



## **RMA Corporate Sponsorship Recommendations to SIA**

Nationally, corporate philanthropy has gone through many dynamic changes during the past ten years. Mergers and acquisitions have run rampant and corporate operating environments have become extremely competitive. Due to these factors, corporations are limiting their support of nonprofits to only those who can make a strong “business case,” and are tying their community relations and philanthropy into a *business and marketing strategy*. This is true regardless of the performance of the stock market and the economy. Many if not most corporations seek partnerships with nonprofits that can give them credibility and visibility. Corporations are also interested in involving their employees in community activities and will support organizations where their employees are involved as volunteers. In addition, corporations want to sponsor nonprofit organizations that use their products or services, (i.e., nonprofit customers who exhibit brand loyalty).

While corporate funding in the United States can be complex, we will break it down into understandable parts. Similarities exist between foundation and corporate giving. Both require initial effort on the part of SIA to develop contacts, relationships and credibility. Both are maintained by ongoing public relations efforts, and both have the potential to generate large sums of money. The main difference between the two is that corporate giving is **partnership driven** while foundation giving is **relationship driven**. Corporations require a win-win strategy. You must have something that benefits the corporation if the corporation is going to benefit you—**W.I.I.F.M. (What’s In It For Me)**. A corporation will want to know what advantage partnering with SIA will give them. Will it increase their visibility with one of their target markets? Will they receive enough visibility through SIA to give them a good reputation in their community? Will the partnership extend their “halo effect” with government entities and policy makers? Will their support give them a competitive advantage with persons with disabilities? These are the kinds of “business case” questions corporate executives will ask themselves when considering a partnership with SIA.

### **Advantages of Corporate Dollars**

The fact that corporate entities have self-interest can be a *distinct advantage* to SIA. Once the partnership is established and is working well, there is a **high probability** of receiving money over long periods of time. Receiving corporate

money also helps leverage other private and foundation money because new corporate dollars will follow once other corporations and foundations are on-board. Corporations are often very generous with in-kind donations such as computers, office equipment, products they manufacture, and printing of annual reports or marketing materials. This approach is also helpful for SIA to develop a three-year development strategy, in two distinct phases.

### **Disadvantages of Corporate Dollars**

There are some *serious disadvantages* to corporate dollars. It is important to have the right “screen” to make sure the corporation fits the values, mission, and focus of SIA so that SIA maintains its credibility with its constituency, policy makers, government entities, and other national disability organizations. If a corporation is approached through its “corporate giving” or philanthropy department, the dollar amounts SIA will likely see are usually very small and not worth the time and effort. Instead SIA should approach the corporations marketing department.

### **Corporate Strategic Approach**

The local, regional and national corporations that SIA should approach are primarily those that have identified themselves as having a customer base that includes the disability niche market segment, and/or employees with disabilities. In this strategic plan, we recommend two different corporate sponsorship options. The first option encompasses the more traditional approach where we create a menu of **packages** containing an array of services that benefit the corporate partner throughout the year. The second option is a more long-term **strategic approach** that encourages the corporation to build upon the first option but allows SIA to develop a more strategic long-term partnership with the corporation.

The following **steps** should be considered when approaching corporations:

1. As with foundation prospects, **inventory** the board, staff, consultants, volunteers, and other contacts to learn who knows the **key people** at corporations, and then use these people as “door openers” to set up appointments.
2. Before the visits, **research the company** by researching their Web site, reading annual reports and the business sections of newspapers, and talking with other nonprofits receiving support. Learn as much as possible about their business products, the key people, and how they want the company to be perceived in the community. Equally important is to identify the company’s other sponsored events, analyze whom the company wants to reach (both its actual market(s) and those constituencies from which it seeks “good-will”), and how it wishes to position itself in the marketplace and

community. In short, it is necessary to understand as much about the company's marketing strategies as can be reasonably ascertained. This knowledge will help SIA help the company understand how its **self-interest** is served by partnering with SIA.

