

Welcome Business Partners!

You may have heard the rumor. The Associates Committee has been retired. It is gone, dead. And pass the point of resuscitation.

I am happy to be here this morning to welcome each of you as Business Partners. You are not tagalong associates, but Business Partners, crucial and full members of our Orange County IFMA Chapter. You may not realize it at this time, but you are critical to enabling our Professional Facilities Managers to be successful in their jobs.

Our chapter theme this year is “**Take it to the Next Level**”. We want to find even small ways in every chapter meeting, in every special event, and every committee meeting to “**Elevate our Performance**” as both FM Professionals and Business Partners.

We know from our chapter survey and many personal conversations that there are three specific needs we are all looking to fulfill by being part of IFMA OC.

- 1) Quality Education & Professional Development,
- 2) Synergy of a Support Network, and
- 3) Personal Camaraderie based on similar industries or life experiences.

Both our FM Professionals and Business Partners are looking to fill these three needs. This year it is our desire to “Elevate Our Performance” in each of these three focus areas.

First, we want our Professional members and our Business Partners to grow professionally this year through a renewed focus on personal development programs for both groups.

To address the Synergy and Camaraderie needs, we hope to foster a gentle transition in the culture of our chapter where FM Professionals can feel comfortable and encouraged while gathering knowledge, receive advice, and learn about cutting edge solutions that will enhance their value to their organizations.

We will encourage our FM Professionals to build their reliance on our Business Partners, for you are indeed their supporting partners. But for that to develop, Business Partners will work to become, and truly be accepted as, “Trusted Advisors” or “go to” resources for information, referrals, connections, guidance, and encouragement.

At World Workplace in Atlanta two weeks ago, we heard Alexis Herman, the keynote speaker and former head of the Labor Department in Washington, DC challenge us to understand the cultural implications on global interaction. She warned us that to survive in the coming trends, we must learn to invest ourselves in relationships. She drove home the idea that we will not need organizations, but relationships to be successful in this new economy.

Most of us have been part of a networking group, a lead sharing team, or a chamber of commerce where getting cards, asking for leads and introductions are the golden brick road to sales success. We are all, especially in this economic climate, looking for the next customer, the next transaction. But that focus alone will not serve us in the future.

The third session I attended, that focused on relationship building, emphasized that the normal concept of networking is a waste of time. David Nour, in his session called “Relationship Economics, pushed us to stop building networks, and start building relationships. Networks are transactional, he said. Relationships are transformational. Contacts have little value. Relationships are business and life changing.

As part of our effort this year to provide professional development for both the Facility Managers and our Business Partners, we plan to build on what was started last year and provide more training in this area of relationship marketing.

How do you get started building new relationships? Get off the sidelines and into the game. And everywhere you go, leave people knowing you care and are willing to help them be successful.

So, where do you fit in? Anywhere you want to.

We cannot “Take it to the Next Level” without your direct involvement. We must have your participation on our various committees. For example, we need 5 people right now to serve on our Hospitality committee, the best way to become known in this chapter.

We need 10 or more to serve on our Membership committee who are willing to build relationships with an assigned group of current members. We need those willing to join our Communications Technology team as we initiate new methods of disseminating quality educational materials and provide enhanced directory marketing tools, such as video and social media options. We need help on the programs team to help develop a topic into a chapter program. Virtually every one of our 17 teams needs your help now.

If you want to grow your business and grow professionally, get involved now!