

Membership Satisfaction and Idea Generation Survey Results 2023 (reformatted to fit on six pages instead of 12!)

Overview

As of September 2023, the Topeka Art Guild and Gallery has 105 members of which 79 are active, 19 are pending renewal and 18 of those are overdue. A membership survey was designed by the Board and delivered via email to the membership on 9/7/2023 and 9/20/2023. It went out twice and ultimately resulted in a 25% return rate if we count all 105 members. This is an excellent return rate.

Age

Of those responding:

80% or 20 of the 26 are 65 and up

12% or 3 are 51-65

4% or 1 is 35-50

4% or 1 is under 25

Time Preference for Holding Events

Membership

54% or 14 Have been members over 6 years.

12% or 3 have been member 4-6 years.

19% or 5 have been members 1-3 years.

15% have been members less than 1 year.

Time Preference for Holding Events

35% or 9 can attend anytime.

27% or 7 are ok to drive at night but prefer days.

19% 5 preferred days.

15% or 4 did not answer.

Days were preferred by 46% of those responding.

People joined the Art Guild and Gallery to:

69% to sell art

46% meet like-minded people

58% to take classes

46% to learn new skills

4% to learn marketing and sales skills.

What members get from the Art Guild is:

81% or 21 Camaraderie. 58% or 15 Art sales.

42% or 11 New skills.

4% or 1 New marketing skills.

When asked: What did you hope to get from your Guild membership that hasn't worked out?

Please be specific. These are the responses typed as written:

- Not really any sales. That isn't a big problem, as that isn't why I do art. But it does make me reluctant to volunteer because it seems people rarely visit the gallery.
- Appreciation of art that is not 100% photo realistic?!?! (But that mostly comes from the "Thursday group....")
- Meeting young artists with strong artistic intent and eagerness to be a part of this Guild.
- I enjoy the classes. Even one not directly in my art area

- I wanted to be part of a healthy, successful organization sponsoring a lot of emerging artists and being a guild to new student artists as well as current ones. We haven't been trusted in that way. The scholars and artists we sponsor as high school students don't really stay with us. Timing is the problem. They are off to college and then they start careers, and we are left behind. We have given to them but nothing comes back in return.
- I hoped to raise funds for scholarships.
- More organized group
- More sales....got to be great though.
- Less stress! We are not very organized. .
- Comradery - ha. If you don't know anyone, you won't. Friendly to each other, but, don't reach out to include others.
- Maybe better marketing. More exposure. Overall I've been pleased with the friends I've made.
- This is a little off topic but seems obvious to me: we need to be more circumspect about discussing the Guild's problems in the gallery when it's open and during classes. That doesn't encourage visitors to join/get involved.
- Since I live on the Missouri side I'm not able to be at most events except holidays and during the summer.

When asked: "Are you an artist or a supporting member?" they responded:

100% as artists

15% or 4 as supporting members.

When asked what they were proud of the Guild and Gallery for, they responded: (typed as written)

73% or 19 That we showcase a different artist monthly as Artist of the Month?

69% or 18 That we encourage young artists by showcasing a different high school monthly during the school year?

65% or 17 That we offer scholarships to high school students annually?

54% or 14 That we have two juried shows with prize money semi-annually?

54% or 14 That we have some very accomplished artists as members?

35% or 9 That we showcase unique music to accompany the art on First Fridays?

Other comments were:

High standards for art displayed in the gallery.

Great friendship and comradery.

The floor plan – the hanging team (outstanding) – the open studio afternoons

The children's art with LuAnn Lowhan

When asked: "If you could wave a magic wand and change one thing about the Guild, what would you change? Be specific." they answered: (typed as written):

- More people visiting the gallery. It is a good space, but there is so little going on in the Fairlawn Mall that attracts people. It is a nice, large space, and I suppose the rent is not high, so there are advantages.

- That the guild would be self-supporting!

- Increased walk-in traffic, and more advertising. Perhaps more parking.

- That we made money every month instead of continuing to delve into our investments in order to operate.

- Traffic, Location, Recognition, Exposure. More gallery less gift shop. Display off-site Art in prestigious locations.

- The guild would be able to find a space that would have more exposure, money to advertise, money to pay a staff person, etc.

- Everyone should pay an entry fee. It's not fair that some exhibit free. Especially since we always need money.
- Staffers be better sales persons. More foot traffic.
- A better location with higher visibility and greater foot traffic.
- Make it solvent and have NO money worries.
- More community involvement
- To have some things like first Friday not in evening hours.
- The location of the gallery. I would magically move it to a space that looks and feels more like a gallery to contemplate the art, with a separate room for the gift/small items shop.
- Larger class rooms
- Management business structure
- More members so the burden of managing the guild could be shared and more diversity among members. I would wave a wand making people in Topeka area want to spend lots of money on good art!
- Be able to afford a permanent position for one person.
- Update the way artwork is shown in our beautiful gallery. Move the featured artist section to the right of the door as you come in. CHANGE THE LETTERING ON THE WALLS. Make it cleaner letters and professionally done. Paint the red walls a neutral color. SECOND thing: Get good PROFESSIONAL communication going. Everyone seems mad and confused about who is doing what. Maybe hire a part-time marketing coordinator.
- Get rid of the present board and put in some younger people who know how to do computer things, the internet and bring the Guild into the 21st century.
- I would like to see more members active in the management and activities.
- A more visible location to attract more walk-in traffic.

