A Message From

P ★ O ★ S ★ D ★ A

PRESIDENT OF SDA SAN ANTONIO



New Membership & Retention Go Hand in Hand

by Belinda Sanchez

Like so many, the ripple effects of the 2020 Pandemic had a definite impact on our membership. As firms grappled with the uncertainty of future work and explored the new dynamics of office administrative needs, our chapter lost a small number of members to the unemployment line or budget cuts. Members offered support in the form of sharing job openings and encouraging words, but nevertheless the loss was felt.

While no one could have predicted what happened in 2020, I found myself wondering what we could do as a chapter to recoup membership, while at the same time focusing on retention. As I moved into my Presidency this year, I determined that both of these aspects of our chapter would be my primary focus.

As Communications and Events Director of AIA San Antonio, I've said it many times to our members, both current and potential. Becoming a member is the first step, but participation is the key to accomplishing the true benefits of that membership. I say that whole-heartedly with my SDA hat on now. Without participation, how will SDA's professional development and networking opportunities benefit you? How do you get your money's worth? How will you develop your network? Participation is the answer.

With that in consideration, I developed a membership outreach program that challenges our current members to some friendly competition. A point system that allows members to earn points by bringing guests to monthly SDA Events, while at the same time earning points for their own participation. Additionally, they will earn double points for participation in official Membership Outreach Events – and even more points if their guests become members. We recently hosted a Virtual Lunchtime Speed Bingo – sixteen folks participated, three of which were guests! Potential New Members.

This approach to new membership acquisition, cleverly addresses some of the issues of retention, by motivating current membership's participation in the competition by simply engaging. A chart tracking progress is shared with members periodically to encourage continued participation and a gift card prize will be given to the winner at our end of year holiday celebration.

We also realized that not all member losses were due to non-participation, but rather new budgetary restrictions set by firms during the pandemic. In fact, our chapter lost a couple of really active members for this very reason and it was a tough blow. Unfortunately, our chapter did not have a program in place to address possible financial assistance needs. In 2021, I requested our budget committee implement a new budget item to enable us to offer financial assistance should the need occur again.

As an organization, it would be a mistake to focus too much effort on new membership acquisition without continued efforts to enrich the experience of your existing membership. It's not inward vs. outward, it's both.

AIA San Antonio

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

2021 LINEUP

- SCHOLARSHIP GOLF CLASSIC
  MONDAY, MAY 3
- BEAUX ARTS BALL
  WEDNESDAY, MAY 26
- 12TH ANNUAL CLAYS & Q
  FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24
- PEOPLE + PLACE AWARDS
  TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9

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