

## **Increasing Membership**

By

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Increasing the number of SAQA members in your region is crucial to the success of your regional program. More members = more opportunities for everything. This is the most important goal of representing SAQA and should be top of mind for everything you do. When we became regional reps, we were able to increase membership by 40% in the first year. Here's how we did it.

### **1. Get to know all the current members in your region.**

This seems like a big task but it is essential to build members. Every current member has a friend who is not a member but who should be. Connecting with existing members will grow your membership overnight. Some techniques are:

- Make personal phone calls to introduce yourself as the new SAQA rep and ask how you can help them make their membership better.
- Send out a questionnaire asking everyone what they want from SAQA and how you can make their membership more beneficial.
- Review the membership list and make a mental note of recognizing members wherever you are in the art quilting world -- at meetings, at stores, or at your local quilt guilds.

### **2. Sign up your friends.**

If you have gotten this far and become a regional rep, you already know tons of people who should be members of SAQA. Call them and tell them to join!

### **3. Identify opportunities.**

There are lots of "events" happening in your region where you will have an opportunity to talk about and promote SAQA. Here are some ideas to check out:

- Traditional Quilt Events – Even though this sounds counter-intuitive, you will find that 10% of people who attend these events are closet "art quilters" and want to find an organization to join. Many traditional quilters don't know SAQA exists! Most events will give you a free table. Man it!
- Quilting Guilds – Again, most of the members of quilting guilds are traditional quilters but many are NOT. Join your local guild and bring membership brochures to every meeting. You will "show and tell" your crazy pieces but you will become recognized as that "Art Quilter" and other people will be coming to gravitate to you.
- Quilting Stores — Get to know the owners of your local fabric stores and see if

- they will let you place membership brochures in their store. Mention to them that SAQA members buy lots of fabric!
- Art Supply Stores — Why not! Out of the box thinking can generate interest!

#### **4. Be on the lookout for emerging art quilters.**

As a professional association, SAQA want to have the highest quality membership in the art quilting world. So look for opportunities to identify these artists in your region who are not already members. Here are some ideas for doing that:

- Book authors
- Magazine contributors
- Artists that magazine contributors refer to in their articles
- Art quilt teachers and speakers

If you find someone who is getting attention, send them a personal letter inviting them to join SAQA.

#### **5. Always be ready to sign up a new member.**

While it's hard to cart around Portfolio 16, carrying 1-2 membership brochures in your purse/briefcase/backpack at all times is a must. You never know when you will run into someone who needs this information!

Establishing a goal at the beginning of each year is a good way to measure your success. Depending on the size of your region, a 10% increase is usually doable. Go for it!

#### **6. Express Your Enthusiasm For SAQA.**

The benefits that SAQA offers artists who work in cloth is truly amazing. The SAQA website, endless exhibit opportunities, the Portfolio, professional resources on SAQA-U, monthly and quarterly newsletters packed with value-the list goes on and on. Live your life as an enthusiastic SAQA member by generating a high level of excitement when out anywhere in the public. Tell everyone about Art Quilting and SAQA.