

Spotlight on AAM's Volunteer of the Year: Brenda Sleeper

Brenda Sleeper, business development director for BizActions, was named volunteer of the year by the Association for Accounting Marketing for her involvement in the association and her commitment to promoting the accounting marketing industry.

An AAM member since 2001, Sleeper began volunteering for the membership committee around 2005. She took over as co-chair of that committee in 2007. During that time she's helped with marketing campaigns to target prospective members including a recent e-mail campaign, coordinated educational roundtables, scheduled and participated in monthly new member calls and made personal calls to prospective members.

What does it take to be recognized as an outstanding volunteer? We sat down with Brenda for a little Q&A to find out what motivates her to give to this organization.

Q. What went through your head when you figured out you were the winner?

A. It never occurred to me that I'd even be considered. I was truly overwhelmed with emotion to think that I was part of an organization where people thought of me in that way. I am so honored to have received the award.

Q. Why do you volunteer for AAM?

A. When I first joined AAM as an in-house marketer, I went to the Toronto conference and had a great experience. I remember calling my managing partner on the way back and telling him how great it was. I told him to picture 350 of me in the same room. The energy was amazing.

Since then, AAM has always been my thing. I've wanted to give back to the organization and mentor people new to the industry. Even before I got involved with the membership committee, I would find non-members and encourage them to become members. I know what a great resource AAM has been to me and I know it can be the same for others. As a volunteer, I definitely get back more than I give.

Still today, I don't think twice about doing things for AAM. It's more than a group of people with whom I can network. I have gained true friendships through my involvement.

Q. What have you done for AAM that you are most proud of?

A. In my job, when I meet new marketing professionals, I always tout the benefits for AAM. I think that's how I contribute best. However, two years ago, AAM's membership was just shy of 1,000. That was a great accomplishment, but it was truly a collective effort on behalf of the membership committee, headquarters and every member who shared their positive experience with others.

Q. Does volunteering ever interfere with your job?

A. Most of the time, no. During the late spring and summer months, my job defiantly picks up and I don't have as much time to focus on AAM. Luckily, I had a great co-chair in Robin Brothers and a strong committee. It also helps that Gary [Kravitz] and BizActions support my efforts.

Q. How has AAM helped you contribute to your professional development?

A. It's been tremendous in terms of creating campaigns, getting feedback on programs, developing proposals...and basically not having to recreate the wheel. It helps you do your job better. Sometimes you're on an island in your firm. You can't put a value on the amount of resources you get from being involved in AAM. Having access to AAM resources is like having an extended marketing department,

except we're all volunteers. Really, this is THE place to get the professional development you need to do the job.

Effective July 2010, AAM has restructured its current committees to help with efficiency and communications among committee and subcommittee volunteers. Sleeper will continue her involvement with the membership committee.

If you are ready to become active at the national level, improve your leadership skills, and expand your professional experience, [volunteer](#) to serve on a committee, subcommittee or task force.