3. Form a **Corporate Partnership Committee** made up of a few board members plus business people who are friends of SIA, and develop the specific approach and "pitch." When approaching the company, try to meet with the **marketing vice-president** or someone above this person - not with the community relations or philanthropic people. SIA will also be targeting government affairs staff in the DC area as "door openers" to the corporate dollars. Remember that the corporation is looking for a *partnership* not a *relationship*, so SIA must match their visibility and marketing needs with its financial needs.
4. If possible, try to drive the prospective corporate partner's employees into SIA programs as volunteers. These employees (called "company champions") can be invaluable ambassadors and will go with us to ask for the money. However, do not assume that the "company champion" necessarily understands his/her own company's marketing or philanthropic budgets, key players, etc. SIA should know this and help educate the "company champion."

#### **A. Tiered Sponsorship Program –**

Develop a multi-tiered approach to **partnerships** with corporations. By this we mean five to six tiers of potential sponsorships for a company that will result in the corporation receiving year-round visibility. The following is a hypothetical model developed for SIA by *Richard Male & Associates*:

##### **Platinum Sponsor - \$100,000**

This is the **highest** sponsorship level that is designed to provide **outstanding** visibility and key introductions throughout the year.

- **Annual Conference Benefits**

- Ten Complimentary tickets to Annual Meeting Awards Gala and VIP reception.
- Corporate display table next to registration booth (or location of choice in exhibition hall) at annual conference.
- Five Complimentary registrations for the annual conference.
- Acknowledgement on all marketing materials, press kits, signage and from the podium.
- Back Cover advertisement in Awards Gala Souvenir Program.

- Opportunity to address conference participants at Annual Conference keynote, Awards Gala and VIP Reception.
- List all presenters, exhibitors and attendees at conference.
- **Ongoing Benefits**
  - Logo on SIA Web site with a link to the corporation's Web site for a 12-month period.
  - One feature article on the corporation and its disability focus in our magazine (publication) and SIA's new electronic newsletter.
  - Networking and opportunity to be SIA's guest at two Washington DC Leadership Events.
  - Host a lunch for the national board of directors.
  - One page advertisement in SIA magazine four times per year.
  - Invitation to serve on SIA's Corporate Partnership Committee.
- **Special Event**
  - Opportunities are available for sponsorship of the SIA Golf Marathon in seven chapter cities across the country.

### **Gold Sponsor - \$50,000**

This is a high-level sponsorship designed to give the corporation **excellent** visibility and key introductions throughout the year.

- **Annual Conference Benefits**
  - Five complementary tickets to annual meeting Awards Gala and VIP Reception.
  - Three Complimentary registrations for the annual conference.
  - Acknowledgement on all marketing materials, press kits, signage and from the podium.
  - Prominent display when participants first enter the display area.
  - Opportunity to address conference participants at Awards Gala and VIP Reception.
  - Inside cover advertisement in Awards Gala Souvenir Program.
  - List of all presenters, exhibitors and attendees at conference.
- **Ongoing Benefits**
  - Logo on SIA Web page with a link to the corporation's Web site for a six-month period.
  - One feature article on the corporation and its disability focus on SIA's new electronic newsletter.
  - Half-page advertisement in SIA magazine two times per year.
  - Networking and opportunity to be SIA's guest at one Washington DC Leadership Event.

- **Special Event**
  - Opportunities are available for sponsorship of the SIA Golf Marathon in seven chapter cities across the country.

### **Silver Sponsor - \$25,000**

This is a **significant** sponsorship level designed to give the corporation excellent visibility and key introductions throughout the year.

- **Annual Conference Benefits**
  - Two complementary tickets to annual meeting Awards Gala
  - Display at annual conference.
  - Acknowledgment on all marketing materials, press kits, signage and from the podium.
  - List of all presenters, exhibitors and attendees at conference.
  - Full-page ad in Awards Gala Souvenir Program.
- **Ongoing Benefits**
  - Logo on SIA Web site with a link to the corporation's Web site for a three-month period.
  - One-fourth-page advertisement in SIA magazine two times per year.
- **Special Event**
  - Opportunities are available for sponsorship of the SIA Golf Marathon in seven chapter cities across the country.

### **Bronze Sponsor - \$15,000**

This is a **value** sponsorship level designed to give the corporation good visibility and show the sponsor the value of increasing their level in the future.

