

Message from the Chair
By Joseph A. Vincent, CMA



Relationships Matter

Sometimes we may think that we don't need other people to help us succeed or provide support in our personal and professional lives, but that's so far from reality.

Strong, meaningful relationships are the foundation on which our lives are built. That truth became especially apparent to me after I attended my 45th high school reunion last month. As I reflected on that experience and my journey since those early days, it reinforced my conclusion that relationships matter in so many ways.

I had many close friends in high school and college, and I'm still close with a few. After we graduate from school, life changes, and people tend to move on in their chosen field. Similarly, throughout your career you make many contacts along the way, with some working relationships becoming much stronger over time. These bonds deepen still further as you weather both difficult and rewarding experiences together. In my own career, I went through a successful corporate turnaround with individuals who are now lifelong friends and for whom I have the utmost respect. Many shared experiences like this will stay with you and your close associates for

the rest of your careers.

It's important to stay in touch with these quality individuals. Former employees can become customers or clients, and clients can become employees. In my case, keeping in touch led to a rewarding position later in my career with a former distributor in Brazil.

As an active IMA member for 40 years now, I've also enjoyed close relationships with many fellow members. These bonds have strengthened over time as we've attended meetings related to subjects we're passionate about. Thanks to our regular interactions, these relationships have bloomed into lasting friendships.

In Buffalo, N.Y., in 1919, a group of accountants with similar interests joined together to form the National Association of Cost Accountants (NACA), now IMA. Those individuals built an organization that would continue to enhance what we now know as management accounting. In the process, they created chapters, which led to councils and now our global expansion. So much has transpired throughout the world in the nearly 100 years since that initial meeting, but what hasn't changed is our reliance on the

relationships that got us here and the new ones we continue to develop.

Earlier in the year, I talked about building bridges to the future and to other organizations that, when combined with our dedicated network of members, will drive our profession and our association to new heights.

Over the years, IMA has built relationships with students and young professionals, universities and the academic community, review course providers and corporate supporters of the CMA® (Certified Management Accountant) certification, regulatory and standards-setting bodies, other government agencies, and other professional associations. For example, we now have more than 110 student chapters, and 16 universities have joined, or are in the process of qualifying for, our Higher Education Endorsement program. All these relationships, and others like them, are focused on a common interest—advancing the management accounting profession—and, like our advocacy endeavors, contributing to society as a whole.

Relationships are the keystone to IMA's future because they

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provide the core strengths that have led to our recent growth and the financial stability that keeps us on course. It's important to continue to build new relationships and nurture existing ones. Relationships do matter.

I welcome your comments at jvincent@imanet.org. **SF**