



A Platform for

Leadership Growth

If we aspire to grow as leaders, then we need to make sure we get the right training so we can be as effective as possible. IMA can help via our new Leadership Academy.

As we move along in our career paths, many of us have the opportunity to work with a variety of leaders. Based on our experiences, we form our own definitions of good and bad leadership styles, and what's effective for some of us may not be effective for others.

Over the years, I've had the pleasure of meeting thousands of accounting and finance professionals in IMA® and in other professional development settings and getting to learn about their successes and challenges as they evolve in their careers. I'm always intrigued to hear how those who describe a gratifying career path often attribute it to being around good leaders.

When meeting new colleagues, one of my favorite questions to ask is, "What type of leader inspires you?" Some of the most common responses I hear include being a visionary, a good communicator, an excellent motivator, a fast thinker, confident, enthusiastic, responsible; having strong ethics; setting a good example; fostering a team spirit; creating a

good working environment.

Many of these traits, of course, aren't unique to the accounting profession. Leadership attributes that resonate a bit more with us as accountants and financial professionals include demonstrating a high level of competence in accounting, helping us maintain strong technical skills, respecting the complexities of our profession, understanding the importance of compliance, having a pulse on technical and regulatory trends, and being willing to stand up for what's right.

These characteristics may seem like a long list, but they help demonstrate that there's no perfect "recipe" for successful leadership. Yet the more we know about effective leadership traits, the more we can reap the positive outcomes and strong performance that often follow solid leadership. Further, if we aspire to grow as leaders, then it's essential that we find ways to get the proper training and surround ourselves with those who are invested in our leadership development.

The recently launched IMA Leadership Academy (IMALA) can be very helpful in this regard. IMALA's mission is to help engage, utilize, and train accounting and

finance professionals to become more effective leaders in both their work and personal endeavors. It's offered as a free benefit exclusively to IMA members.

To accomplish its goals, IMALA has developed an ambitious array of offerings. Foremost among them is a webinar series on topics of interest around leadership development. Three of these webinars—Leadership, Coaching, and Team Building—have already transpired, and we've had an overwhelming response with attendance reaching the maximum. Upcoming webinars in 2010-2011 will feature topics such as Change, Problem Solving, Conflict Management, and Mentoring. Of particular note to certified members: All webinars offer NASBA-approved CPE credit.

The Leadership Academy will also provide in-person learning opportunities for IMA members to bolster their leadership skills. These will include special educational sessions at events sponsored by several IMA regional councils and chapters as well as at IMA's 92nd Annual Conference & Exposition in Orlando next June.

By participating in IMALA, members will develop skills for

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problem solving, team building, and inspiring others. IMALA programs will be strongly focused on cultivating mentor/mentee relationships to ensure that tomorrow's future leaders receive guidance from today's leaders. Participants also will enjoy the opportunity to meet and learn from like-minded peers all over the world, one of the many advantages of IMA's global reach.

We hope that, through IMALA participation, members will gain skills and knowledge that they might not otherwise acquire in their everyday job responsibilities. We also hope that it will create emerging IMA volunteer leaders!

I encourage you to consider participating in the IMA Leadership Academy. You can find more information at www.imanet.org/programs_events/leadership_academy.aspx.

I welcome your comments at srichtermeier@imanet.org. **SF**