

# Excellence Awards Submission - 2023 for 2024

Welcome to the application form for the 2024 SAMA EXCELLENCE AWARDS™

You are welcome to submit up to two Excellence Award categories. If you wish to apply for more than one award, simply complete and submit an application for each category. To help you prepare your submission, the list of questions are displayed when clicking on the category.

If you are not able to complete the submission in one session, you can return to your submission so long as you are using the same computer and browser. Your responses will be automatically saved as soon as you complete them.

We have included the option to submit a file with supporting material if needed. It is not required. Each question still must be answered in the submission form. In addition, we ask that if you are a previous Excellence Award Winner in the categories of Young or Mature Program of the Year, you wait two years from when you won to submit in the same category again. This rule does not pertain to any of the other Excellence Awards categories.

If you have any questions or challenges, please contact Libby Souder at [souder@strategicaccounts.org](mailto:souder@strategicaccounts.org) **The deadline for submissions is January 16, 2024**

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Please enter your contact information.

- First Name \_\_\_\_\_
- Last Name \_\_\_\_\_
- Company \_\_\_\_\_
- Title/Role \_\_\_\_\_
- Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

# Section Selection

Please select the category that you would like to apply for. Each category will have a full description and submission questions for you to review before starting the submission process.

- Category 1: Systematic enablement of the SAM program: Learning and Development** Recognizing the imperative and challenges to attract, develop and retain SAM talent, learning & development (training) plays an increasingly important role to build SAM capabilities to effectively collaborate, create value and grow with their Company's most important customers. Additionally, in our hybrid world, organizations need to innovate in how they develop SAM talent, enable cross-function account teamwork, equip leaders to sponsor and coach, and embed and sustain organization-wide change.
- Category 2: Innovative value co-creation** One role of the SAM is to leverage resources within his or her organization to co-create value with a strategic customer. At SAMA we've seen some extraordinary examples of this innovation through value co-creation — and we are looking for more.
- Category 3: C-Suite support and engagement for the SAM program and strategic customers** CEO engagement with customers can have a significant impact on their companies' revenue, profits, growth, shareholder value, and very survival. However, C-suite support is not easily earned by the SAM internally and externally. In this category, show what good C-suite support for a SAM Program and customer engagement looks like.
- Category 4: Outstanding young program of the year (< 5 years)** The winning entry will demonstrate, through examples, the specific foundational elements and enablers that are transforming their business and their relationships with strategic customers to produce new levels of growth and profitability.
- Category 5: Outstanding mature program of the year (5+ years)** Mature SAM organizations face many challenges, including maintaining and evolving strong executive leadership and governance, becoming more agile through changing economic and digital disruptions, continuous learning to elevate SAM processes and tools, and accelerating the drive for innovative co-creation with strategic customers. The winning entry will demonstrate through examples, the strength, resilience, and productivity of their SAM organization.

Was your strategic account management program established within the past 5 years? (Note: This cannot be just a matter of rebranding or refreshing an existing program, scaling an existing program to a new division or region, or making a change in leadership.)

- Yes
- No

Has your strategic account management program existed, in any form, for five years or more?

- Yes
- No

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## **Category 1: Systematic enablement of the SAM program: Learning & Development**

Recognizing the imperative and challenges to attract, develop and retain SAM talent, learning & development (training) plays an increasingly important role to build SAM capabilities to effectively collaborate, create value and grow with their Company's most important customers. Additionally, in our hybrid world, organizations need to innovate in how they develop SAM talent, enable cross-function account teamwork, equip leaders to sponsor and coach, and embed and sustain organization-wide change.

### **The winning submission will demonstrate:**

- Innovative, integrated learning strategies
- Approach (learning roadmaps/training programs)
- Design and deployment that accelerate, deepen and sustain enterprise-wide strategic account management mindset and capabilities
- Measurable improvement of SAMs' competencies
- Company capabilities and customer-centric culture
- Customer value/impact

**Within this submission, you will answer the questions outlined below. If necessary, you can copy the questions and return at a later time to paste in your answers.**

- Please describe the role Learning & Development plays in supporting personal development and expanding the capabilities of the SAMs and SAM teams.
- Please describe how Learning & Development disseminates SAM knowledge & best practices across the organization.
- Please describe how Learning & Development helps drive organizational alignment, efficiency and standardization across BUs, regions, etc.
- Please describe how Learning & Development contributes to your company's ability to co-create value and provide a great customer experience for your strategic accounts.
- Please provide any business results that help quantify the improvement of SAM competencies, company capabilities and customer-centric culture, as well as customer value/impact.

