

**2026 OHIO KENTUCKY CHAPTER
AWARD SUBMISSION**

**better
for
business
book**

OUR VISION

Our Chapter recognized a **recurring challenge** within our design community: designers often understood the value of professional engagement, but many struggled to clearly articulate that value to firm leadership. While IIDA offers meaningful opportunities for leadership, professional development, and industry connection, members lacked a concise tool to demonstrate the **return on investment of membership** in a way that resonated with employers.

Through conversations with members and firm leaders, we heard consistent feedback that designers needed a resource they could confidently bring to their employers, one that communicated the **professional and business value of IIDA beyond social networking**. Many members expressed that they wanted stronger language and clearer examples to support discussions around **membership reimbursement, professional development, and employer support for engagement**.

The Chapter envisioned a resource that would bridge this gap, a tool that translated the value of IIDA membership into terms that mattered to firms: **talent development, industry visibility, professional leadership, and business growth**.



- Amy Harmon,
2 year member



The IIDA Better for Business Book was a great resource I used when presenting to my company's leadership to ask for the company to fund my IIDA membership. It was very important that **I advocate for myself, using tools like the IIDA Better for Business Book, explaining how my IIDA membership would benefit the company and myself as a professional representing the company.**

The leadership team reviewed the document that supported my reasons for why the IIDA membership would be a great way to support me. I can see how companies would like to know how funding a designer's IIDA membership benefits the company and how it is a positive cause to support. **Any resources or tools like the IIDA Better for Business Book are very helpful.**



VALUE COMMUNICATED CLEARLY

The **Better for Business book** was designed to empower members to advocate for themselves and their profession while helping firms understand how supporting employee involvement in **IIDA benefits both the individual designer and the organization as a whole**. By clearly connecting membership to professional growth, industry relationships, and leadership development, the booklet reframes **IIDA engagement as a strategic investment** rather than simply a networking opportunity.

AREAS OF VALUE COMMUNICATED IN BETTER FOR BUSINESS BOOK

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH + LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Highlights opportunities for members to build leadership skills, serve on committees, and develop professionally through volunteer involvement.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT + INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS

Demonstrates how IIDA facilitates meaningful relationships between designers, firms, manufacturers, and industry partners—often leading to new collaborations and project opportunities.

ADVOCACY FOR THE PROFESSION

Communicates the role IIDA plays in advocating for the profession, elevating the value of interior designers, and supporting efforts that strengthen the industry's future.

EDUCATION + KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Showcases access to continuing education, industry insights, and programming that keeps members informed about emerging trends, technology, and best practices.



SCAN FOR A DIGITAL COPY



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT + FUTURE TALENT PIPELINE

Illustrates how the chapter connects students with professionals through mentorship, events, and resources that help prepare the next generation of designers.

COMMUNITY + BELONGING

Emphasizes the power of professional community—creating a network of peers who support one another, share experiences, and celebrate the profession.

FIRM-LEVEL VALUE

Provides a resource firms can use internally to understand how supporting employee membership contributes to staff development, retention, and industry engagement.

PLANNING & GOALS

OUR DISTRIBUTION PLAN



OUR CHAPTER GOALS

2024 MEMBERSHIP GOAL

Execute a firm connection + strategic outreach plan.

2025 MEMBERSHIP GOAL

Visit 1 firm per City Center with Better for Business book to discuss the value of an IIDA membership.

5-YEAR MEMBERSHIP GOAL

Connect with **ALL FIRMS** in Ohio and Kentucky that employ **4+ interior designers and all Campus Centers** through distribution of the Better for Business book.



Scan to see our full distribution plan!

While we are early in our 5-year plan to connect with all larger sized firms and campus centers in our Chapter, we are excited to see the **immediate positive impact** through personal testimonies from members who have utilized the Better for Business book.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

We returned to a more personal approach: *face-to-face, eye-to-eye conversations with firm leaders*. We invited leaders to meet with us, walked them through the Better for Business resource, and in doing so **strengthened relationships** across our professional community.

We also engage **students**, helping them learn how to *speak with future employers* about the importance of professional involvement and how it supports both career development and firm success.

These conversations created meaningful connections between emerging professionals and industry leaders.

This tool is now available at all OHKY programming as a **physical asset** as well as a **digital resource** on our website, allowing members and event attendees to review and utilize at their convenience.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

- Senior Leaders
- Business Owners
- Principals
- Students
- Non-members
- Former Members

Sip & Connect Events



Tangible Leave-Behinds



Get Connected Events



Firm Lunch and Learns



BEYOND THE BOOK

For potential members who may need additional assistance with getting the Better for Business book into the hands of their managers, supervisors, professors, or parents, we have created additional tools to better communicate the *why* behind the ask. These tools are available on our website for download next to the digital Better for Business book.

