



New Plans for the New Year

Will this be the year you stick to the resolutions you make? You may want to work on them with someone else so you can encourage each other.

The calendar now reads “January,” and, for most IMA® members, that’s the start of a new year (even the Chinese lunar year, which often begins in February, starts at the end of January in 2012). With the dawn of a new year come hopes and plans to do things differently, usually better than the year before. Many of us make resolutions, which, according to *Merriam-Webster*, are “firm decision[s] to do or not to do something.”

Resolutions take many forms, and we all know the obvious ones: Get more exercise, eat healthier foods, pursue a new hobby, or maybe even watch less TV. While these personal resolutions can improve our bodies and minds, other resolutions aim at a different aspect of our lives: our careers.

As we begin 2012, I encourage all IMA members to consider making a resolution that can improve the health and soundness of their professional lives. One of the best ways to do that is to look at the various resources and opportunities that IMA offers and to take advantage of them. There

are myriad ways to do that, but here are a few suggestions:

1. Get more involved in IMA. This can be anything from attending a conference, to speaking at a chapter event, to volunteering to serve on a committee at the chapter, council, or global level. Another overlooked example: writing an article for one of IMA’s award-winning publications or for your chapter or council newsletter. IMA provides wonderful opportunities for you to gain leadership experience and to exercise your creativity. It’s also a great venue for making or renewing lifelong friendships.

2. Start something new. Does your city or town have an IMA chapter? If not, consider starting one. How about organizing a scholarship program for CMA® (Certified Management Accountant) candidates or starting a CMA review program for your chapter or company? What about working with your company or other organization to sponsor an IMA student chapter at a local college or university? Please remember: All of the great ideas that IMA has implemented over its 92-year history were started by someone at some point.

3. Bolster your credentials. Have you always wanted to get

certified but have never found the time to do it? This can be the year when you commit yourself to registering for the CMA exam and getting started with a study plan. IMA offers various ways to support you in your path to certification. I’ve talked about them previously, but you can also visit the IMA website at www.imanet.org/certification to find out more.

I know these suggestions create a long list of options, but they’re merely to get you to start thinking about your own “resolutions.” By all means, don’t feel that you have to commit to all of them. In fact, resolving to do just one of them can go a long way toward making 2012 a great year for you professionally. So pick one thing to focus on, and then stick with it.

But sticking with it is part of the problem with New Year’s resolutions, isn’t it? The perennial joke about resolutions, of course, is that they’re usually broken by the end of January: We go off that diet, we skip a few classes at the gym, or we get distracted by a new TV show and have less time to devote to our new hobby or even our family.

I’ve typically found that when I make resolutions that involve

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other people, they're usually easier to keep. That's why I suggest that you co-opt your friends and colleagues to join you in some of these initiatives. You can hold each other accountable and encourage one another to keep the commitment. You may even attract or meet a new IMA member or two. For example, work with a professor at a local college or university to start an IMA student chapter. Get someone in your chapter or company to register with you for the CMA program, and study together as you prepare to take the exam. By having someone else work with you, it makes the task more manageable and gives you support through the process.

I wish you a healthy and prosperous 2012. I also welcome your thoughts on this or any other topic. Please share them with me at bmcguire@imanet.org. **SF**