



# Keeping Our Resolutions

If you haven't made your New Year's resolutions yet, try some different ones, such as keeping a positive outlook, continuing to act ethically, or volunteering in your community.

**M**ore than a month has passed since the start of 2009, about the time most of us start slipping on those resolutions we made so fervently when the clock struck midnight on January 1.

Although it isn't an easy task to keep those promises, I urge us to do so—and to perhaps consider adding some new ones that we might not have considered.

First among them is keeping a positive outlook. With all the discouraging news we're hearing today, it's no wonder that we tend to develop a dire attitude about the future, particularly with respect to our organizations. Given that our role as management accountants usually involves analyzing risks and forecasting what's ahead, it's tempting in the current economic environment to focus only on trimming budgets or clamping expenses to shore up our resources. But rather than assuming that things will only get worse, why not act from the belief that things will get better—and look for ways to increase revenues or even enhance our customers' experiences?

Developing a positive attitude can permeate everything we do, including our careers. Making the resolution to continue your education or get certified is a worthy goal. If you've already made it, ask yourself if you've begun the process. Getting started can be difficult, of course: A complex task such as obtaining an MBA or becoming a Certified Management Accountant (CMA®) appears monumental if glimpsed in its entirety, but when broken down into smaller parts it suddenly becomes possible. So if 2009 is the year you've decided to pursue additional education or a certification, try taking a simple first step, such as downloading information or talking with colleagues.

One thing that shouldn't be hard to start is maintaining an ethical way of doing business. Difficult economic circumstances can prompt our ethical standards to waiver, and that's a temptation we need to avoid. As management accountants, our ethics must remain spotless and stable across any economic environment, providing an anchor from which to base all our decisions and actions. For IMA members, the *IMA Statement of Ethical Professional Practice* provides that anchor; reread it

early this year, and reaffirm your commitment to it.

Although these professional issues are important, they represent just one aspect of our entire lives. We all know that diversification—that is, not focusing on a single product or product category—is a sound way to reduce investment risk. But diversification also offers a valuable template for life. Don't spend all your time in any one place: Balance time between work and family, between work and leisure, and between developing new relationships and cultivating old ones.

One great way to diversify your time is to devote more effort to outside activities in your community. Many organizations are struggling right now and may need your particular time and talent. We've all heard of the "80/20 rule"—80% of the work is done by 20% of the people. If you're among the 80% who usually don't get involved, make 2009 the year you join the 20%. Most likely, you'll be glad that you did.

With these and your other resolutions, I wish you much success and welcome your comments at [fschea@imanet.org](mailto:fschea@imanet.org). I also invite you to visit my blog at [www.fscheablog.com](http://www.fscheablog.com). **SF**