

CMA: A Career Edge

By Maria Shiela M. Cancino, CMA, CPA



Maria Shiela M. Cancino, CMA, CPA, is transaction processing manager with the global company leading in financial services in Hong Kong, China, and is an international member of IMA. You can reach Shiela at cielah_04@yahoo.com.

I was born and grew up in the Philippines. In 2003, I graduated from college and six months later earned my CPA. During the next four years, I worked for four different companies. Even though I enjoyed my work, I always wanted to learn something new, so I kept changing. My last job in the Philippines was as senior analyst of Megaworld Corporation (a company in the real estate industry). Being a CPA helped me get my next job—in Bermuda as a portfolio account manager with the global company leading in financial services—and earn higher income.

When the economic crisis hit in 2008, I tried searching for alternatives in case something unexpected might happen regarding my job. I looked for work in North America, but most companies wanted someone who held a CPA (U.S. only), CA, or CMA®. That made me decide to join IMA® while I was still in Bermuda. Then, thank goodness, our company relocated me to our office in the United States as an account manager in the transfer agency department. Since I had joined IMA, I registered for the second part of the CMA exam (as a CPA, I didn't have to take Part 1) my first week in the U.S.

I planned everything as to when I would get the certification. I thought since I already had passed the CPA exam, it would be easier for me to pass the CMA exam. I didn't consider that I was a full-time student when I studied for the CPA but a full-time employee when I was studying for the

CMA. I passed Part 2 (old format) in 2010, and then I was relocated to our office in Asia as transaction processing manager. Though many changes occurred, such as location and workloads, my plan to become a CMA didn't change. In January 2011, I registered for Part 2 (new format).

I finally passed the CMA exam this June, and I just became a CMA. I believe that having this additional qualification will give more edge to my career and will help demonstrate my expertise. I am excited about the good things that await me as a CMA.

I enjoy IMA's other member benefits, too, especially the webinars. Even though I'm in Asia, which is a 12-hour difference, I still attend because I'm learning a lot. I also like playing chess, and when I worked in Bermuda I participated in two international tournaments and hope to start again now that I have my CMA. I'm also a member of Toastmasters International and want to resume that.

In addition, I have been supporting a few college students in their schooling since 2008, and I started a scholarship foundation in 2010 called SHARE A SECRET SPREAD SUCCESS. I want to encourage IMA members and CMA candidates to pursue their dreams, whatever it takes.

Finally, I want to thank my family, particularly my mother, Priscilla, and my mentors, my colleagues, and my friends for supporting me in all of my undertakings. I hope this story will inspire others. **SF**