

*Message from the Chair*



# Come to the Conference |

**BY JOHN B. POLLARA, CMA**

If you're like many of your fellow finance and accounting professionals these days, your budget is probably tight for conferences or other networking and educational opportunities. So if you plan to attend just one conference this year, I encourage you to make it the Institute of Management Accountants' (IMA®) 89th Annual Conference & Exposition, June 14-18, 2008, in Tampa, Fla.

This year's Conference offers some outstanding opportunities for anyone working in our profession. For Certified Management Accountants (CMA®s), it provides a unique venue to fulfill all 30 hours of your annual CPE requirement in just a few days. In fact, nearly one-third of the 50 educational sessions are on topics related to the CMA Body of Knowledge.

In addition, based on feedback from prior years' participants, this year's program includes more sessions with practical applications and hands-on training—something that can increase your personal “return on investment.” For example, the Conference will feature a workshop with one of the preeminent trainers in Excel finance and accounting

applications and a workshop on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Other sessions will cover small business issues and ethics, including a group study of IMA's own ethics course, “Success Without Compromise.” At these sessions and others, you'll learn something that you can take back and immediately apply to your job to drive business performance inside your organization.

Many sessions and keynote addresses will be led by senior-level speakers, several of whom are not currently finance professionals but are leaders in operations and other major organizational functions. They'll show the depth and breadth of the finance relationship in working

with many cross-functional groups.

For instance, there's Tim Solso, chairman and CEO of Cummins, Inc., the \$14 billion multinational manufacturing company that just received the Global Six Sigma Award. He'll share how Cummins earned this impressive honor and its impact on the bottom line. Robert S. Kaplan, Baker Foundation Professor at Harvard Business School and management accounting thought leader, will receive a special IMA award and will offer his vision for our profession. Finally, Julie Gilbert, SVP of Best Buy, will deliver a motivational message about how she helped her company bridge the gender gap to create competitive advantage.

Also, let's not forget the networking opportunities. While it's always nice to see the same folks at your local chapter meetings or regional conferences, the Annual Conference enables you to meet IMA senior leaders and practitioners from across the country and around the globe and to exchange best practices in a relaxed setting.

Speaking of the setting, Tampa is a convenient destination for just about everyone (and just a short hour from

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Orlando). The Tampa Marriott Waterside, the host hotel, offers deluxe accommodations and easy access to everything the Bay area has to offer. Visit [www.imaconference.org](http://www.imaconference.org) for full details on the entire event.

Finally, the Annual Conference presents you the perfect opportunity to talk with your colleagues and staff about becoming IMA members. (And how about the nonmember attendees, too?) I've put out this call to action before: Please ask others to join IMA and help us become a stronger presence in the accounting and finance community while improving their personal ROI and that of their organizations. Your direct efforts profoundly affect our ability to grow and provide you with tools to help you succeed.

Please share your thoughts with me at [jpollara@imanet.org](mailto:jpollara@imanet.org).