

# Help IMA Lead the Profession

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The Institute of Management Accountants has a rare opportunity within its reach. Recent business scandals have caused faith in Corporate America—and the accounting profession in particular—to be badly shaken. This crisis is

our opportunity to establish IMA as the leader in the managerial finance and accounting profession.

The federal government’s response to this crisis was the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (SOX). The ultimate effect of this legislation will in all likelihood reach beyond publicly held companies. Many states and agencies are also considering legislation that will apply SOX to privately held companies and nonprofit organizations as well. SOX Section 404 assigns reporting responsibility to CEOs, who then must rely on their financial professionals. This increased reliance on and recognition of managerial finance professionals (MFPs) signals our opportunity to become full business partners. When companies turn to us, we must be ready to use our skills and add value to the entire business process.

This is our responsibility because we are the inside professionals.

To do this, we must apply one of the lessons from the movement to Total Quality Management, which is that quality can’t be inspected into the product from the outside. Quality has to be built into the product from the *inside*. This is the philosophy that led to Six Sigma, the Malcolm Baldrige Award, and ISO 9000. This inside approach has been so successful that the United States is still the most productive economy in the world. We, as managerial finance professionals, should take the responsibility for building quality into corporate governance rather than leaving it to the external accountants and government agencies. Building quality into our product

begins long before the auditing and financial reports are rendered. It is in the guidance and support we provide for decision making, planning, and control and in the high ethical standards we exemplify and best practices we use every day. That should be the foundation of our company’s financial product. Financial reporting is *our* end product, not our auditors’ end product. We respect the role of the auditor, but if we have done our job, their report will simply affirm the quality of our company’s financial processes.

In the new financial reporting environment, Corporate America can no longer ignore the importance of their managerial finance and accounting professionals. We are responsible for the processes and product. This is both an opportunity and a challenge to our profession. As MFPs, CMAs, and CFMs, you will have key roles to play as we go forward. You have the skills sets required

to accomplish the task.

IMA is dedicated to its role as the leader in management accounting. Our goals are to strengthen you as a professional on the inside and to inform Corporate America about the value and importance of our profession. Being a managerial finance professional can be the most rewarding and exciting of business careers. When you are an MFP, you are an MVP (most valuable player)!

Now go out there and do your part to restore the faith in our proud profession! Take an active role, and don’t leave your job to the outsiders.

Keep in touch. I can be reached at [kwallin@imanet.org](mailto:kwallin@imanet.org).



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