

SPORTS COLLECTORS DIGEST 11/12/99

# Steiner Sports enjoying AmEx program

Steiner Sports Marketing sees a big future in business and sales incentive programs after its first go-round with American Express. In the American Express Membership Rewards program catalog, SSM is on pace to sell 40 times more product than it anticipated. "We were hoping Cardmembers would spend a couple million points in 1999, and in the first half of the year, we did 20 times that," said SSM president David O. Smith. In the program, cardholders accumulate points with purchases and can spend those points on items in the catalog. "We started with them three years ago, and last year they came to us because most of their Cardmembers were using their rewards for airline miles," Smith said. SSM went one step beyond just expanding its presence in the catalog - which features products from such noted companies as The Gap, Banana Republic and Eddie Bauer - and produced its own catalog for AmEx. The SSM-

exclusive catalog does not go to all 3.5 million card holders, but only to a list of 10,000 Cardmembers with the most reward points to spend.

The success of the catalog has resulted in a second edition, revamped and revised with new product including Walter Payton and George Brett. It features about 60 items and mailed out last week. "Our most popular items are things that cost as much or more than airline tickets," Smith said. The first catalog was so successful that SSM ran out of several items, including Wayne Gretzky signed pucks. "In this year's catalog, we tried to pick items that we had a better source of in case we had to replenish," Smith said. "Also, in this year's catalog, we made it clear to the readers that items were in limited quantities." Smith said it's not uncommon for SSM to receive catalog orders for four or five of the same item, indicating they're being used for gifts or

prizes. "They're using it for corporate use," he said. "They're giving them out as client gifts, employee incentives and rewards. We're reaching high-profile, high-income individuals who see autographed sports memorabilia as a new solution."

SSM is also in AmEx's "Exclusively Yours" catalog (circ. 250,000), another incentive-based program that allows businesses to give their employees "Stored Value" points that can be used to buy gifts from the catalog. "This is a solution for incentive programs because it's a perfect fit for a sales staff," Smith said. "Car dealers, for instance, are skewed heavily toward being male and sports fans. How many more clock radios can you give these guys? How many more TVs do they need?"

For more information, visit the Steiner Sports company web site at [www.SteinerSports.com](http://www.SteinerSports.com), or call 1-800-759-7267.