



# Providing High-Quality Service

In most cases, if you give your customers what they want and surprise them with some benefits and services they didn't expect, they will keep coming back. IMA® is doing that.

I've spent a lot of time traveling in the United States and abroad lately, which has given me the opportunity to notice the quality of service provided by various organizations, including airlines, hotels, and restaurants. I'm probably like most people in saying that the level of service an organization offers can greatly affect whether or not I have a positive or negative experience. For example, a rude waiter, an inconsiderate front desk manager, or a delayed flight without acknowledgement of the inconvenience will often dissuade me from associating with that organization in the future. On the other hand, a positive experience, such as a manager who goes out of her way to help or a flight attendant who goes the extra mile to meet a request, will often make me want to visit that establishment or use that airline again.

This same philosophy—a good experience encourages people to stay, and a bad experience can drive them away—also holds true for the service provided by a professional organization. In this

regard, I believe that IMA® is making bold strides to enhance the experience of our customers.

One important way we're doing that is by improving the functionality of *LinkUp IMA*, our exclusive online member community. Just a few weeks ago, we moved *LinkUp IMA* to a new platform with enhancements that help members network, connect, and access resources better. I hope all of you have been able to visit this site (available at [www.linkupima.com](http://www.linkupima.com); member login required) and see firsthand how much easier it is to navigate and the valuable information that's now readily available. This upgrade comes as a direct result of member feedback, and it's just one of the ways that IMA is listening to what you, our members, want.

Another way we're listening to you is by hiring more support staff in our U.S. and overseas offices. For example, we've doubled the size of our staff in China, added personnel in the Middle East, and opened a satellite office in Atlanta, which is our first new office in the U.S. in recent years. Furthermore, in order to take into account the various time zone differences of our members, we've also extended the office hours of our U.S. head-

quarters in Montvale beyond the usual "9-to-5" window.

In addition, our large network of chapters and councils has always played an integral role in how our association delivers service to members. In this regard, I'm very pleased to report that we've started several new chapters during this past year, including ones in Europe and in the Middle East, and have revitalized chapters in several large U.S. cities.

One very obvious benefit of these changes has been a strong upsurge in membership. While our non-U.S. growth has been consistently positive for many years now, we also saw robust growth in our U.S. membership during fiscal 2011-12, which is the first time in decades we had growth in our U.S. membership. Combined, these two trends have given us a total membership that now approaches 65,000 as compared to 60,000 at the beginning of the year. We also enjoyed another very strong year financially, achieving our fourth consecutive year of operating surplus. All these accomplishments occurred during a period when we've been facing increased competition from other professional organizations.

*continued on page 18*

## Perspectives

*continued from page 6*

I believe we've laid a firm foundation for the future growth of our organization, which, starting July 1, will be guided by a new Chair (I'll be moving into the Chair-Emeritus role). This marks my final column in these pages, so I want to thank all of the volunteers and staff who have made this past year such a remarkable one of learning and service for me. Thanks to all members, too, for giving me this opportunity to enjoy a small part in shaping the future of our organization. I wish the very best of luck to incoming Chair John Macaulay, a long-time IMA member who embraces a strong commitment to service, as well as to Chair-Elect William Knese, another devoted IMA member and former ICMA Board of Regents Chair.

As always, I remain eager to hear your thoughts on this or any other topic. Please share them with me at [bmcguire@imanet.org](mailto:bmcguire@imanet.org). **SF**