



# Practicing Pure Leadership

If you want to hone your leadership skills, IMA is a great venue. You'll get a chance to prove yourself, and you can make mistakes you can learn from without losing your job.

In his book *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, leadership expert John C. Maxwell explains that it's in voluntary organizations that we see leadership in its purest form. In voluntary organizations, he says, "Leaders have only their influence to aid them." Maxwell quotes Harry A. Overstreet, the psychologist and educator who observed that, "The very essence of all power to influence lies in getting the other person to participate."

The voluntary nature of the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA®) gives every member the opportunity to practice leadership in this purest of forms. In fact, I believe one of the most underrated aspects of the value of your IMA membership is the chance to practice pure leadership where there's no rank by which to force people to listen to you, and there's no holding of someone else's career in your hand by virtue of your title. Instead, it's just your ability to make a difference to a group of like-minded individuals who want to better their profes-

sion and their own careers.

Early in my professional life, I was asked to consider taking a small position of leadership in the IMA chapter I was attending. I had just begun my career, had no one reporting to me, and had little experience with leading others. Through that IMA chapter, I was given an opportunity to be a leader—and I took it.

By saying "yes" to this minor chapter-level officer's role, I got the chance to learn leadership in a situation where the stakes were low (a mistake couldn't cost me my job, after all), as well as a chance to prove myself. I knew that, if I did well, I would be presented with more opportunities for leadership service. It was through this leadership role that I became involved at the global level with the Certified Management Accountant (CMA®) exam. Because I was willing to take that role—to exercise leadership in a very small way—I eventually was named Chair of this great organization 20 years later.

Throughout my career, the lessons I've learned in IMA leadership roles have helped me become a better leader on the job. Never underestimate the value that comes from service, and never underestimate what service can do for you

and for others—particularly the leadership opportunities available through IMA.

Service at the IMA chapter level is a great place to start. If you don't have an IMA chapter near you, consider starting one. We've had a tremendous surge of renewal at many of our chapters this year, and a number of new chapters have been formed as well. With the help of our dedicated Community Services Team in our Montvale, N.J., headquarters, we're in the process of revitalizing or have recently revitalized the following chapters: Minneapolis, Princeton, Southwest Florida, Arkansas Central, Hampton Roads, Lehigh Valley, Bergen-Rockland-Meadowlands, Mid-Florida, South Florida, Lake West Point Area, Gaston Carolinas, Wilmington, Coastal Fairfield County, Westchester Gateway, and New York (Metro). This success isn't limited to the United States. IMA has recently formed chapters in Jordan, Switzerland, Egypt, and Abu Dhabi and has revitalized a chapter in Germany.

Leadership: It's one of IMA's core values and one of the values IMA brings to its members.

As always, I welcome your comments at [jbrausch@imanet.org](mailto:jbrausch@imanet.org). **SF**