

RISE & REFINE

IIDA | TENNESSEE
chapter



Why Now?

Great events start with listening. Last year, IIDA Tennessee conducted a membership survey to better understand the evolving needs of our design community. The results were clear—while social events remained valuable, our members were looking for something more. There was a strong demand for professional development content, particularly from mid and upper-level designers who felt a lack of resources to support their career growth.

This feedback was a turning point. It revealed a critical gap in our programming and an opportunity to better serve our members in a meaningful way. *Rise and Refine* was born from this insight, created to provide the tools, knowledge, and connections that our members were actively seeking.

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**WE WANT
TO HEAR
FROM
YOU.**

membership survey coming soon.

**MESSAGE US, IF YOU'RE NOT ON
OUR EMAIL LIST!**



2024

The Mission

The mission of *Rise and Refine* was to provide a tangible, career-enhancing benefit to IIDA Tennessee members—one that extended beyond social events and filled a critical gap in professional development. Many designers gain technical expertise at work but lack structured training in leadership, management, and soft skills—especially mid-to-senior designers stepping into leadership roles without formal guidance. As an advocacy-driven chapter, we aimed to show firm leadership that IIDA membership is an investment in their employees' success. Since firms often sponsor memberships, we wanted to demonstrate clear professional value beyond networking and social gatherings. For our inaugural year, we focused on designers with **8-15 years of experience**, who often lead teams without formal leadership training. To ensure relevance, we began with a **private leadership dinner**, where select designers discussed real workplace challenges. These insights were then shared in a **roundtable format** the next day, fostering broader conversations. The summit's sessions prioritized **soft skills, leadership development, and conflict management**, equipping members with practical tools to advance their careers. *Rise and Refine* wasn't just an event—it was a strategic investment in our members' professional growth.

**GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!!

RISE &
REFINE



IIDA
JANUARY 23-24

NSH
TN



The Kick Off

NIGHT ONE | THURSDAY, JAN.23.2025

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LOCAL PROJECT TOUR @ The Drift Hotel | 75 Tickets Sold

As part of *Rise and Refine*, attendees toured the Drift Hotel with the project team from Dryden Studio, exploring its transformation from a neglected hotel into a vibrant design destination. The adaptive reuse project features a reimagined lobby and bar, a restored pool courtyard, and thoughtfully designed guest rooms. The tour also showcased local fiber artist Sick Dye, who created custom wall hangings for the space, sharing insights into her creative process. The experience wrapped up with a happy hour at The Sunroom, fostering connections in a beautifully curated setting.

THE LEADERSHIP DINNER @ AI Corporate Interiors | 14 Attendees

A private Leadership Dinner gathered senior designers for candid discussions on team management, career growth, and leadership challenges. We intentionally selected leaders from various firm sizes, design sectors, and experience levels to ensure a well-rounded conversation. Key takeaways from the dinner shaped the next day's roundtable session, ensuring real-world leadership challenges were addressed with the broader design community.





Resilient Leadership: Thrive Through Change

Brittany Cole, CEO of Career Thrivers, delivered a powerful keynote on resilient leadership, equipping mid-career designers with strategies to navigate industry shifts and build confidence in leadership roles. As the spouse of a Nashville architect and entrepreneur, Brittany brought a unique perspective on leadership in the design industry, blending business acumen, career development, and industry insight.

Her talk, *"R.E.A.L. Resilient Leadership: Thriving Through Change,"* encouraged attendees to reflect on their leadership approach, align values with professional goals, and embrace authenticity and adaptability. Attendees also received signed copies of her book, *Thrive Through It*, reinforcing the session's key takeaways and providing lasting inspiration beyond the event.

