

The IMA—Your Partner for Life

by Margaret Butler, CMA, CPA

Why do you suppose an individual would join the Institute of Management Accountants as a student and remain a member for life? The answer lies in the benefits IMA provides to members at each stage of their lives and careers.

Those who become IMA members as students find exciting opportunities available to them. They are encouraged to participate in on-campus activities through their student chapters and in the activities of their parent chapters, which is a great opportunity for networking. The IMA offers a job bank, career counseling, and scholarships as well as tips on résumé writing and interviewing. Many chapters and councils also offer scholarships, internships, and mentoring for students in their local areas. And let's not forget the Annual Student Conference during which student members gather for a weekend of education, networking, and *fun!* All of this prepares the student to enter the professional world.

For those new to the workplace, one of the greatest benefits IMA has to offer is certification. A young professional who holds a CMA or CFM has an advantage when competing for jobs and promotions. And members who volunteer for leadership positions in local chapters have the opportunity to practice and develop the planning, organization, communication, and leadership skills that will help them advance in their careers.

As careers take shape and develop, IMA benefits such as continuing education may become more important. Practicing professionals find it necessary to keep their knowledge and skills current, and they can do this through IMA programs at the local, regional, and national levels. They also may find themselves motivated and

reinvigorated by attending IMA's Annual Conferences to hear exciting speakers and network with other professionals. Those who find it difficult to allocate time for in-person training sessions can benefit from IMA's Web-based educational offerings in the Lifelong Learning Center. Members also may increase their knowledge and competence by participating in industry sectors and special interest groups. IMA is continuously providing timely and relevant information to keep members abreast of new developments in the profession.

And as IMA members mature in their careers, they benefit and add value when they mentor and train the new generation of professionals who will follow in their footsteps.

Throughout each career stage, and even into retirement, IMA provides members bene-

fits. In addition to certification, education, and career-development opportunities, it offers an Online Marketplace, special discount programs for personal and business products, the McLeod Information Center and "Cybrary" (online library services) to assist with research needs, and a number of competitively priced insurance products.

The Institute of Management Accountants is committed to providing benefits and services that will help members become and remain professionally competent and successful. It may truly be considered *your partner for life.* ■

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