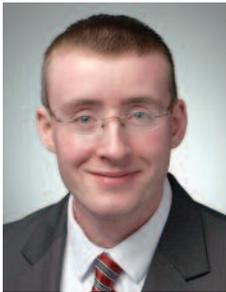


## Bridging the Gap

By Sean Stein Smith, CMA, CPA, CGMA



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**A**fter completing my graduate education at the Metropolitan Campus of Fairleigh Dickinson University in 2013, I followed the traditional path of earning a CPA (Certified Public Accountant) credential, but during that process I learned about IMA® and the CMA® (Certified Management Accountant) certification. Both designations, in different but complementary ways, have been put to good use in my corporate accounting role at the headquarters of United Water and as I have developed courses in accounting, personal finance, and corporate governance at FDU. While I hadn't originally considered the CMA, the more I researched, read about, and asked about the designation, the more it appealed to me. Accounting education, conversation, and literature are focused heavily on attestation and financial reporting, but there's an entire world of accounting knowledge and practical experience beyond those functional areas. While they obviously are critical, there's a much wider variety of activities that managerial accountants can engage in and learn from. With this in mind, and with my desire to expand both my professional knowledge and practical abilities (or "bridging the gap"), I completed the CMA exam, received my certification, and joined the IMA Bergen-Rockland-Meadowlands Chapter. I was fortunate enough to not only pass the CMA exam in 2013 but also to have an opportunity to join the board of my chapter that same year.

The CMA designation has proved inval-

able in my job as a senior accountant working in private industry. In my current role, I have the opportunity to work with both the director of Treasury and director of Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A) for the segment on a day-to-day basis, and the dynamic learning embedded within the CMA curriculum has proved invaluable as my role has evolved. In short, the breadth of material covered on the CMA exam—in addition to the continuing education, webinars, and numerous other communications from IMA—provides accountants with an outlet to grow and develop valuable, in-demand skills.

Keeping in line with my personal mantra of bridging the gap between accounting and the broader business community, I'm continuing my education in the form of a Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) focusing on strategy and innovation. In addition to the real-world items previously mentioned, I've also been able to leverage IMA's resources to develop a series of articles published in academic and practitioner publications. Finally, my increased awareness of the broader business community, refined by the continuous stream of information from IMA, has given me the confidence to start teaching as adjunct faculty at my alma mater, FDU, and to volunteer as the vice president of communications of my chapter. As 2014 winds down, I'm more confident than ever that my involvement with IMA and its CMA program is an investment that generates real-world return on investment. **SF**