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## **IFMA Boston Chapter: Get involved and stay involved**

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In preparation for IFMA's upcoming Leadership Conferences, IFMA had a leadership expert interview some chapter leaders on what challenges they face so that they could begin to craft a conference agenda. This expert was especially interested in learning about the Boston chapter because "you must be doing something right - you continue to grow and grow." The following was what I shared with my interviewer:

We are stronger than ever with 822 members, a terrific comeback from our low of 500 members in 2002. But more important to the chapter is the huge number of active volunteers, almost 150 at last count. We have people volunteering to co-chair a committee, call members to see how they are doing, sell raffle tickets at the Gala to raise money for charity, hand out water at the Jimmy Fund Walk and take a recently unemployed member out to lunch.

Our members are involved in some groundbreaking work. We had the first "green committee" in all of IFMA and boasts 250 attendees at their inaugural event last year, with much more to come! Our Facilities Asset Management Taskforce, which is providing recommendations on how asset management principles and practices could be incorporated into education and training programs for FM's has attracted the interest of IFMA. Our Emerging Leaders Network (ELN) is the most active and engaged group of all the ELN's in IFMA, and is currently working with all of the other committees in IFMA Boston to secure programming and education specific to the needs of EL's.

The challenge of today's economy sparked much discussion and idea exchange for the chapter at World Workplace which gave birth to the Career Preservation Task Force. I'm personally very excited about what this Task Force is doing, leveraging the IFMA Boston information network to help unemployed members find new positions, employed members validate their professional value to their employers and provide support to our valued associate members to assist them in identifying potential opportunities to sustain and grow their businesses. We are fortunate indeed to be part of a community that looks after its own. I learned during the interview that we are the only chapter that has gone to such lengths for our members.

I also reported to my interviewer that we go out of our way to stress the value of active involvement in the chapter. With free programs and deep discounts on education for our members, IFMA Boston membership is the most cost effective membership in town. We also offer many opportunities to network for the job or business you need now, and more importantly, in the future. IFMA Boston, as it turns out, is full of people of influence who are willing and able to help.

As you can guess, the interviewer was impressed with the high level of enthusiasm, groundbreaking work and the many exciting opportunities for the chapter. How about you? If you haven't been to anything in a while, you might want to come back and check out what is going on in your chapter. Join linked-in! Check out the website and register for seminars and programs! Check out what our sponsors have to offer! Donate your time to the Community Projects committee! There has never

been a better time to get involved and stay involved.

Kate Thibeault was the 2008 president of IFMA Boston.

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