

Paul Sharman Is New IMA President and CEO

▶ The Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) is pleased to welcome Paul Sharman, ACMA, as president and CEO. He had served as IMA's interim executive director since January 2004, aggressively positioning IMA to become a global force in the accounting profession.

Sharman's major accomplishments during his tenure include IMA's investment in a major market research initiative and a credentialing evaluation that examined 13 areas of the Certified Management Accountant (CMA) and Certified Financial Manager (CFM) credentials. This powerful study concluded that the CMA and CFM programs are among the best business credentials in the marketplace for incorporating fundamental management concepts with cutting-edge industry practices



and superior ethical standards.

He has also driven IMA's professional research efforts to focus on developing standards, best practices, and tools for the decision support, planning, and control functions of the management accounting and finance profession. Planned research

includes projects on new cost management techniques, technologies to improve information flow and business reporting, and holistic performance management.

In making the announcement, IMA Chair Larry White said, "It is a privilege to announce Paul as IMA's presi-

dent and CEO. I am confident IMA now has a leader who is committed to building and enhancing the profession of management accounting.”

When asked about his vision for IMA and the profession as a whole, Sharman described it as rebalancing the accountancy profession, but he made it clear that IMA doesn't intend to follow the recent path of the professional accountancy associations in Great Britain and Canada by merging with an association that represents audit.

He explains: “IMA is well positioned to restore credibility to the accountancy profession following recent high-profile corporate collapses resulting in part from audit's failure to adequately protect society's interests. By reestablishing management accounting's natural role within business and society, we will rebalance the accountancy profession and return focus to management accountants and finance professionals who truly drive business performance. Strong Certified Management Accountants working inside organizations, building sustainable value and supporting Sarbanes-Oxley Section 404, will move society in the right direction. Merging with an accountancy association that represents audit would send the wrong message to society.”

Sharman also clearly recognizes the significant opportunity that lies ahead for IMA and its credentialing programs, given that the majority of financial professionals today work inside organizations. “As many as 85% of all finance function professionals work inside organizations, exercising decision support, planning, and control over the organization's value-creating operations. Furthermore, perhaps as many as 80% of those who enter public account-

ing eventually leave to work in industry, and the CMA program best prepares these early-career professionals for the transition to a more advanced, strategic role within an organization. With a focus entirely on entering the audit profession, the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) credential is not the most appropriate designation for senior financial executives working within organizations. All high-level finance function professionals, regardless of whether or not they hold a more-focused designation like the CPA, an undergraduate college degree, or even an advanced degree such as the master of business administration (MBA), should be required to hold the CMA; anything less is insufficient.”

Under Sharman's guidance over the past 15 months, IMA's leadership team has worked diligently to develop a clear mission and vision for the organization as well as defined measures of success to which all staff will be held accountable.

“As an organization, we have identified our key strategic imperatives, and our first priority is to develop a clear value proposition for our members and corporations,” Sharman emphasizes. “By aggressively promoting our CMA credential as the advanced-level standard for management accountants and finance professionals working inside organizations and by developing IMA as the ‘go to’ organization for continued learning strategies, the value of IMA membership will be clear.”

Sharman, along with IMA's Strategic Planning Committee, a specially formed Governance Task Force, and the IMA Board of Directors as a whole, also was integral in a recent substantial redesign of IMA's governance. The new structure includes four Board Standing Committees

that will enable the organization's Board of Directors to become highly focused. These Committees—Governance, Planning and Development, Performance Oversight, and External/Member Relations—will better position IMA to be more effective in advancing the management accounting and finance profession.

Sharman notes: “With a new, lean governance structure, clear strategic imperatives, world-class credentialing programs, and powerful research initiatives, I feel well armed for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for IMA. We have only just begun to make our mark on the global accountancy profession.”

Prior to joining the IMA staff, Sharman was a leading independent cost and performance management consultant for 17 years, serving many organizations including AT&T, Bell Canada, Canada Life, the Canadian Navy, Canadian Pacific Railways, Citibank, DuPont, Hewlett-Packard, Ontario Hydro, and Volkswagen Canada. Before that, Sharman worked as controller for a number of Northern Telecom (Nortel) units. A Canadian citizen and resident of Toronto, Sharman holds the Chartered Management Accountant (ACMA) designation from the British Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA). A respected speaker and author, a number of his articles have received awards for Distinguished Contribution to Management Accounting from the International Federation of Accountants' (IFAC) Professional Accountants in Business Committee. He also was editor of *CMA (Canadian Management Accounting) Magazine* for eight years, and he currently serves as a member of the editorial advisory board for *Cost Management*. ■