When asked: "What would you like to see the Guild doing in 3-5 years? Be specific." the responses were: (typed as written)

- Maybe have a show that artists are juried into. Maybe even a regional or National
- Open for more hours, with a matching increase in customers/members/patrons/programs
- Hold personal studio tours, rent bus for trips of interest to museums in KC or Crystal Bridges.
- Become the center of all things Art in Topeka, Have an Art fair
- 1)Find more places to display art from guild members with reasonable commission 2)Think about ways to donate a portion of guild's commission from sales to non-profit organizations and in turn asking for those organizations to promote the guild to the community.
- Thriving!
- more members at are active, instead the same 10-15 members
- Advertising. Greater visibility.
- Working at the Boys-Girls Club, offering groups at the Rescue Mission, having an after-school children's group, sponsoring Home School kids with challenging classes, having Open Studio four days a week, having younger members as well as older. Have retirement centers come over and use the facility. Use the venue for community events. Then let that success build.
- Expansion, more relationships with elementary/high school teachers
- Increase in classes and teachers available. May be extended source for sales.
- A time to offer like white elephant sales to membership= such as when a member ages out or needs to get rid of extra supplies, etc. or art pieces like an art garage sale on a certain day
- What about an annual or biannual art fair? One that the participating artists have to pay a booth fee and % of their proceeds to the guild as a fundraising option.
- Add additional classroom spaces

- Increase traffic, sales, community service
- More outreach. I would love to see the guild have more visibility and become a destination for groups wanting an art experience. Events every day and evening so there is little time when the gallery is dead.
- A mural in a great location.
- Getting better organized. Having people with experience leading the different areas of our business. More classes and events for the public.
- Be a part of the Topeka art world, what little there is. Maybe as a driving force of that. Get the word out - there is art in Topeka. Not just to high school students. I'm of tired of the kids art.
- growth, activities in the community and better exposure.
- Attracting more young people.

When asked: "How can the Guild get more involvement from its members? Be specific." the answers were: (typed as written)

- If you solve this, you can sell your solution for much money! This is a problem for every more involvement is a solvable issue....
- Perhaps sensitivity training for some of the standing members who have not made new members feel welcome and appreciated? I'm relatively new, but I hear TALES.... Committees or teams rather than one individual.
- Ask. This Survey is a good start. Have a consensus. I would like do see the results... maybe I am the minority in my thinking.
- More "Social Hours"
- Lower the requirements for volunteer hours or give credit for committee work, etc.
- Being more visible publicly.
- Currently we have the best leadership we have had in quite some time. This could be stepped up. When Carol Jarvis did our analysis, she specifically suggested me. We need an Ex Director who has the power and calls the shots. We need a publicity person who is knowledgeable and gets our name out. We need all the worker bees who will conduct the classes and sponsor the activities in the afternoons and evenings. Structureless-ness is tyranny.
- Invite members to pay years membership and get one class up to x value in the year. Open house for art people.
- I think people join to support the guild but to expect more involvement is unrealistic interest. The Tuesday guest speakers is a great idea.
- Not sure
- Get more members so it's not just the same 10 people trying to do everything.
- Create a simple event and then offer it to every group in town that you can think of— church groups, mothers with young children(partner with a local day care or get a couple of babysitters to give moms an art break.) try to partner with a no-to gallery on first Friday to promote a special event to folks who never venture outside of No-to. More events with the zoo. Local PTA groups. Get more members!
- More events, better marketing
- Have more opportunities to be involved. More classes, more speakers, more fun events. But get organized so people don't feel like they are wasting their time.
- Get more communication going. Welcome program for new members. Introduce yourselves to us - YOU , the Board. Who are you? What are you doing? How did you get there? I don't recall any election or even hear who was running. Show me how I can help. ASK me for help - besides just pathetic pleas on the website. ASK me to be involved. This survey is good.
- We need to have better visibility, and involvement by the business community. We need to ask and receive more funds from doners and make them feel more involved.

- I think the number of active members is not bad given how few members there are. TAG just needs more members and they need to be interested in doing outreach activities.

