

**“WIIFMs”**  
**(What’s In It For Me?)**  
**The Benefits of Academy Involvement and Advisory Board**  
**Membership**

Business partners have limited resources (time and money) to invest in philanthropic, charitable endeavors. As a matter of fact, some business people won’t even consider making such an investment unless there is a potential return on investment (ROI.) When Directors are trying to recruit new Advisory Board members, they need to be able to describe the WIIFMs; the reasons why it makes sense for business partners to direct their limited resources to the local Academy program, and the benefits that will inure from such a contribution. The benefits of getting involved with the local Academy<sup>1</sup>, including Advisory Board membership, can be broken into two main areas:

- 1- The Financial Factors; the bottom line benefits which directly affect the business and its shareholders, and
- 2- The Altruistic Factors; the warm and fuzzy, feel-good, benefits, which align with the company’s philanthropic strategies and goals.

The listings below describe in more detail how business benefits in these two areas.

**The Financial Factors**

If the Director and the business partner manage the relationship correctly, the “bottom-line” of the business can benefit from being involved with the Academy. Some of the ways the bottom line is positively impacted include:

- ♣ Higher employee recruiting opportunities (ability to:)
  - Identify and groom future entry-level workers
  - Reduce recruiting costs
  - Retain local talent from the geographic area
- ♣ Lower training costs<sup>2</sup>
- ♣ Lower employee turnover<sup>2</sup>
- ♣ Higher morale in current workers<sup>2</sup>
- ♣ Greater ability to work in teams<sup>2</sup>
- ♣ Greater work ethic
- ♣ Greater employee productivity

- ♣ Increased networking
- ♣ Increased positive public relations news
- ♣ Greater exposure in the market(s) served by the company

### **The Altruistic Factors**

These “warm and fuzzy” factors may not necessarily directly affect an organization’s bottom line, but they may be in line with a company’s social responsibility pledge, or community involvement activities, or strategic philanthropic endeavors. Some of the ways business can enjoy these benefits include:

- ♣ Giving back to the community
  - mentoring
  - job shadowing
  - providing paid internships
- ♣ Being an agent of change in education
  - speaking with Boards of Education or Superintendents
- ♣ Getting involved in schools in a focused, direct way
  - speaking in the classroom
- ♣ Changing the lives of students through meaningful interaction
  - mentoring, shadowing, internships, classroom speaking, mock interviews, resume writing, student conferences
- ♣ Providing professional development and technical assistance for educators
  - summer externships
- ♣ Reviewing and updating curriculum
  - providing expertise and collateral material

<sup>1</sup> See *NAF Continuum of Involvement* for more information

<sup>2</sup> See *Shaping Postsecondary Transitions*, Orr, Hughes and Karp, Institute on Education and the Economy, Teachers College, Columbia University, (IEE BRIEF April 2003)