



The Foodservice Industry is changing and 2012 promises to test the focus and strategy of every company. IFMA began transforming a little over a year ago to bring it into alignment with you and your business. You wanted more involvement and input in your association, that message was clear! Today virtually every aspect of IFMA is driven by a committee comprised of our Members.

We now have more than 20 committees with more than 50% of all Member companies actively participating! These committees range from association governance to those that shape our programs and services, such as Presidents Conference and your new Center of Innovation Excellence.

- **Improved Programs** – Your input, through committee participation, drives your programs. We made substantial changes over the past year and the results were significant. The Gold & Silver Plate Awards were sold out, chain operators attending COEX were thrilled and the Sales & Marketing Conference delivered new insights on how you can work together with distributors to help the independent operator. The 40th annual Forecast & Outlook now includes a deep dive on driving consumer demand and Presidents Conference will bring together channel leaders to address the challenges we all face.
- **Center of Innovation Excellence (CIE)** – Innovation is the lifeblood of the industry – critical for profitable growth. This new committee-driven initiative also engaged leading chain operator to assist in addressing the all-important linkage between manufacturer and operator. Phase I resulted in a foundational understanding and whitepaper. Phase II, fall of 2011, will provide benchmarks on a large scale. Phase III, early 2012, will provide best practices.
- **GS1** – IFMA is taking a lead role in driving “The Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative”, which seeks to facilitate GS1 Standards adoption. Along with IFDA, the NRA and leading operators and distributors, the industry has made tremendous strides with now more than 600 manufacturers synchronizing data with eight of the top 10 distributors. There are currently seven committees working on GS1 initiatives!
- **Small/Midsize Business** – Led by Peter Cokinos, Little Lady Foods, the 24-member committee was recently established to explore new ways to address the unique needs of small/midsize business members. We look forward to their insights and recommendations as the year progresses.

Finally, I would like to address two notes regarding your **2012 membership**.

First, as part of your invoice, we have included a suggested contribution to IFMA’s Educational Foundation. We guarantee that 100% goes toward scholarships and

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internships for students interested in the areas of culinary, food marketing and food science. Many organizations ask for dollars but none guarantee that 100% goes to the students! We ask that you donate what you can to help support the future of our industry.

Second, as we make efforts to improve our communications to our members, we ask that you provide contact information for an administrative representative from your organization who can help us ensure our records are up to date. [Administrative Form](#).

Time does not allow me to mention everything that we will be doing in 2012, but we are prepared to visit with you to discuss your priorities on how to gain the most out of your membership at IFMA. Please contact Tony DePaolo at 312-504-9885 or Cheron Lessmeister at 312-253-4682 in our Membership Department to schedule an appointment at your convenience.

Your involvement guides us all through what can be an uncertain path in today's foodservice industry and ensures that your voice is heard. Together we are not only positively impacting our individual businesses, but the entire foodservice industry.

Thank you for your continued support of IFMA!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Larry Oberkfell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

Larry Oberkfell