



The Power of Networking

If you take advantage of even one of IMA's abundant opportunities to network, you can potentially further your career, make new friends, and broaden your horizons.

A great challenge in our fast-paced society is that many of us often can't spend the time it takes to seek out and develop new networks of professional contacts. It's simply a great time saver—and usually easier—to stay with the networks we already know and that provide a safe, nonthreatening comfort zone. But this approach is really limiting, and the possibility of impacting a broad number of people rarely exists, at least unless these smaller networks are filled with influential people who will network on our behalf. Fortunately, IMA® membership offers many ways to expand our spheres of influence and gain other benefits as well.

Annual Conference & Exposition

Perhaps the best opportunity for expanding our professional network occurs every year at IMA's Annual Conference & Exposition. If you've never attended the biggest event of IMA's year, I strongly encourage you to do so. This year's Conference, our 93rd, will be held June 23-27, 2012, in

Las Vegas, Nev., at the beautiful Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino. Themed "Achieve Brilliance!" the Conference will offer more than 30 hours of NASBA-approved CPE credit, which is the greatest number of hours in recent years. Although registration started in January, you still have ample time to sign up. Please visit www.imaconference.org to find out more.

As in prior years, the Conference will feature educational sessions on topics of keen interest to today's accountants and financial professionals. Scheduled keynote speakers include industry leaders such as Steven Covey, practice leader, Franklin Covey's Global Speed of Trust Practice; Leslie Seidman, chairman, Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB); and Teri List-Stoll, treasurer, The Procter & Gamble Company.

The Conference always provides numerous networking opportunities in addition to educational sessions, and this year it offers a few unique features. First, there will be a special CMA® anniversary celebration, a free reception that's open to all participants to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the CMA certification. Also available for the first time is a family and guest orientation session plus

optional tours to Hoover Dam, Red Rock Canyon, and Spring Mountain Ranch. Finally, there will be a closing session to enable participants to share memories of this Conference and to hear about the exciting plans for next year.

Other Networking Opportunities

Of course, attending IMA's Annual Conference & Exposition isn't the only way to expand networking connections. Our nearly 200 chapters and councils around the world provide access to professional education programs, mentoring, community service, leadership training, and authorship opportunities, which are all great ways to make and grow new connections. As a supplement to chapter and council involvement, every IMA member should also join *LinkUp IMA*, a free professional networking site open exclusively to IMA members. It provides an excellent forum where you can post or research jobs, find a study group, meet other IMA members in your community, share ideas, and much more. Please visit www.linkupima.com to register.

Another way to broaden your professional network is by volun-

continued on page 24

Perspectives

continued from page 6

teering for one of IMA's committees. You might be surprised at the diversity and number. For example, IMA has committees that address issues related to Young Professionals, XBRL, Small Business and Regulatory Affairs, Member Relations, Financial Reporting, the IMA Leadership Academy, and more. All of these committees are composed of IMA volunteer members who share their time and talent and, in exchange, help to shape the future of IMA and the management accounting profession. If you'd like to volunteer to serve on a committee, now is the time to do so. See the call for volunteers in the April 3, 2012, issue of *IMA Online News*. Applications are due April 30. For our most active IMA members, there's also the Stuart Cameron McLeod Society (SCMS), which is a select organization that was founded in 1934 to recognize those who have served IMA in various capacities and to provide an opportunity for continued friendship and service.

I hope that some of these suggestions will give you incentive to expand beyond your comfort zone and move out with confidence into new worlds of influence. These new opportunities for networking should make a difference for you and your career, for IMA, and for the accounting profession.

As always, I welcome your thoughts on this or any other topic. Please share them with me at bm McGuire@imanet.org. **SF**