

An Enjoyable Experience

By William W. Scarborough, CMA, CPA, CIA, CFE



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I'm a latecomer to IMA® membership and becoming a CMA® (Certified Management Accountant), but it has been a very enjoyable experience.

My professional career began in Savannah, Ga., working with a local CPA firm while getting my undergraduate accounting degree. As one of two accountants there, my duties included keeping the books for a number of small companies and preparing payroll and sales tax returns, W-2s at the end of the year, and individual, corporate, and partnership tax returns. During that time I became a Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

I next went to work for an international accounting firm while obtaining both a master of professional accountancy degree and a master of taxation degree. I worked with international accounting firms for more than a decade in Atlanta, Ga., and was ultimately promoted to senior manager.

Next I was the CFO of a private company before accepting an appointment with the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) in December 1992. I started in the Division of Corporation Finance and was responsible for reviewing financial statements contained in filings of public registrants. In making sure that a company's financial statements were in compliance with GAAP, I often discussed complex accounting issues with CFOs of public companies and the engagement partners for those registrants. I noticed that some of the CFOs were CMAs.

In 1997, I was promoted to assistant chief accountant and transferred into the Enforce-

ment Division, where I work with Division attorneys to bring financial fraud cases before the Commission. I take testimony, provide accounting and auditing expertise, help draft action memorandums, testify before the chairman and commissioners concerning financial fraud, and identify companies and auditors to investigate for financial fraud. I've been associate chief accountant since 2001.

A strong believer in lifelong learning, I became a Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE) in 2006, a Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) in 2009, and a CMA in 2010. Now I've been accepted in a part-time doctorate in business administration (DBA) program with an emphasis in accounting. I plan to start in 2012 while continuing to work full-time.

Of all the professional examinations I've taken, the CMA was the most challenging and comprehensive. I really enjoyed studying the material, and it brought me back to my cost accounting courses in graduate school. Some of the material even was helpful in my work. Fortunately, I was able to pass each part on the first try.

Even taking into account the short time I've been a member, my experience with IMA has been very helpful and rewarding. I'm looking forward to getting more involved with my local chapter, and I really enjoy the articles in *Strategic Finance* as well as IMA's website. I would recommend anyone who has a career in accounting to pursue the CMA—it's well worth the time and effort. I only wish I had done it sooner. **SF**