2011 IDSA Membership Survey

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Executive Summary

The request to answer the survey was e-mailed to all members. We received 202 responses which was up from 151 last year. For more details, see the section “Demographics of the survey.” 202 is a representative sample for our membership.

Last year only 31.8% of the members where satisfied or very satisfied with the society’s performance. This year it was 29.3%. The result is still unacceptable and we recognize that we still have a lot of work to do and did not manage to make the improvement that we hoped to in 2011!

What do we need to change? The 2011 Membership Survey gives very clear pointers and I would personally like to thank everyone for your participation in the survey and even more so for your loyal support of IDSA. The Societies operations are stable and 2012 will be a year of many more changes that will result in a better more open and inspiring society.

The direction the members would like IDSA to go in are clear and have been consistent in the survey results of the past three years, what we need now is a year of stability to start to execute on the requests of the members and we are looking at a plan that should allow us to make progress on that in 2012. The top 3 activities members want us to take action on are “to promote the value of design to business”, online learning and conferences. “Promote design” grew again in importance to the number one position at 61.9% and on-line learning remained an important request from the membership at number 2 with 52.5% The top 4 issues members would like their society to focus on going forward are all related to ways that IDSA can help to develop business opportunities for designers and help them to raise the value that they offer to business and society. (For further detail, see the section “How Should IDSA Lead the Design Industry in Creating Relevance for Design”.) This outcome is in line with the 2009/2010 results.

Finally, over half the members who responded would like to see IDSA focus on promoting Designers as integrative thinkers as opposed to producers of artifacts or products. In addition, they would like us to promote the value of Design to business and society.

In short, members want IDSA to help grow opportunities for Design and Designers! These results have not changed much since the 2009 survey.
What do you think of IDSA today?

When asked which statements applied to IDSA, the scores that were returned showed low correlations to IDSA.

48.8%(48.4%) feel that IDSA **keeps them aware of the issues** influencing them. (We keep members informed through the website, *Innovation* magazine, *Design Perspectives*, 28 local chapters, a weekly e-mail, *designBytes and the monthly studentBytes and the member e-Newsletter*)

41.7%(40.7%) believe that IDSA is **playing a leadership role** in world design.

37%(41.1%) feel that IDSA is a **leader in building bridges** between Design and Business. IDSA does this through its website serving over 1.5 million visits a year, by running the IDEA Awards, 5 District and 1 International Conference every year.

36.4%(43.1%) feel that IDSA is **one of the best places** to stay in touch with the most interesting new thinking in design.

30.4%(40.6%) feel IDSA represents **their point of view** on most positions and activities.

The strongest reasons Designers join IDSA are for Community and to raise their Awareness amongst the profession. Not surprisingly with the improvements in the website, this reason has become a lot more prominent as it now represents a distinct member benefit. The secondary reasons are for Information, Networking, Understanding and Respect.

Note: percentages in brackets represent 2010 results.
What IDSA benefits do members appreciate today?

49% (62.3%) of the members found *Innovation* magazine most beneficial to them. Next came the *Annual International Conference* with 38.1% (38.4%), *District Conferences* at 36.6% (33.1%), *Local Chapters and events* at 35.1% (45%), the *IDSA Website* at 34.7% (29.3%) and *designBytes*, with a 33.2% (40.4%). The website improved in ranking from 9th to 5th place confirming the improvements in content creation and information architecture that has been going on through 2010.

IDSA’s on-line activities have made substantial progress through 2010 with the new website working much more effectively as a marketing and communication device. Traffic on the site is up again for 2010. Our Twitter and LinkedIn groups are now over 10,000 members each and the Facebook group is growing again. IDSA is finally catching up in the Social Media, but again we recognize that we are still very much in catch up mode but gradually closing in on the traditional digital media sites with our digital presence. We are now of comparable size to other news and forum sites. This work is on-going and will remain so. Every week we make improvements on a continuous basis, so it is often hard to see the changes happening, but the traffic numbers are confirming the improvements are effective.

The Future: What do members want us to do?

61.9% (57%) of members would like IDSA to promote the value of Design to business and society;
52.5% (57.6%) would like IDSA to provide online learning;
51% (42.4%) would like IDSA to continue to host conferences.
50.5% (49%) would like IDSA to be active in US and international design policy;
44.1%(47%) would like us to advance designers as integrative thinkers to business and society and

Note: percentages in brackets represent the 2010 results.
The Future: How should IDSA lead the Design Industry in creating relevance for Design?

Members still want IDSA to focus on issues that deal with the designers’ role and involvement in business and society and are least interested in IDSA focusing on artifacts or products which can be easily found on the internet.

The top 5 things that members and nonmembers would like IDSA to do to develop the relevance of design are:

1. Focus on issues that deal with the designers’ role in business and society 58.9%(59.6%).
2. Build a stronger demand for design services in the future 53% (45.7%).
3. Focus on business objectives for design 52% (49.7%).
4. Focus on examples that make the case for design thinking when promoting design’s value to business 51% (55%).
5. Focus on developing creativity and inspiration as criteria for design excellence 42.1 (42.1%)
Demographics of the survey

202 people participated in the survey. One of the largest ever held. 79.1% (94.5%) were members.

21.4% (11%) of the participants were junior level designers with 1-4 years experience, 33.6% (21.4%) being made up of mid career designers with 5-20 years experience and the remaining 39.3% (42.1%) were senior level participants with over 20 years experience. The mid career designers were fairly evenly divided at 10.7% (17.2%) between 5-9 years experience, 10.7% (13.8%) with 10-14 years experience and 12.2% (15.9%) with 15-19 years experience. 5.6% have less than one years experience, indicating the rise in our student membership in 2010.

The majority of the respondents describe themselves as either an Industrial or Product Designer. 41.8% (43.4%) of the respondents regard themselves as Industrial Designers, and 24.5% (20.7%) as Product Designers. 33.7% (35.9%) of our membership do not consider themselves as Industrial or Product Designers. On the front end of design there were 4.6% (10.3%) in Design Management, 4.1% (4.1%) in Design Strategy and 3.1% in Design Research. The rest of the respondents (the remaining 13.6% of participants) were made up of people in 19 more practice areas showing how diverse the professional practice area has become.

Of the respondents, 21% (13.8%) were under 30, 39.1% (39.3%) under 40, 69.3% (70.3%) under 50 and 85.6% (86.2%) under 60.

And finally who are these people in their professional life? 24% (24.8%) are owners, partners or principals in Design Consultancies, 10.7% (11.7%) are Designers, 15.3% (20%) are Senior Designers, 10.2% (3.4%) are Students, 15.8% (17.9%) are Design Directors, 6.6% (10.3%) are educators and 3.1% (2.8%) are Freelance Designers. A good spread across the profession.
For a PDF of the full results of the survey please e-mail execdir@idsa.org