STUDENT INSERT

Value of an IIDA Student Membership

IIDA Student Members have access to exceptional resources for education and professional development. Membership is designed to give a unique opportunity to be involved in leadership roles and build professional connections before graduation, joining IIDA while in college complements academic learning, preparing students for a successful and fulfilling career in Interior Design.

GRADUATING STUDENTS SAVE 50%

Take your membership to the next phase of your career. Save 50% when you upgrade from a student membership to an associate membership.

benefits

- Networking Opportunities
- Skill Development
- Access to Resources
- Career Development
- Exposure to Current Trends
- Leadership Opportunities
- Building a Sense of Community
- Access to Mentors
- Scholarships & Awards
- Personal Growth

programs

- Nation-wide Student Mentoring
- QUAD: Student Newsletter
- Student Competitions & Awards:**
 - MEMBER OF THE YEAR
 - CAMPUS CENTER RECOGNITION
 - PROJECT AWARDS
- IIDA Foundation Scholarships
- OHKY Biennial Student Retreat
- Students from Ohio & Kentucky gather for a few days of inspiration, development, networking and education.
- Student-focused programming:**
 - PORTFOLIO REVIEWS
 - MOCK INTERVIEWS
 - HEADSHOTS
 - FIRM TOURS
 - CONSTRUCTION TOURS
 - MANUFACTURER TOURS
 - PROFESSIONAL EXAMS INFO SESSION

Join today!

IIDA

IIDA | INTERNATIONAL INTERIOR DESIGN ASSOCIATION
www.iidaohky.org

Front

value of an IIDA campus center

An IIDA Campus Center creates an environment where design students, educators, and professionals mutually develop and exchange knowledge. Plan and execute events, participate in design competitions and volunteer in leadership roles.

← SCAN TO VIEW THE CAMPUS CENTER HANDBOOK

My time as a student member in IIDA and serving as a Campus Co-Leader at Ohio State was critical to my educational and professional growth. It provided me with opportunities to learn from design professionals both locally and nationally through mentorship programs, student-focused conferences, and virtual learning opportunities. It also allowed me to be a voice for fellow design students on multiple platforms. In addition to all of this, I was able to make meaningful and lasting connections with both students and professionals across the organization, which has been a huge asset throughout my design career.

— TYLER HATTON,
DESIGN SPECIALIST, WSA

Back

KEY FEATURES

- Highlighting HQ and Chapter benefits
- Showcasing **programming** specifically for students
- Student to professional **member savings**
- Testimonial from a student member turned chapter leader
- Campus Center explanation & value

PROFESSIONAL LETTERS

Dear [Hiring Manager's Name],

Thank you for extending the job offer to join [Company Name] as [Position]. I am thrilled about the opportunity and eager to contribute to the success of your organization.

I wanted to discuss a small detail regarding my employment agreement. As someone dedicated to professional growth, I believe that maintaining an active membership with the International Interior Design Association (IIDA) would greatly benefit my career development and enhance my effectiveness in the role.

Considering the advantages of being a member, I kindly request that [Company Name] covers the cost of my membership. This investment would provide me with additional resources, networking opportunities, and ongoing professional development, all of which can contribute to my effectiveness within the company.

I am confident that this investment aligns with the company's interests because:

- **Enhanced Expertise:** Membership in IIDA would provide access to industry insights and knowledge that can be directly applied to my work at [Company Name], resulting in professional growth and valuable perspectives for the team.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Through IIDA, I would be able to connect with industry professionals and thought leaders, fostering relationships that can contribute to the growth and reputation of [Company Name].
- **Industry Recognition:** Affiliation with a reputable and recognized body like IIDA would showcase the company's commitment to excellence in interior design, enhancing its profile and reputation.

I understand budget considerations and assure you that this request is well-justified. If needed, I am available to provide additional information or discuss this further.

Once again, I am excited about the opportunity to join [Company Name]. Investing in my professional development through a membership with IIDA will benefit both myself and the company in the long run.

Thank you for your understanding and consideration. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this matter and discussing the next steps in the hiring process.

Warm regards,

To Hiring Manager

Dear [Supervisor's Name],

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to request your support and approval for my membership with the International Interior Design Association (IIDA), specifically the Ohio Kentucky chapter. Joining this professional organization will bring significant benefits to my professional growth and our company as a whole.

