

Innovation Corner

By Audrey Taylor, Ph.D.



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As an academic, it's challenging to test potential solutions without any input from the real implementers. That's why I highly value my relationship with the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA®). Whether it's reading *Strategic Finance* or *Management Accounting Quarterly*, or perusing the *IMA Educational Case Journal* for cases to use in my classes, IMA provides a catalyst for my research and my teaching.

I remember the first IMA conference I attended after a few years of drought. It was the Annual Conference, and it took place in Las Vegas (not my favorite venue) and was packed with new ideas; intelligent, engaged people; and vigorous discussions. On Sunday morning I attended the Student Case Competition and realized the incredible opportunity this competition held for my students. Since then my students have participated in this competition, gaining expertise in both content and delivery.

The Conference sessions that year were filled with new, innovative solutions. The infusion of ideas propelled my research and energized my classroom content. I remember telling my chair, "Finally I have found a group of like-minded people!"

The other professors I have met presenting their research ideas at the Annual Conferences are interested in improving business practices through the signals accountants send. By being introduced to these focused few, I have been personally challenged and have honed my ideas. I assign their cases and articles in order to

give my students the latest in management accounting techniques. In addition, the Conference has allowed me to present my research and get feedback from my peers.

The practitioners I meet each year ground me in the boundaries of current practice. They share the frustrations they

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have with some accounting methods and give me feedback on the viability of the "new" ideas.

When I was a student in my master's program, one professor, Wayne Morse, fostered my love for cost and managerial accounting. What I deeply appreciated about Dr. Morse were his real-life examples and experiences that he gathered from his interactions with industry. Each concept was linked to valid applications, and we were taught the importance of relevance by seeing it modeled. It is my hope that someday one of my former students will remember me for the same inspiration. If they do, a large part of the credit will be laid at the feet of IMA and the collection of pioneers drawn to this network. **SF**