

# At the simple drop of an e-mail...

by Margaret Butler, CMA, CPA

This phrase is from one of a number of messages I received recently from members who expressed their concern about the lack of emphasis given to what they considered one of the most important benefits of IMA membership—the e-mail exchanges. They were exuberant in their support.

The free e-mail exchanges are but one component of an IMA activity known as Member Interest Groups (MIGs). The MIGs are groups of IMA members who share their accounting and finance knowledge with other members who may need practical advice. Some members of the groups are experts in their professional areas, while others are seeking to learn from the experiences and expertise of those who have faced and dealt with issues similar to their own. The MIGs serve as sounding boards for ideas and vehicles for exploring new technologies and methodologies. A member of the financial management e-mail exchange states that within minutes of hitting the send button on their e-mail programs, professionals at all levels and in every financial discipline can get corroboration of or correction to their ideas.

Member Interest Groups are divided into three basic components: several special-interest groups that require an annual membership fee, the free industry sector groups, and the free e-mail exchanges. The special-interest groups consist of the Controllers Council, the Cost Management Group, the Small Business Council, and the Sarbanes-Oxley Group, which has recently been formed to benefit those affected by the Sarbanes-Oxley legislation. Industry sector groups are available for members working in areas of manufacturing, healthcare, construc-

tion, not-for-profit, and education. And there are e-mail exchanges among members interested in financial management, family businesses, CMA/CFM certification, technology, and international activities. The list is by no means all-inclusive and will grow and change as member needs grow and change.



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How do you take advantage of this valuable but little-known benefit? Simply go to the IMA website ([www.imanet.org](http://www.imanet.org)), and follow the Member Interest Group links. If you don't have your own e-mail address, you can take advantage of another IMA perk and sign up for a free IMA e-mail address while you are there. Members can directly access other members through the exchanges or search prior discussions that are stored in the archives.

If you are still wondering whether involvement in a Member Interest Group is for you, come to the Annual Conference and Exposition (Nashville, June 21-25, 2003) and take a "test drive." Participate in the MIGs Roundtable discussions, and learn how you can get questions answered; share ideas, experiences, and frustrations; and make connections that will benefit you throughout the year. You will find that you have a resource ready and waiting to help you do your job, create value for your employer, and enhance your career. This outstanding benefit of IMA membership is available to you 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and all *at the simple drop of an e-mail.* ■

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