Membership with IIDA offers many valuable advantages, including (but not limited to):

- **Test Reimbursement:** Financial assistance for professional certification exams, enhancing my skills and credentials.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Access to industry professionals, potential clients, and suppliers through events and conferences.
- **Continuing Education Units (CEUs):** Access to seminars, webinars, and courses for continuous learning.
- **Design Excellence Events:** Participation in prestigious design competitions and recognition programs.
- **Grant Opportunities:** Access to grants and scholarships for research, project development, and education.

Membership dues are due on January 1st and prorated for any time after January. The investment required aligns with our company's commitment to professional growth.

I kindly request your support in approving the payment for my IIDA membership. This investment will directly translate into enhanced skills, expanded networks, and increased opportunities for our team.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I am available to discuss this further and explore alternate options. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Scan to check out IIDA's compensation calculator!

To Current Supervisor

KEY FEATURES

- Providing **professional language** for requesting IIDA membership
- Specifically outlining direct professional development impact
- Acknowledging cost implications and showing **company ROI**

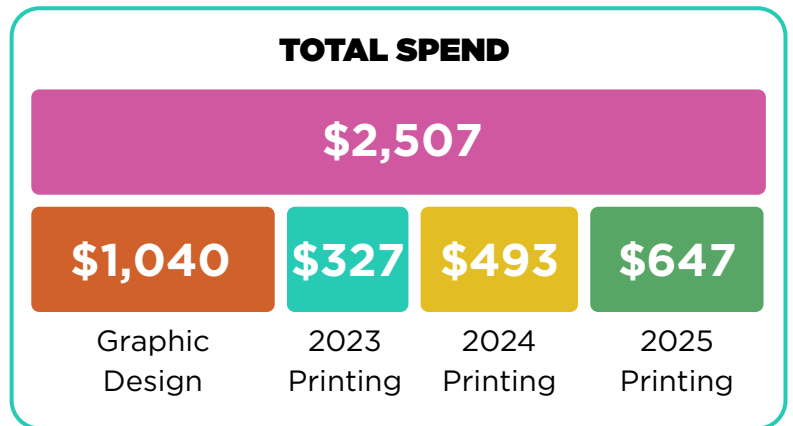
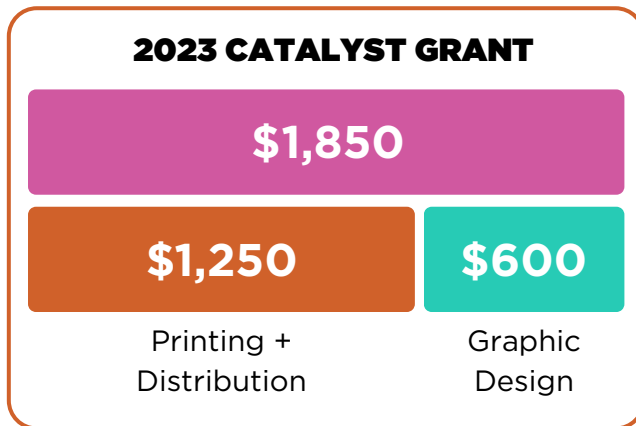
FINANCIAL PRIORITIES AND GROWTH

BY THE NUMBERS

300 Total B4B books printed since their creation in 2023

718 IIDA OHKY members as of 2/28/2026

5% Membership increase 12/15/2022-2/28/2026



Membership team members are allocated **\$200 per city center** for direct Better for Business conversations with firms, inspired by the Sol Harris/Day success story below. Additionally, are currently **expanding** the initiative into an *IDCEC* **CEU course** that can be delivered both in person and virtually to increase its reach.

The Better for Business book is a tool that equips designers with the **confidence and language to have meaningful conversations** with firm leadership, strengthening both individual careers and the profession at large. Ultimately, our goal is to **share this resource nationally**; creating a unified voice that clearly communicates the **value and impact of IIDA** across the industry.



The Better for Business book opened the door to a *pivotal conversation* with Sol Harris/Day at a *critical* moment. Their design team was **actively questioning the value** of their long-standing IIDA memberships and leaning toward non-renewal. Using the Better for Business *resource as a framework*, we were able to clearly articulate the depth of programming, advocacy, and professional development offered by both our Chapter and IIDA nationally, benefits many on the team had not *fully realized*.

More importantly, the conversation **created space** for candid dialogue. By listening intentionally and responding thoughtfully, we demonstrated that their feedback mattered and that **IIDA is a collaborative partner in their firm's success**.

The result was **transformative**: 100% membership renewal and the emergence of new leadership with one interior designer stepping forward to serve as a **Vice President** on our Chapter Board. What began as a retention concern became a strengthened partnership and **deeper engagement with IIDA**.



- Bethany Williams,
16 year member