When we asked: “What do you want to see the Guild offer that it isn't? Please be specific.” they responded: (typed as written)

- Beginning drawing—like Lee Hammond was originally offering.
 - Inexpensive classes for all ages. "Paint and Sips." More small pieces that the general public will purchase and less glass.
 - Classes in watercolor or mixed media, possibly learn about Procreate on internet, how to use internet to show my artwork., how to better advertise our guild.
 - Exposure
 - My community involvement.
 - Website listings of current available artwork with size, medium, and price listed made available for public viewing and buying. A lot of art is sold to people who never step foot into the gallery that it's being purchased from, except for pick up.
 - Community service projects, classes to all ages sponsored by competent teachers.
 - Staffing that is competent. I have been there when the staffer says "Sorry, I don't know how to run the cash register. I don't know who that artist is. I can't sell that, come back later..."
Our staffing is awful often. They sit there and don't promote. They don't even clean up or improve anything. Thus we don't have return customers. No one follows up with customers who say, "I want to see more work from..."
 - We also don't bring in quality work from across the nation. We need to sponsor a "Women of the West" Exhibit such as the Carriage Factor did this past month. Display work of well-known artists such as Cally Crallman and Diane Lawrence and Cris Sundquist. Bring in the bigwigs and publish that we are doing this. Offer a show by past winners.
 - More class options
 - Better facilities for classes
 - More business structure aimed at sales, traffic, community awareness
 - I think the guild should do some outreach with the younger population to generate new members. Maybe partner with Washburn art dept when they do their open pottery night - make the pot with them, paint it with us in the gallery before firing. Then have a special display to sell the pots. Consider providing a space for a Wine and Painting night for a Ladies night out event where a canvas and paints will be provided for everyone for a fee. You would probably only break even the first time but then subsequent events would already have the supplies. Maybe partner with a local winery to do an event on their site. You could reach out to civic groups that might need a fun activity to offer their members.▪
 - Artist meet up events
 - I'd like to see high level classes available and more conversations about art and artists. Also website training, marketing and business training for artists. Member artists are looking at the Guild to be EVERYTHING for them. In reality, artists have to do a lot of their own marketing. The Guild can't do all that for each artist. Especially with an all-volunteer organization.
 - More info about what's going on. What happens in those Board meetings? Is the ONLY way you communicate thru the website? Only phone call I've gotten was a reminder of the meeting nights for members. Include me in something. I don't like reading all about it on the website. Feels like the writer doesn't like us sometimes.
 - We need better internet exposure.. I would like to see more donations and more young people join the guild.
 - More classes and programs.
- I'm full of ideas but they all require reaching out to bring more people in so they know of the gallery and develop an appreciation of the talent and knowledge of its members. You want people to get familiar with the guild and give them the creative license to do art.

When we asked: “How can the Guild attract younger and/or more diverse members? Be specific.” They responded with: (typed as written).

- Maybe send your call for Art to groups that have a diverse membership? Maybe do something like “Sacred Threads,” and send to some predominantly minority churches.
- I know you have done a lot with high schools, but how about looking more at Washburn art students? Maybe a specific outreach, not just like the high schools, but more from the idea of becoming members and getting their work noticed. I’m thinking—attend a class (just one—maybe as guest speaker?) and make a pitch for TAG.
- Have a talented Washburn student teach a class at TAG.
- Taking the show on the road? Like the car wash, but to places like Brewster Place or maybe some larger churches.
- Better hours, livelier shows with edgier art, more classes, more advertising, participation in community events
 - ??????
 - Connection to Washburn.
 - More "Younger and/more diverse" activities
 - Featuring the high school artists is a great start
 - Greater visibility overall.
 - Be there for them. Offerings that are diverse. Bring in their high school group for a free presentation during their month of display.
 - Recognition of accomplishment thru art educators
 - By contacting school art teachers and asking questions regarding what these students are interested in. Finding young artists who would work part time at the guild.
 - Be open to change
 - People are busy. Make events that are an easy introduction to the gallery with low time commitment. Make every event a “subtle” membership drive so people know they can become members and how. Get the art teachers from area high school to be members. Offer to go to the high school and teach a class to relieve them from one class prep.
 - Better social media outreach
 - Have meet-ups for younger artists. Maybe a mentorship program? Make our space a cool place to hang out. Coffee nights? Bring their artwork for critiques? An open mic and art night?
 - Go to schools & colleges, talk to the senior class of art students and tell them about artists in the community. Let them know they could help US too. If the women end up having kids and no jobs - the art guild can be a place for them to get an art fix. The guys too.
 - That is a huge problem in today's world. Two other art guilds I belonged to got over 30 years unfortunately dissolved cause members got too old to work. Perhaps mentor Jr High students and grade school trying to fill the void with free membership for students like Summit Art organization in Lee Summit?\
 - We need to offer more classes geared to a younger generation and activities that will attract this age group.
 - Activity tables at community non-profit events would raise our profile, but I don't know how many members there are who would be willing to staff them. I think there's a limit to how much time members want to devote to outreach.