



# A Mission to Grow

The Story of SIAA  
and its Commitment  
to the Success of the  
Independent Insurance  
Agency System



# Table of Contents

Click on a heading to be directed to that chapter.

Introduction . . . . .	3
Chapter 1: The Roots of SIAA. . . . .	4
Chapter 2: Taking it National . . . . .	5
Chapter 3: How SIAA Works . . . . .	7
Chapter 4: Market Access, Higher Profits . . . . .	9
Chapter 5: The Total Solution . . . . .	11
Chapter 6: Future Growth . . . . .	13



# Introduction

The story of SIAA (Strategic Insurance Agency Alliance) goes back more than three decades to Jim Masiello and his independent insurance agency in New Hampshire. Struggling through a particularly difficult market, he – like so many others – was searching for a way to help his agency grow.

As he put together the national network of agencies that became SIAA, he focused on a mission to support the growth and continuing success of the independent agency distribution system.

Today, SIAA has signed more than 5,700 Member Agencies, writing more than \$6 billion in combined premium. Thousands of local independent agencies – all committed to profitable growth – have benefited from joining SIAA. They have gained the tools to flex their combined muscles to gain access to many of the nation’s biggest and best insurance companies.

*Thousands of local independent agencies – all committed to profitable growth – have benefited from joining SIAA.*

The SIAA story is inspiring for the thousands of independent agents who have prospered through SIAA and for the future of the independent insurance agency system.



[Back to Table of Contents](#)

# The Roots of SIAA

It's 1983 and the insurance market is challenging independent agents and brokers. Jim Masiello, owner of Masiello Insurance Agency in Keene, N.H., is looking for a way to overcome the two biggest challenges faced by independent agencies: growth and access to markets.

"Those times were very tough," Masiello says. "We were in a hard market and our location limited our potential to grow. It became clear to me we had to grow outside of Keene, which was quite isolated in terms of population."

Masiello was not interested in acquiring other agencies, so he set his sights on partnering with other independent agents to create one master agency. "My concept was to put little pieces together that could add up to something very powerful," he says.

*Local agents found they could remain independent, concentrate on producing profitable business and take advantage of opportunities usually only afforded to larger agencies producing significant volumes of business.*

That something was a master agency called the Satellite Agency Network (SAN). After a group of independent agencies signed on, the master agency was appointed by its first Strategic Partner Company, which saw the potential of the model SAN was off and running.

"Once they saw the model, how we could control the quality of the business and our growth, the concept really resonated with them and they became very interested," he says.

With interest from agencies throughout New England, SAN grew quickly as a regional alliance. Local agents found they could remain independent, concentrate on producing profitable business and take advantage of the opportunities usually only afforded to larger agencies producing significant volumes of business.



