

## NURTURING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

# Leadership Academy Helps Members Grow Their Skills Through Volunteering

The Institute of Management Accountants (IMA; Montvale, NJ) launched its [IMA Leadership Academy](#) (IMALA) as a way to provide its members with leadership education and skills to advance their career and build their personal and professional brand.

“IMALA is one of our top recognition programs, with about 6,000 of our 140,000 members currently participating,” says Patricia Stefanczyk, IMA’s vice president of governance and volunteer relations. “It’s a critical component to fulfilling our mission to serve our members.”

The program, available at no additional cost to members, includes a monthly webinar series on coaching, team building, conflict resolution and problem-solving created and delivered by volunteers; regional and global volunteer leadership opportunities; a mentoring network; and access to leadership news via a column in IMA’s Strategic Finance magazine. It also includes a leadership recognition program that allows members to move up five levels of leadership, from Pewter to Platinum, as they complete IMALA courses and participate in increasing levels of leadership with IMA.

Each leadership level offers a digital badge members can use on their social media. As of January 2023, the organization had issued 4,066 Bronze Level badges; 4,280 Gold Level badges; 5,531 Pewter Level badges; 2,124 Platinum Level badges; and

5,776 Silver Level badges.

The program is promoted via a landing page on the IMA website, in their [newsletter](#), in an every-other-month leadership column and an annual ad in their Strategic Finance magazine and in PowerPoint presentations to chapters.

“We find the program to be really impactful for our members because, again, it’s building their personal brand, and it’s also a win for us because we’re building our leadership pipeline and providing something different and unique to our members, which is part of our value proposition,” she says. “For example, this program provides young professionals who are not comfortable public speaking, an opportunity to learn. We start them out by being facilitators. We train them and then they get to present webinars attended by between 3,100 and 3,500 members and non-members. It’s not always about the tangible thing in your hand — the plaque or the swag — it’s many times about how we are helping them to build their leadership, and ours.”

Also, the more members are engaged, says Stefanczyk, the happier they are and the more they are likely to renew their membership with IMA. ♦

---

Source: Patricia (Pat) Stefanczyk, CAE, PMP, Vice President of Governance and Volunteer Relations, Institute of Management Accountants, Montvale, NJ. Phone (201) 573-9000. Email: [pstefanczyk@imanet.org](mailto:pstefanczyk@imanet.org). Website: <https://www.imanet.org>

---

## MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION BYLAWS

# Three Common Questions About Association Bylaws

Nisha Thakker, a partner with Tenenbaum Law Group PLLC (Washington, DC), answers three common questions associations ask about their bylaws:

***How do you stop the old school mentality from constantly creeping back in?***

“Find a way in your governance to respect the historical perspective but not to let past presidents and previous board members stay so involved that the organization can’t evolve. One way to do that is by creating a Past Presidents’ Council. Give them a voice and respect the historic perspective, but allow the organization to continue to evolve without the expectation of lifetime leadership involvement.”

***How often should we be updating our bylaws or reviewing our bylaws?***

“The sweet spot is somewhere between three and five years. If you’ve drafted your bylaws well, and you’ve created flexibility and nimbleness, you can push it closer to five years. One reason to look at it sooner than that is in case the statute changed in your state to be able to grant you more flexibility in your governance.”

***How can we ensure our bylaws are helping us create a diverse representation on our board?***

“When we talk about diversity, we’re not necessarily limiting ourselves to the traditional DEI of race, age and gender. We’re really talking about experience level too and how to fill the leadership positions in an organization to make sure that your governance is broadly representative of your membership.” ♦

---

Source: Nisha Thakker, Esq., Partner, Tenenbaum Law Group PLLC, Washington, DC. Phone (202) 221-8004. Email: [nthakker@TenenbaumLegal.com](mailto:nthakker@TenenbaumLegal.com). Website: <https://www.TenenbaumLegal.com/>