

By Jeffrey C. Thomson, CMA, CAE



Key Drivers of Success

Innovative thinking and continuously cultivating relationships are key member differentiators that will allow IMA® to grow during the new fiscal year.

Dear IMA members,

At IMA, we understand that innovation isn't only about inventing or creating breakthrough ideas from scratch. It's also about leveraging existing cross-functional assets to deliver value-transforming products and services to customers. We also know that behind every great partnership, whether it's with a member, a community, or another organization, is a well-maintained relationship. The combination of these two key drivers helps IMA's strategic plan breed success.

Innovation Creates Engagement

Being innovative enables IMA to deliver value now and into the future, and our steady stream of new products, bundles, and services—with more to follow—is evidence of that commitment. With new technology, “crowdsourcing” (i.e., value-enhancing ideas from marketplace consumers, customers, and members), and the creation of distinguished volunteer awards, we're reaching and connecting with more members than ever before. A few examples of this were

seen last month at IMA's 94th Annual Conference & Exposition in New Orleans.

At the Conference, we debuted our first-ever live simulcast that gave members the ability to earn CPE credits from the convenience of their own home or office. This broadcast covered the Annual Meeting of Members and two keynote sessions: *Ethical Leadership for the 21st Century* by Cynthia Cooper and *Unleashing Creativity* by Josh Linkner.

Another first at the Annual Meeting of Members was a crowdsourcing event performed in conjunction with IMA's Education and Career Services group and IMA's Staff Innovation Council. Members in the audience, and those participating in the simulcast, were challenged to design a new beneficial career tool or product. By the way, thank you to all who participated by submitting new ideas!

Creating new engagement opportunities for our members is important, but so is rewarding them. This year, we presented three new volunteer awards to four outstanding members at IMA's Annual Dinner: IMA's Exemplary Leadership Award, IMA's Exemplary Volunteer Award, and

IMA's Distinguished Member Award. These awards recognize contributions in volunteer leadership positions, dedication and successes over a period of years, and the true spirit of volunteerism through exemplary volunteer service. These innovative ideas help us connect, engage, and reward our members for all that they do.

Relationships Driving Innovation

Externally, our global and local partnerships aid in driving innovation in new research, products, and services. This was evident at the Annual Conference, where the nearly 1,000 attendees included members, exhibitors, and partners. At the Annual Meeting of Members, we celebrated the one-year anniversary with our strategic global partner, the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), one of the world's most respected and influential accountancy bodies with more than 600,000 members and exam candidates. IMA and ACCA share a common vision of community and public value to help enrich careers, organizations, and society. During the Annual Meeting, IMA Chair John Macaulay and his peer, ACCA President Barry Cooper,

continued on page 61

Top Line

continued from page 8

announced two significant developments: (1) a Mutual Recognition Agreement, which allows respective certification holders from each association broader and more flexible access to each other's credentials, and (2) a new portal with timely and relevant resources for students, CFO aspirants, and CFOs that draws on IMA and ACCA's vast and growing set of educational products and services. IMA and ACCA have been able to deliver so many value-enhancing offers to the market because our relationship is rooted in commitment, respect, and trust.

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of staff, volunteers, and partners at the local and global levels, IMA ended the fiscal year with record-breaking growth in membership and CMAs. One encouraging feat is that IMA student membership has grown year over year for 50 consecutive months to more than 7,000 student members. The number of student chapters has also grown to nearly 100 from less than half that number two years ago. IMA's local chapters and councils, including the student chapters and a growing number of international chapters, are truly a competitive advantage as we encourage, grow, and nurture the future of our great profession, building relationships to help students achieve their career goals.

Our past, present, and future is a story of community, core values, and demonstrating a commitment to delivering sustainable value to our members. Please know how seriously we take that commitment.

Please share any thoughts with me at jthomson@imanet.org. **SF**

Sincerely,
Jeff Thomson, CMA, CAE
IMA President and CEO