*Original Headquarters of Masiello Insurance Agency*

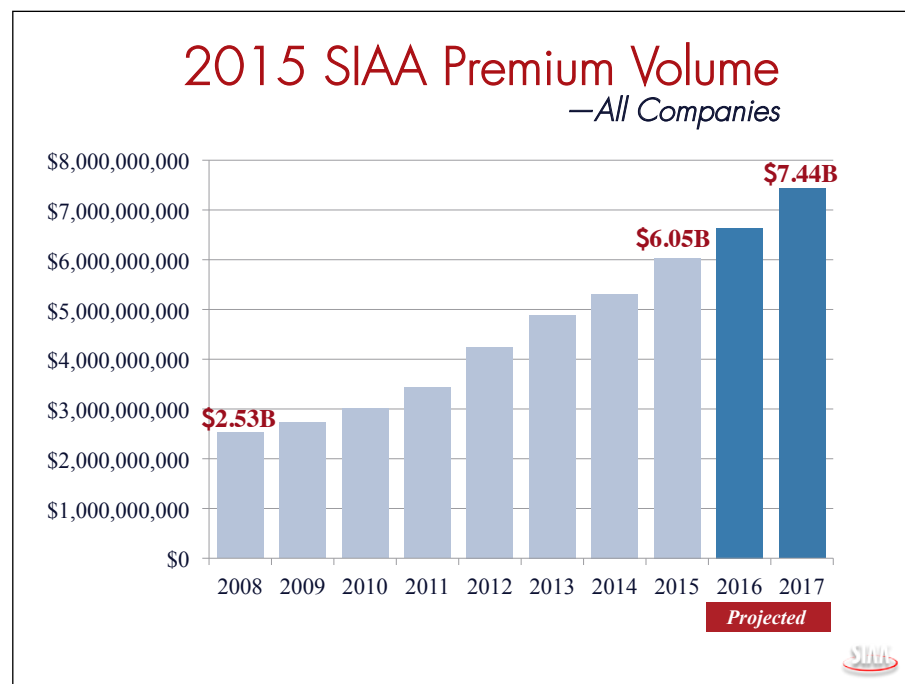
# Taking it National

With the success of SAN, Masiello was encouraged by carriers, associations, industry consultants and existing member agencies to expand the concept nationally. Rather than selling SAN in geographic markets he didn't know, Masiello developed the idea for a national alliance of Master Agencies like SAN, each operating in an exclusive territory.

In 1995, this national alliance – SIAA (Strategic Insurance Agency Alliance) – was born. The model was created and successfully tested as a multi-level partnering concept, and Masiello and SIAA President Nick Pappajohn were instrumental in signing additional master agencies.

In 1997, a national marketing plan was put in place with regional presidents signing qualified master agencies in exclusive geographic marketing territories. The regional presidents identified large retail agencies around the country, many in growth mode. They explained there was a different model – the SAN model – that could bring them growth without the financial pain of buying agencies, funding branch offices, investing in producers or giving up some independence and control through a merger. SIAA was a natural fit for the prospective master agencies that did not want to sell.

Meanwhile, SAN continued to grow to more than 337 members; the alliance currently spans eight states and reports more than \$640 million in total member premiums. With strategic leadership provided by president and CEO Matt Masiello, SAN is the largest alliance of independent insurance agencies in the Northeast.





On the national stage, by the end of 2014 SIAA had connected 48 master agencies spread over the 48 contiguous states. In 2015, it signed the 5,700th independent agency member, having generated hundreds of millions in new business premium annually.

Today, SIAA is the nation's largest alliance of independent insurance agencies. In fact, it is estimated that 13 percent of all independent agencies in the United States are or have been signed members of SIAA master agencies.

Since 2000, SIAA and its master agencies have created over 3,400 new independent insurance agencies, which represents approximately 9 percent of all independent insurance agencies in the United States (based on estimates of 36,000 P&C independent agents nationally). These agencies came from the direct writer/captive ranks, as well as from agency producers and life and financial service sectors.

Over the past five years, SIAA has averaged more than \$600 million in new written premium, with organic growth representing in excess of 80 percent of the total.

*SIAA is the nation's largest alliance of independent insurance agencies... nearly 13% of all independent agencies in the United States are members of SIAA.*



**TAKING INSURANCE DISTRIBUTION  
TO THE NEXT LEVEL!**

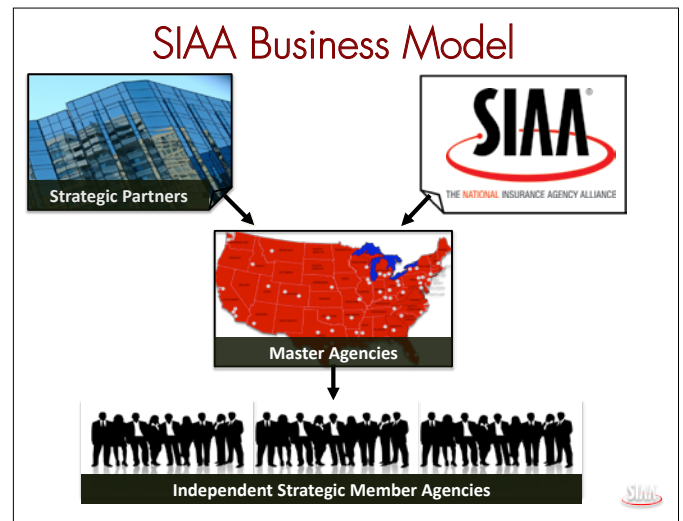
*SIAA celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2015 as the premier alliance of independent insurance agencies.*

