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IFMA Boston launches Career Preservation Task Force

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To further its mission of providing the services and information facility professionals need to advance their careers, IFMA Boston has launched a Career Preservation Task Force. The primary goal is to provide ongoing support and a networking forum to help our members weather the economic downturn. Leveraging the IFMA Boston information network, LinkedIn, and an enhanced career section on the IFMA Boston web site, the task force will 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.

What can you do to help?

Advice from the career doctor

It is very difficult to lose a job. All kinds of emotions arise at such a time, mostly revolving around issues of confidence. Those of us still employed, regardless of our satisfaction with our positions or our certainty of their durability, sometimes have no idea how to respond to our colleagues who are suddenly unemployed. There are some things we can do to help, regardless of whether or not we have a job to offer.

* Don't pull away. Regardless of how awkward or uncomfortable you may be, treat this as a setback that needs to be managed and addressed. If you pull back from your disenfranchised colleagues, they run a much greater risk of losing contact quickly, and contact is critical to their continued ability to maintain confidence. Remind them that at this critical time, there is no shame in being unemployed. Many talented people are finding themselves caught up in the current wave of economic uncertainty.

* Help to keep people connected. It is vital that our colleagues in the job market remain visible and connected to their professional lives. Keep people apprised of workplace activities, invite and encourage them to attend events and seminars, and meet them there to be sure they have a friendly face once they get there.

* Encourage people to keep a routine that includes work-related activities. Many of us have fantasized about having time to volunteer in the community, paint the house, or learn basket-weaving. While there is nothing wrong with using this time to enjoy some personal activities, it's important to make sure that those in the job search make consistent time for business activities, such as professional associations and development. Now is the perfect time to pursue LEED certification or volunteer for IFMA or another association.

* Make resources available. Many of us have office space, computers, copiers, faxes, etc. that we can allow our colleagues to use to further their job search. If you do, reach out to colleagues and encourage them to spend some time each week at the office. It will help them to facilitate their search and to keep a routine.

Remember, now is the time to make yourself available as a resource and a source of support and networking. Sometimes just brainstorming ideas will help someone who finds themselves in this challenging position to stay positive and realize they are worthy of your time and attention regardless of their job status. It's not only good practice, it may serve you well when they land in a new position.

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