

2018 Ric Sweeney Chapter Volunteer of the Year Nomination Essay

Shahab Zargari, AMA Las Vegas

Mr. Shahab Zargari is a successful entrepreneur and award-winning filmmaker with a passion for art, photography, music and creative advertising. Anyone who has had the pleasure of meeting Shahab has immediately recognized his genuine desire to help those around him and his love for creation and collaboration. He has brought his unique concepts and exceptional leadership to AMA Las Vegas for almost four years and is directly responsible for many significant contributions to the chapter. Shahab is the embodiment of service, knowledge and community.

Joining AMA Las Vegas in 2014, Shahab supported the board as a sponsor while managing his own creative services company, Higher Ground. When the chapter's website was hacked, Shahab jumped in to save the day, working morning and night to reprogram our entire site, moving it to a more secure host and essentially taking over as the webmaster. He has continued to demonstrate this level of consistent support year after year as a member, a volunteer, and as director of digital.

In 2016, Shahab was asked to serve in a leadership capacity when he was tapped to be a part of a three-year succession plan as the ensuing president-elect. Since making this long-term commitment to AMA Las Vegas, he has played a considerable role in the strategic guidance of the chapter.

Shahab earned Board Member of the Year for the 2016-2017 term for his dedication to the membership and his constant expression of the AMA philosophy. His infectious positive energy promotes teamwork and camaraderie between colleagues. Shahab has also been the proud recipient of several Davey Awards and several Las Vegas Digital Media Awards for video editing and direction, ad design and web design. Most notably, a film directed by Shahab, *The Crystal Crypt*, was chosen as the Official Selection of the 2016 Comic-Con International Independent Film Festival and Best Sci-Fi Film in the Independent Filmmaker's Showcase 2014. He is a gifted but humble creator of content and he shares his experiences and expertise with our band of creatives.

This year as president-elect, Shahab initiated and produced *Marketing Schmarketing*, the official podcast of the AMA Las Vegas, discussing current events to help you become a better marketer. This was a huge turning point for the chapter, harnessing the underlying innovation within our

board and driving it to the surface where it could be appreciated by others. This is what Shahab does. He finds the hidden gem within and shines a light on it. The podcast currently has 10 episodes available on Soundcloud and iTunes, ranging in topics from marketing tech and consumer experience to an episode examining the Las Vegas community's reaction to the tragic events of 1 October. He didn't mention it in the podcast but Shahab held a fundraiser in conjunction with a local coffee shop where local artists performed to raise money for the Las Vegas Victims Fund.

Shahab is also a motivating and illuminating speaker. He recently presented a lunch and learn session on creating your own photo and video content with a fellow board member. It was one of our best-attended January luncheons on record and the chapter received tons of feedback that the information was extremely useful, very relevant and easy to execute. Shahab has been asked to share his knowledge through various speaking engagements addressing several topics including How to Conquer Fear of Risk, How to Channel Your Inner Grit in Order to Take Bolder Risks and How to Become a Professional Geek. Shahab has also appeared as a panelist for LVIMA's Mad Men and Women of the 21st Century and will be a part of a lecture series this spring at UNLV with his take on The Importance of Storytelling in a Digital World.

Shahab is a compelling example of someone who continuously makes valuable contributions to the broader marketing community. In addition to AMALV, Shahab is very active in other organizations including Creative Mornings and Las Vegas Innovation Marketing Association.

In his spare time (how could he possibly have any spare time), Shahab is a volunteer and relentless advocate of the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth, whose programs stabilize the lives of homeless teens, providing a safe, supportive environment and a path to self-sufficiency.

Shahab is a native of Los Angeles, California who graduated in 2000 from the University of California at Irvine with a degree in sociology, and a minor in education. He moved to Las Vegas with his wife, Heela, in 2008. He is a father to two vivacious daughters, Mahtab (13) and Arezu (10) and is also the co-owner of GC Records, an indie record label he started with his family and friends in 1998.

Currently, Shahab is the communications coordinator for the UNLV College of Fine Arts & Performing Arts Center. His job responsibilities include communications and social media

management for the departments of art, dance, film, theatre, the School of Architecture, the School of Music, and the Performing Arts Center. He serves on the strategic planning committee and the external relations subcommittee for the UNLV College of Fine Arts.

It is with great pleasure that we formally nominate Mr. Shahab Zargari for the distinctive Ric Sweeney Chapter Volunteer of the Year Award. Shahab is a leader among his colleagues, an innovator in the marketing industry and an influencer in the community. We are proud to know him and honored to work side-by-side with him serving the AMA Las Vegas chapter. He would be an incredible addition to the long list of exceptional professionals who have held this honor.

To learn a little more about Shahab, please view his mini-documentary at <https://vimeo.com/209867576>.