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

# How SIAA Works

The key characteristic of an agency joining one of SIAA’s master agencies is the desire to grow, says Matt Masiello, president and CEO of the SAN Group and Executive Vice President of SIAA. “Our continued success can be traced to the original master agency model from 1983. We pick the right agencies – agencies who want to grow – and the return is significant.”

Agencies must clear the SIAA due diligence process, which not only looks at the organization’s size and desire to grow, but also its financial health and key performance factors such as management experience, carrier experience and historical loss ratios.



“Unlike aggregators who generally accept business from any agent, the SIAA model relies on quality, not quantity,” says Jim Masiello. “We’re very careful about who we allow to come into our organization.”

Existing smaller agencies that are able to join an SIAA master agency become instantly big as they access top national carriers which SIAA calls its strategic partner companies. The size of SIAA and the master agencies affords access to markets most of these smaller local agencies never had before, while retaining control of their own agencies.



“Our formula is simple,” Jim Masiello says. “We find good people who want to succeed but have limited access to competitive companies and other resources. We enable them to use their hard work and determination to grow successful independent insurance agencies. We make a difference in the quality of life for our member agents, significantly raising their personal and business standard of living.”

Membership also offers access to support services well beyond the reach of smaller agents. The result is the ability to grow and compete with bigger agencies.

For captives, direct writers, agency producers and life and financial agencies, SIAA and its master agencies structure them and teach them how to become an independent insurance agency business. The markets they access give them a sales track to grow rapidly.

Through an innovative program called AccessPlus, SIAA provides the resources, underwriting guidance and market access to member agents who decide to open their own agencies.

*“Unlike aggregators who generally accept business from any agent, the SIAA model relies on quality, not quantity.”*  
– Jim Masiello



*SIAA Headquarters in Hampton, New Hampshire*

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

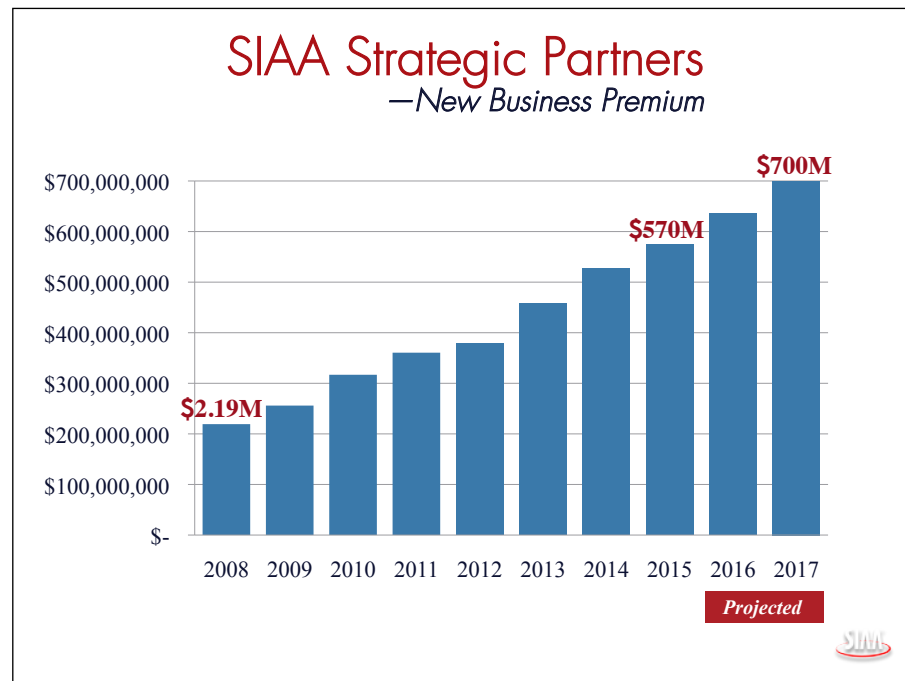


# Market Access, Higher Profits

With more than 20 top insurance carriers – its strategic partners – the SIAA model gives member agencies strong, diversified market access and, thus, the ability to compete at a completely new level, both for personal and commercial lines customers.

