

Message from the Chair



Curiosity

BY WILLIAM BROWER, CMA, CFM

What is your personal level of curiosity? Would you rate yourself the Thomas Alva Edison of your company, someone always seeking new ways, new answers, new learning and coming up with suggestions and solutions that can drive business growth? James Burke, a former chairman of Johnson & Johnson,

sought curious individuals to lead the independent operating companies of J&J. He believed that they could be counted on to ask the why, how, and what that would create the spark of an idea that led to new opportunities.

Today we can all cite examples of great ideas—like the creation of Google or eBay—that have transformed our landscape. I marvel at someone's ability that has resulted in these hugely successful outcomes. Some might call it serendipity that they stumbled onto these ideas. But more likely it was the result of persistent hard work, trying many ideas, failing often, and having the curiosity and fortitude to overcome those who said it couldn't be done.

Now I hope that all of you have rated yourself a 10 on the 10-point

scale of curiosity. But if you haven't, don't worry—I believe there is room for all of us to contribute to creating solutions that will grow the business. Often these ideas are small tweaks that improve the service or products to move ahead of the competition or closer to what the customer wants. As a management accountant, you are in position to become involved in all the elements of the business. By demonstrating interest and curiosity, you will be seen as a partner helping to find the solutions that will enhance the likelihood of business success.

Of course, as management accountants, we must not ignore the opportunities for improvement in our own back yard. Are we continually upgrading our own skill levels, staying current with the latest technology that can be applied to our

business processes, educating ourselves on new techniques and regulations that can improve or will impact the accounting and finance function? Are you benchmarking your company and your processes against the best, seeking to find the improvements that can make *you* the benchmark?

A good way to stay in tune with the accounting landscape is through continuing education. One of IMA's recent innovations has been the creation of the monthly webinar series. Participation in these interesting and often provocative discussions has been steadily growing so that today approximately 500 people listen to these free seminars. But I'm surprised that even more of us aren't making the time (or don't have the curiosity) to take the opportunity to participate. So I challenge you: Why not try to raise your rating on the curiosity scale, learn what IMA is doing to influence accounting regulation, and ask how it might help you change your accounting practices for the better?

What do you think? Please share your thoughts with me at bbrower@imanet.org. ■