

*Message from the Chair*



# Being Involved

BY WILLIAM BROWER, CMA, CFM

I'm sure you have heard the old saw that you only get out of something as much as you put into it. And, related: Anything worth doing is worth doing well. The question that comes to mind, then, is whether being actively involved in IMA® is something that's worthwhile. Despite the fact that we are all faced with the tugs and pulls of family, work, and community, many members

are finding time to be actively involved in IMA. For some, attending professional education events, signing up for the free IMA webinars (the last one had more than 500 participants), and reading *Strategic Finance* are the only membership benefits they are using. Others regularly attend local chapter meetings, building strong professional relationships and personal friendships, and, thankfully, some exceptional individuals go the extra mile to take on chapter leadership responsibilities. These individuals are interested in furthering their professional development, honing their leadership skills, and helping IMA advance the profession.

Our most successful chapters and councils have strong leaders who consistently provide excellent, interesting programs that entice their

members to attend. Other chapters are struggling to find the formula that will work for them. How can you help? By getting involved: letting the local chapter know what speakers and programs would be interesting to you, letting the chapter leadership know what forums and times would enable you to participate, and attending the meetings that interest you.

Unfortunately, there is less personal interaction in society today—many of us are becoming more isolated. I know that I spend more time typing on my computer than interacting with others face to face or even by phone. This isn't a good trend. It might be more efficient, but it is hardly more effective. In order to be a successful management accountant today, you need the social skills and oral communication skills

that enable you to influence others and sell your ideas—not just the technical skills of your craft.

When I joined IMA, I had the choice to become a member-at-large or join a chapter. Luckily for me, another IMA member invited me to join the North Penn Chapter. My association with this local chapter has been a rich and rewarding experience. It led to my involvement at the national level, and it provided me the opportunity to become involved in the international arena as well through my stint on the Professional Accountants in Business Committee of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC).

I am convinced that these opportunities wouldn't have happened had I chosen the path of member-at-large. So I ask you: Is being a member-at-large right for you, or should you join a local chapter? If you are waiting for an invitation, here it is. I would like to invite any and all members-at-large to join a local chapter. You can make a difference by becoming active at the local level. You will help yourself, and you will help strengthen IMA.

What do you think? Please share your thoughts with me at [bbrower@imanet.org](mailto:bbrower@imanet.org). ■