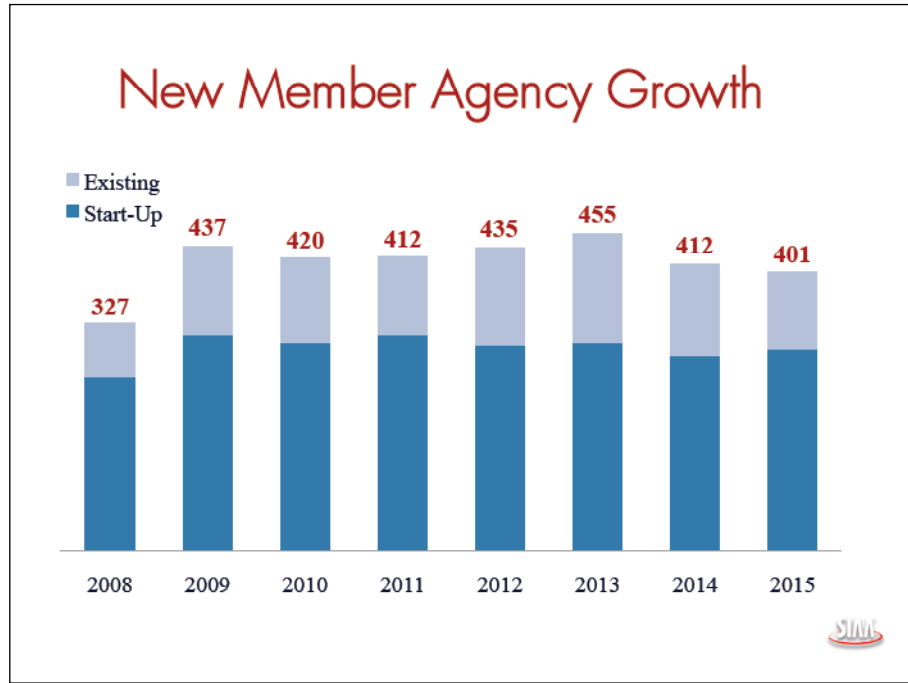
On the flip side, SIAA member agencies also are very attractive to carriers, says Matt Masiello. “Not only does SIAA offer volume,” he says, “but we seek to build long-term carrier partnerships based on value. We’re not just an agency to our strategic partners, we’re a powerful form of distribution. And that creates value.”

This philosophy is why SIAA calls itself an “integrator,” not an aggregator. It is committed to bringing profitable premium growth and quality relationship integration between member agencies and strategic partners.





Agencies joining SIAA also find higher agency income and value generated by local and national incentives, which would not be otherwise available to most stand-alone, smaller agencies. All SIAA member agencies receive the incentives based on growth and profitability.



*"We're not just an agency to our strategic partners,  
we're a powerful form of distribution."*

*– Matt Masiello*



# The Total Solution

Delivering services to member agencies is another key to continued premium growth, says Matt Masiello. “We deliver services to our agencies that help them grow,” he says “It’s a total solution for the independent agent.”

## SIAA MARKETFINDER

A valuable part of this solution is the [SIAA MarketFinder](#), which provides SIAA members the ability to place more difficult Excess & Surplus (E&S) risks with access to a wide array of insurance programs, specialty markets, wholesale and brokerage partnerships. There also are opportunities to build a life and benefits business.