## Questions 1-5

1. Please describe the role Learning & Development plays in supporting personal development and expanding the capabilities of the SAMs and SAM teams.
2. Please describe how Learning & Development disseminates SAM knowledge & best practices across the organization.
3. Please describe how Learning & Development helps drive organizational alignment, efficiency and standardization across BUs, regions, etc.
4. Please describe how Learning & Development contributes to your company's ability to co-create value and provide a great customer experience for your strategic accounts.
5. Please provide any business results that help quantify the improvement of SAM competencies, company capabilities and customer-centric culture, as well as customer value/impact.

You may add 1 supporting document if you want to show an example or need to give more context outside of the submission form.

*Files uploaded can be up to 100MB. For security reasons, executable files (such as those ending in .exe) are not permitted. Content options are PDF, Document (DOC, DOCX, TXT), Spreadsheet (CSV, XLS, XLSX), or Graphic (JPG, PNG, GIF).*

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## Category 2 Innovative value co-creation

One role of the SAM is to leverage resources within his or her organization to co-create value with a strategic customer. At SAMA we've seen some extraordinary examples of this innovation through value co-creation — and we are looking for more.

The winning entry will demonstrate, through one or more examples, how SAMs think outside the box to solve complex problems by, e.g., engaging their company's entire ecosystem (suppliers, competitors, start-ups), solving not only customer problems but customer's customer's problems, or through other novel, innovative mechanisms. Bonus points will be given for new, innovative ways to assemble diverse stakeholders to co-create solutions that address complex customer problems. A specific customer example is required!

**Within this submission, you will answer the questions outlined below. If necessary, you can copy the questions and return at a later time to paste in your answers.**

- What specific customer problem (or problems) did you set out to address?
- What past attempts had you and/or your customer made to solve said problem(s)?
- How did the SAM discover the opportunity for joint value-creation?
- What challenges (technical, organizational, etc.) had to be overcome to develop and execute your solution?
- Who were the key stakeholders on your side? On the customer side?
- What specific actions did the SAM take to influence key stakeholders needed to move

the project forward?

- What specific actions did the SAM take to create internal alignment around the project?
- How are you measuring the success of this project, and how have you decided how the “pie” (i.e., the new, innovative value) gets divided up between customer and supplier?
- What was different/innovative/envelope-pushing about this project?
- What have been the business results?

#### Questions 1-9

1. What specific customer problem (or problems) did you set out to address?
2. What past attempts had you and/or your customer made to solve said problem(s)?
3. How did the SAM discover the opportunity for joint value-creation?
4. What challenges (technical, organizational, etc.) had to be overcome to develop and execute your solution?
5. Who were the key stakeholders on your side? On the customer side? What specific actions did the SAM take to influence key stakeholders needed to move the project forward?
6. What specific actions did the SAM take to create internal alignment around the project?
7. How are you measuring the success of this project, and how have you decided how the “pie” (i.e., the new, innovative value) gets divided up between customer and supplier?
8. What was different/innovative/envelope-pushing about this project?
9. What have been the business results?

You may add 1 supporting document if you want to show an example or need to give more context outside of the submission form.

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### **Category 3: C-Suite support and engagement for the SAM program and strategic customers**

SAMA is interested in knowing what good C-suite support for a SAM Program and customer engagement looks like!

CEO engagement with customers can have a significant impact on their companies' revenue, profits, growth, shareholder value, and very survival., In addition, we know that:

- CEOs are now spending 3% or less of their time with customers.
- customers dissatisfaction with their suppliers is now going up.
- without a C-level relationship it is difficult to obtain deep strategic alignment
- the most successful SAM programs are sponsored by the C-suite and board
- for you and your company to be seen as a strategic supplier you must be relevant at the

c-level of your customer

However, C-suite support is not easily earned by the SAM internally and externally. This is why SAMA recommends using executive sponsors with strategic accounts up to and including the C-suite.

**The winning example in this Excellence Award Category will demonstrate:**

- How the CEO or other C-suite members support the SAM program.
- How the CEO or other C-suite members had a specific impact on enhancing the customer relationship.

**Within this submission, you will answer the questions outlined below. If necessary, you can copy the questions and return at a later time to paste in your answers.**

- Please describe how your CEO or C-suite plays a role in enabling and supporting the SAM program.
- With regards to your SAM program and strategic customer engagement, where do they stand on your CEOs priority list on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest priority and 1 being the lowest?
- Please describe how your C-suite and CEO demonstrate their commitment and prioritization to the SAM Program and strategic customers? Is it proactive or reactive?
- Explain the extent to which your CEO or C-suite engages with your strategic customers in any given year.
- Please describe how your CEO or C-suite engages with strategic customers to build relationships.
- Please describe how the CEO or member of the c-suite has had significant impact on supporting the SAM to close big business deals. Please include any business results.

