

ERA PRESS RELEASE

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Announcing 2026 ERA Conference General Session Speakers Jacob Shapiro and Eddie Smith

The 2026 ERA Conference Committee is pleased to announce that Jacob Shapiro and Ed Smith will present as general session speakers at the annual ERA Conference on Feb. 22-24, 2026, in Austin, Texas.

Jacob Shapiro is a geopolitical analyst and Director of Research at The Bespoke Group, a wealth strategy firm. Shapiro is a prolific public speaker, delivering frequent keynotes and briefings across industries like finance, agriculture and energy, to name a few. He hosts “The Jacob Shapiro” podcast, which features interviews with subject matter experts in geopolitics, technology, markets and other fields.



Jacob Shapiro

Shapiro will present the first general session on Monday, Feb. 23 entitled, “Geopolitics, Supply Chains and the New Electronics Landscape.” The world is shifting from a U.S.-led unipolar order to a multipolar, highly transactional system, and the electronics industry sits squarely in the crosshairs. In this new landscape, success depends less on efficiency and more on resilient partnerships, flexible planning and strategic urgency. Global power is realigning and while this comes with risks, it also creates opportunities for manufacturers and distributors to stay ahead.

Key takeaways from the presentation will include:

- Why North America—especially Mexico under USMCA—is emerging as the most trusted, adaptable foundation for future electronics supply chains.

- Why exposure to China (and in some cases India) now carries structural risk that companies can no longer ignore.
- Reconceptualizing trust as infrastructure—and adaptability as strategy—to build more resilient sourcing, customer relationships and operational plans.



Ed Smith

Eddie Smith is ERA's new CEO as of September 2025, and will present the second general session on Monday, February 23.

Smith is a seasoned and successful executive with more than 35 years of experience in the electronic manufacturing services (EMS) industry and the electronic components distribution industry. He served as CEO at Smtex International and then held several senior executive positions at Avnet for many years, including president for seven years. He then joined SMTC Corporation as CEO in 2017 and was later promoted to chairman. He currently serves on the Board of Directors

at Data I/O and other private Boards.

Smith will present, "Everything Revolves Around Electronics," a session that will dive into change in the electronics industry is reshaping our operations. Smith will discuss what is driving the latest supply-chain shifts and what they mean for how we sell, collaborate and compete.

We'll explore how AI is rapidly transforming our workflows, how sales teams can stay effective in a world where fewer customers want face-to-face meetings and where the future of the rep model is headed. We'll look back at previous cycles of rapid change — with research and real-world industry data — to reveal the clues that will help us adapt even faster this time.

The 2026 ERA Keynote and General Sessions Conference Committee is thrilled to have Shapiro and Smith as general session speakers on the first day of the conference, as they are sure to bring incredible value and expertise to attendees.

Stay tuned for more information about the remaining speakers at the 2026 ERA Conference!

About the 2026 ERA Conference

The 2026 ERA Conference is an educational and networking event that offers the only opportunity for electronics industry reps, manufacturers and distributors to learn together from many experts in an environment dedicated to sharing proven best practices in field sales and marketing. Complete with keynote speakers, breakout

sessions and networking events, this do-not-miss event offers a collaborative and energetic environment where all attendees can learn, connect and grow. [Read more information](#) about the 2026 ERA Conference.

About ERA

The 90-year-old Electronics Representatives Association (ERA) is the international trade organization for professional field sales companies in the global electronics industries, manufacturers who go to market through representative firms and global distributors. It is the mission of ERA to support the professional field sales function through programs and activities that educate, inform and advocate for manufacturers' representatives, the principals they represent and the distributors who are reps' partners in local territories. Visit era.org.