

Message from the Chair



Persistence and Procrastination

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Would you think highly of a person who deferred taking action? How do you feel about the person who, after an initial attempt, lets the momentum lapse?

Of course, these aren't behaviors of highly effective people. While I have heard and often agreed that it is unwise to make a decision before its time (You do want quality information and analysis to make decisions!), there is just no substitute for energy, action, and persistence to set and achieve the goals that must be tackled. These behaviors are ones we admire and seek out, both in those we want to have working for us as well as in the leaders we want to work for.

There are thousands of examples of people who have built successful businesses by taking action and persisting despite the trials and tribulations of successive bumps and potholes along the way. The scientific world seeks progress by continually testing new assumptions, and, through trial and error, the learning obtained from the failures leads to success. It is hard to overcome the disappointment of failure, but if instead you choose to see each step along the way as progress, your persistence will often pay off.

One of the interesting dynamics of human behavior is that different factors influence our actions. When I took the Certified Management Accountant (CMA®) exam, it was only offered twice a year. You could take all five parts over a two-and-a-half-day period, or you could stretch it out over numerous six-month periods. Today there's the option of the computerized on-demand exam, so very few individuals schedule the first three parts in a tight time frame. Would it be better for the Institute of Certified Management Accountants (ICMA®) to go back to a semiannual or quarterly schedule to offer the exam? The surveys that have been taken indicate that there would be limited change to the timing of when people would take the exam. Those who want to study and stretch the exams over a long period of time will choose to do so. Personally, I can say that sitting for all five parts at one time was the right decision for me. It forced me to study and focus over a relatively short period, and, while I

wasn't sure when I left the exam room that I had passed all the parts, I was confident the experience would allow me to more easily pass those parts that I might have to retake.

I encourage all of you who are currently enrolled or are pondering becoming enrolled for the CMA exam to accelerate your efforts. The Institute of Management Accountants (IMA®) just launched a new bimonthly electronic newsletter called the *CMA Connection* to provide support to candidates preparing for the exam and to help create a sense of community among practicing CMAs. This new initiative along with all the other materials and support available from IMA makes it better than ever to pursue certification. Why procrastinate? Why not persist in your efforts to become certified? There is just no substitute for getting started now or rapidly proceeding on the path to certification. I am confident that you will become a better accountant and have a more successful career if you are certified and if you avoid procrastination and become more persistent in achieving your goals! What do you think? Please share your thoughts with me at bbrower@imanet.org. ■