Questions 1-6

1. Please describe how your CEO or C-suite plays a role in enabling and supporting the SAM program.
2. A Michael Porter study in HBR shared that CEOs spend less than 3% of their time with customers. With regards to your SAM program and strategic customer engagement, where do they stand on your CEOs priority list on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest priority and 1 being the lowest?
3. Please describe how your C-suite and CEO demonstrate their commitment and prioritization to the SAM Program and strategic customers? Is it proactive or reactive?
4. Explain the extent to which your CEO or C-suite engages with your strategic customers in any given year.
5. Please describe how your CEO or C-suite engages with strategic customers to build relationships.
6. Please describe how the CEO or member of the c-suite has had significant impact on

supporting the SAM to close big business deals. Please include any business results.

You may add 1 supporting document if you want to show an example or need to give more context outside of the submission form.

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## Category 4: Outstanding young program of the year (< 5 years)

The winning entry will demonstrate, through examples, the specific foundational elements and enablers that are transforming their business and their relationships with strategic customers to produce new levels of growth and profitability.

**Within this submission, you will answer the questions outlined below. If necessary, you can copy the questions and return at a later time to paste in your answers.**

- What was the challenge your company was facing that led to the creation of a strategic accounts program?
- Who was involved from your organization in establishing your program?
- What are the key components of your SAM program?
- What internal KPIs do you use to measure the program's success?
- What external (customer or third-party) validation do you have that the program has contributed positively to your strategic accounts?
- What have been the business results? **Note that these numbers may be expressed in relative, rather than absolute, terms (e.g., year-over-year).**
- What have you learned from this experience?
- What can others learn from your experience?

Please note: Previous winners of this award must wait 2 years before submitting for "Outstanding young program of the year" but are encouraged to submit in other award categories.

Questions 1-8

1. What was the challenge your company was facing that led to the creation of a strategic accounts program?
2. Who was involved from your organization in establishing your program?
3. What are the key components of your SAM program?
4. What internal KPIs do you use to measure the program's success?

5. What external (customer or third-party) validation do you have that the program has contributed positively to your strategic accounts?
6. What have been the business results? **Note that these numbers may be expressed in relative, rather than absolute, terms (e.g., year-over-year).**
7. What have you learned from this experience?
8. What can others learn from your experience?

You may add 1 supporting document if you want to show an example or need to give more context outside of the submission form.

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## Category 5: Outstanding mature program of the year (5+ years)

Mature SAM organizations face many challenges, including maintaining and evolving strong executive leadership and governance, becoming more agile through changing economic and digital disruptions, continuous learning to elevate SAM processes and tools, and accelerating the drive for innovative co-creation with strategic customers. The winning entry will demonstrate, through examples, the strength, resilience, and productivity of their SAM organization.

Within this submission, you will answer the questions outlined below. If necessary, you can copy the questions and return at a later time to paste in your answers.

- What goals did you set out to achieve to advance, sustain and/or alter the course of your existing SAM program?
- What specific steps did you undertake to achieve these goals?
- Who from your organization was involved?
- What internal KPIs do you use to measure the program's success?
- How have these KPIs evolved over time?
- What external (customer or third-party) validation do you have that the program has contributed positively to your strategic customers?
- What have been the business results? Note that these numbers may be expressed in relative, rather than absolute, terms (e.g., year-over-year).
- What have you learned from this experience?
- What can others learn from your experience?



Please note: Previous winners of this award must wait 2 years before submitting for “Outstanding mature program of the year” but are encouraged to submit in other award categories.

What goals did you set out to achieve to advance, sustain and/or alter the course of your existing SAM program?

Questions 1-7

1. What specific steps did you undertake to achieve these goals?
2. Who from your organization was involved?
3. What internal KPIs do you use to measure the program’s success? How have these KPIs evolved over time?
4. What external (customer or third-party) validation do you have that the program has contributed positively to your strategic accounts?
5. What have been the business results? **Note that these numbers may be expressed in relative, rather than absolute, terms (e.g., year-over-year).**
6. What have you learned from this experience?
7. What can others learn from your experience?

You may add 1 supporting document if you want to show an example or need to give more context outside of the submission form.

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