Other SIAA services range from marketing and lead generation support to training and new business development techniques, services which would be out of reach for smaller non-member agencies. SIAA member agencies find them all via a members-only web portal designed just for them.

## MARKETING

SIAA Marketing is established as a separate wholly owned subsidiary to demonstrate a commitment to all member agencies at various stages of development and provide all facets of SIAA-related marketing and communications.

As part of these marketing services, the [SIAA Online Store](#) operates as a storefront where member agencies can go to pick collateral material, buy a prospect list, execute a direct mail campaign and more. The storefront includes complimentary creative services so agencies just have to pick up the printing and postage costs.

[Insurancedeals4u.com](#), a proprietary consumer-facing web portal, finds new business leads for distribution to all member agencies on a zip code basis. Established in 2006 and re-launched in 2009, this portal was the first of its kind in the independent insurance agency system. It enables consumers to request multiple quotes from several insurance companies, using a local agent of their choice. Consumers can obtain quotes on the insurance needed, and

all contacts are relayed to the respective member agency as the result of a zip code location process.

*“We deliver services to our agencies that help them grow.  
It’s a total solution for the independent agent.”*

*– Matt Masiello*



## **EDUCATION**

In its mission to help members increase sales and revenue, SIAA has created and operates a Training & Learning Center (SIAA TLC) with discounted online and self-study courses. Focusing on sales and career growth for new and seasoned independent insurance agents, TLC has more than 1,000 users who also receive Web CE credits. The TLC features:

- QuickSTART program to equip member agents with the training and tools necessary to build a profitable, growth-oriented business while maximizing productivity.
- Multiple training and education providers which offer continuing education credit and state specific courses.
- Growing library of content and resources on many subjects and processes related to the insurance industry and general business ownership.

## **BUSINESS INSURANCE ADVANTAGE**

Business Insurance Advantage gives member agencies the ability to start or grow a profitable book of small commercial lines business. This is aimed at the smaller personal lines member agency that wants to build a book of small commercial lines. It is a straightforward process and methodology featuring education on products and strategic partner capabilities; the step-by-step process helps member agencies start or grow a book of business. It also features access to carrier products and services, sales platforms and the ability to earn direct appointments.

According to Matt Masiello, the ability to write commercial lines is part of SIAA's commitment to the future success of independent agents. "The agency of the future will not offer just auto, home and umbrella," he says. "They will have a balanced book of commercial and personal lines."

## **AGENCY FOUNDATION**

SIAA initiated the Agency Foundation to assist new member agencies that are also start-up agencies establish the foundation of their businesses. The goal is to help these agency owners get up and running sooner than might otherwise be possible.

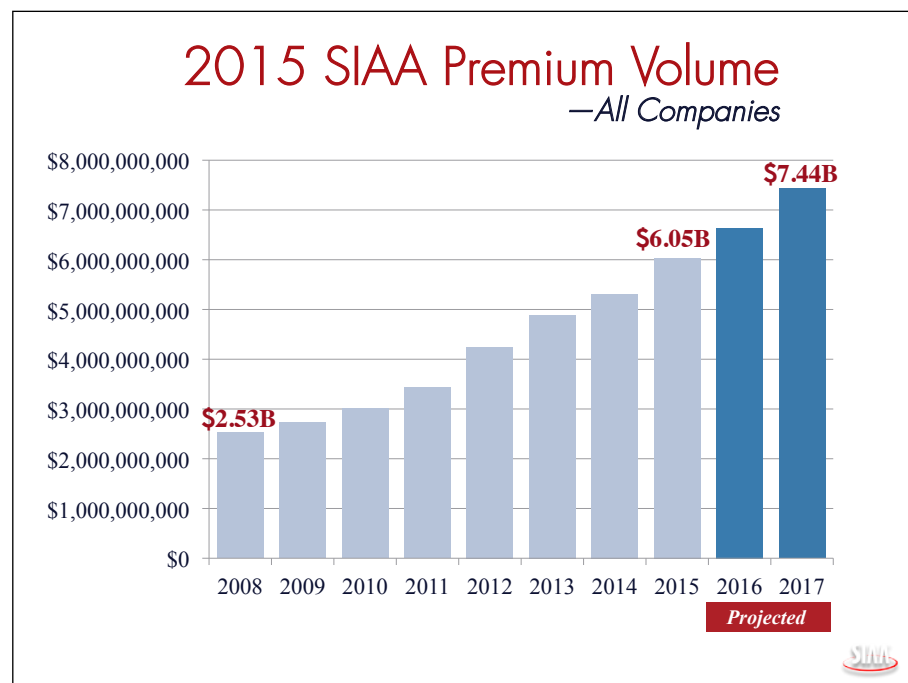
Recognizing that these new agencies will need to be successful business enterprises, not simply writers of insurance, this consultative program includes discounts, checklists, access to third party providers, consulting and helpful hints – all designed to establish a strong agency foundation.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