The Keynote

87 Attendees

DAY TWO | FRIDAY, JAN.24.2025



The Sessions

87 Attendees

DAY TWO | FRIDAY, JAN.24.2025

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Soft Skills for Career Growth +1 CEU

Presented by Traci Ginn, FSA Lighting

Leadership is Lonely- But it Doesn't Have to Be +1 CEU

A Conversation with Ali Oxley and Molly Prior, OFS

Can We Talk? Navigating Difficult Conversations +1 CEU

Presented by Allyn Martin, Shaw Industries

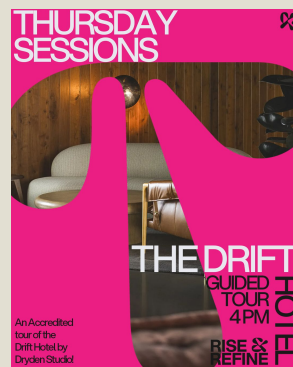
Leadership Roundtable: A Panel

A conversation with Brandon Howell, Lauren Moore, Celeste Mize, and Michelle Merrick

Structured Breaks

Tennessee Advocacy Updates shared by Claudia Lofton, IIDA TN President
Burnout Prevention Techniques shared by Abbey Finnegan, Daltile





We created a bold, custom brand identity to distinguish it as a career-focused event. Morgan Wistead of HASTINGS Architecture designed a striking visual identity that set the tone for professional growth. Our multi-channel marketing strategy ensured broad reach through flyers, posters, social media, email campaigns, and newsletters. Board members and volunteers actively promoted the event, engaging mid-to-senior designers who don't typically attend IIDA events. This distinct branding and outreach positioned *Rise and Refine* as a must-attend professional development opportunity.

Measuring Success

Success for *Rise and Refine* was measured through attendance, engagement, and industry impact. We tracked registration numbers, firm representation, and member vs. non-member participation to assess reach. Networking participation and sponsorship support helped gauge engagement and financial sustainability

Team & Timeline

Our 8-member committee brought together a unique mix of personalities, blending strategic leadership, event planning expertise, and a shared passion for professional development. Board members worked alongside volunteers to ensure good distribution of responsibilities. Originally planned for October 2024, we extended the timeline to allow for greater impact, giving us the time needed to refine content, secure top-tier speakers, and strengthen outreach.

Partnerships

We designed sponsorship opportunities to be accessible at various price points, ensuring a range of industry partners could participate. Based on past feedback, we knew sponsors were especially eager to support educational events that provide value beyond social events. The enthusiastic response to *Rise and Refine* confirmed this—many sponsors have already expressed interest in expanding their involvement for next year's event.



Process | *Planning & Partnerships*

SAVE THE
DATE
NASHVILLE

DATE
TENNESSEE



RISE &
REFINE

WIDA
JANUARY 23-24



Partnership Offerings

Prioritizing Accessibility

\$100

Swag Bag Item

\$250

Registration Table

\$500

Parking Validations

\$750

Espresso Cart

\$1000

Lunch Sponsor

\$2500

Keynote Speaker

\$24,650 Preliminary Budget
-\$28,686 Event Cost

+ \$10,150 Sponsorships

+ \$7,500 Catalyst Grant

+ \$8,069 Ticket Sales

-\$2,967 Final Cost to Chapter





Rise & Refine was the event I've been wanting and needing. We are always learning about new products and best design practices, but rarely do we have opportunities that focus on personal growth. Rise & Refine made me realize I've been too comfortable in some areas. Our phenomenal speakers challenged and inspired me to become a more polished, more confident, healthier person, which I believe will also help me become a better professional.

–Isaac Holman, IIDA, NCIDQ

The Response:

“ Participating in Rise and Refine was one of our favorite engagements of the year. The event created a comfortable and dynamic atmosphere to engage with designers, less as clientele, and more as collaborative partners we are able to invest in.”

–Katie Hawk, Industry IIDA

“ As a student, I am always looking for opportunities to learn from and network with experienced professionals within the design world. The Rise and Refine event put on by the IIDA TN chapter was a valuable opportunity for both! It was wonderful getting to hear from several amazing speakers in just one day.”

–Emma Bauer, Student IIDA



Reflecting on the success of *Rise and Refine*, we are excited to build on this momentum with a larger committee and an even more impactful experience next year. The event's structure—blending project tours, leadership discussions, keynote sessions, and skill-building panels—proved to be a valuable resource for our members. One key takeaway from attendee feedback was how much the venue's inspiring design contributed to the overall experience, reinforcing the importance of thoughtful event curation.

Looking ahead, we plan to maintain the core programming while expanding access to CEUs, ensuring even more professional development opportunities for our members. With growing sponsor interest and strong engagement from mid-to-senior-level designers, *Rise and Refine* is positioned to become a signature annual event that continues to evolve with the needs of our industry.

Looking Forward