- **Annual Conference Benefits**
  - Two complementary ticket to annual meeting Awards Gala
  - Display table at the annual conference.
  - Acknowledgment on all marketing materials, press kits, signage and from the podium.
  - Three-quarter advertisement in Awards Gala Souvenir Program.
  - List of all presenters, exhibitors and attendees at conference.
- **Ongoing Benefits**
  - Logo on SIA Web site with a link to the corporation's Web site for a two-month period.
  - Bronze page listing in SIA magazine two times per year.

- **Special Event**
  - Opportunities are available for sponsorship of our Golf Marathon in seven chapter cities across the country.

### **Supporting Members - \$7,500**

This is a **basic** sponsorship level designed for small companies to showcase their products to our constituency.

- **Annual Conference Benefits**
  - One complementary ticket to annual meeting Awards Gala.
  - Opportunity to display corporate brochure on SIA resource table.
  - Acknowledgment on select marketing materials.
  - List of all presenters, exhibitors and attendees at conference.
  - Supporting member listing in Awards Gala Souvenir Program.
- **Ongoing Benefits**
  - Logo included on supporting member page on SIA Web site.
  - One time Supporting Member page listing in SIA magazine.
- **Special Event**
  - Opportunities are available for sponsorship of the SIA Golf Marathon in seven chapter cities across the country.

### **Small Business Sponsorship - \$2,500**

This **introductory** sponsorship level is designed for **small** businesses that want to market their products and services to our membership at our annual conference. Such businesses can include wheelchair producers, assistive technology, medical services, research laboratories, vendors, nonprofits, etc.

- **Annual Conference Benefits**
  - Display table at the annual conference.
  - Acknowledgement on marketing materials at the conference.
  - Business card advertisement in Awards Gala Souvenir Program.

### **Friend of SIA**

SIA provides written material that welcomes the corporation's support and lets the corporation know that SIA would be happy to create and **customize a sponsorship package** to suit the level of their support.

## **B. Corporate Partnership Program –**

The goal of the Corporate Partnership Program is to develop long-term business partnerships with a select group of corporations throughout the United States. The intention of SIA is to provide **significant value** to the corporation and to directly assist the company in **marketing** their products, goods or services.

Each of these partnerships will be tailored to meet the specific needs of the corporations. Each partnership will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

The cost of the partnership will be based upon the needs of the corporations, but will include a platinum sponsor level (\$100,000) and the following options:

1. **Web site** – The SIA Web site is visited by 1,500 unique guests every day, over half a million visitors each year! SIA could insert a banner ad and direct link to your Web site in a prominent location on its front page and/or on a page most suited for your potential customer.
2. **Co-Branded Mailing Between Corporation and SIA** – SIA has a “clean” mailing list of over 125,000 names of persons with spinal cord injuries, their families and related service, equipment, healthcare and daily-living providers. This extremely targeted list can be used to help promote good will, credibility or products and services.
3. **Electronic Newsletter** – In much the same way as SIA has a mailing list, we have an electronic newsletter disseminated monthly to a growing number of members. As we obtain email addresses, a currently active initiative of the organization, we anticipate distribution of the electronic newsletter to reach 25,000 people by the end of 2003, and 75,000+ by the end of FY04. We can develop an advertisement or article and marketing materials for this newsletter to promote the company’s many products.
4. **SIA magazine** – This excellent magazine is disseminated to 9,000 subscribers on a quarterly basis and is the “flagship” publication for our members. In each edition, it is possible to develop a **supplementary article** that can profile the corporation’s themes in areas such as: Trends, Pharmaceuticals, Home Ownership, Travel, Technology, etc.
5. **Training for Senior Management and Line Staff** – If your company wants to conduct a training session, workshop or needs a keynote speaker, SIA could tailor a variety of programs to fit your specific needs.
6. **Focus Groups and Marketing Surveys** – If your company is engaged in marketing surveys and needs SIA to assist in identifying participants for focus groups, or one-on-one interviews for surveys or studies, this could be arranged.

7. **Testing** – If you are testing a new drug, Beta testing technology, equipment or other products, and you need people with our expertise, primary disability experience, demographics and profile, SIA will work with your company to reach qualified and influential participants who may later be explored as spokespersons.