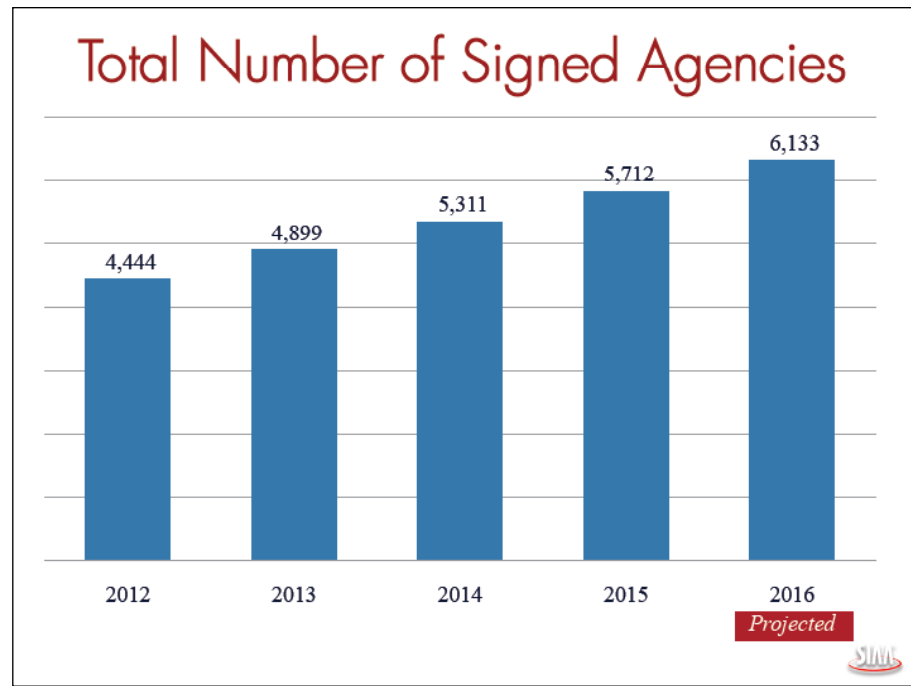
# Future Growth

SIAA’s growth shows no signs of slowing down. In each of the past seven years, an average of 425 new member agencies have signed on and the alliance experienced its largest annual growth in 2013 with 455 new member agencies signing with SIAA’s master agency partners. Average annual premium growth among member agencies is in excess of \$606 million.

In 2016, premium volume is projected to approach \$7 billion. The total member agencies signed since its inception is projected to exceed 6,000.



*In 2016, premium volume is projected to hit \$7 billion. The total member agencies signed since its inception is projected to exceed 6,000.*



At the heart of its success is the same mission to grow that drove Jim Masiello to form the first master agency in 1983. Along the way, SIAA has remained dedicated to the creation, retention, growth and continued success of the independent insurance agency distribution system.

That’s a formula that bodes well not only for SIAA, but also for independent insurance agents and consumers across the country.

**For more information, email us at [info@siaa.net](mailto:info@siaa.net).**



234 Lafayette Road • Hampton, NH 03842

**SIAA.net**