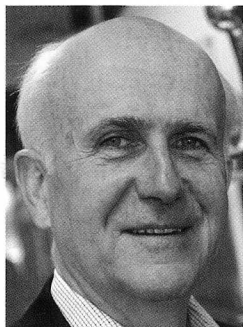


11. AIA Corporation

Building On Momentum



DAVID WOODS

For years, AIA (*asi/109480*) was a solid, if a tad staid, business. Located in the heart of the Midwest in Neenah, WI, the company had a good reputation due to its strong, well-regarded CEO, David Woods, but its sales were static and corporate culture wasn't known for being the most, well, electrifying.

Oh, what a difference two years can make. In that time, AIA has deftly reinvented itself through clever recruitment initiatives, a successful rebranding effort and a recent acquisition that put the whole industry on notice: This isn't your father's AIA.

Under the leadership of Woods, Rebecca Kollmann – AIA's director of business development – and their galvanized management team, the company's sales were up 15% in 2010 and 16% in the first four months of this year, making AIA one of the industry's most interesting turnaround stories in the

past 12 months. Consider that with the May purchase of Flagship Promotional Services – and its 25 affiliates – AIA adds \$10 million to \$12 million to its books in 2011.

“Coming out of the Great Recession we've put a lot of new tools and resources in place to help the AIA organization grow organically,” says Woods. “We've developed and refined a proprietary marketing and sales program we call SOAR Higher, focusing on planning, new client acquisition and account penetration and development, which is really showing impressive results. One element is LeadGenesis, a lead development program which has opened a lot of great new accounts for AIA owners.”

Woods also says the company rethought and realigned its field sales team to be more responsive and focused on

growth. “Our recruiting initiatives are really paying off, so we've added a number of great new people as well,” he says. “I'm happy to say these strong results are carrying over into 2011 and we are expecting another great year.”

And while Woods admits to being optimistic that both his company and the industry will show strong growth in the next few years, he concedes that the marketplace is changing.

“Going forward for the industry, it will be more and more difficult for smaller companies and individuals to make the investments necessary to prosper, but well-funded and positioned companies will do very well,” Woods says. “We're also in the midst of exciting generational changes. Younger people use technology readily and communicate differently, and we've quickly



AIA has successfully added new recruits to its ranks, including closing an acquisition of Flagship Promotional Services this year, which added 25 salespeople and more than \$10 million to the company's coffers.

adapted AIA to benefit from these changes. We focus on adding a limited number of the best people we can find, and that strategy has worked remarkably well for us. That's like our motto: We will never substitute quantity for quality.” – MB

AIA's Five-Year Revenue Track (in millions)

