

Growing My Career

By Jerry Hancock, CMA, CIA, CRMA, CBA



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IMA® has had a large impact on my professional growth. As a recent college graduate, combat veteran, and young professional in 2006, I saw the importance of management accounting while working as an office assistant at a small business consulting company in Las Vegas, Nev., and was immediately attracted to the profession.

While I had taken accounting courses in college, I had no idea what career I wanted to pursue after graduation. But my first job helped me decide to go back to school for accounting. I learned about IMA while reading one of my textbooks and decided to research the organization. I've always valued investing in myself and wanted to demonstrate my commitment to the profession, so I became an IMA student member.

Busy with school and with working full time in an entry-level accounting position at a construction company, I didn't get involved in IMA that first year. I was about to let my membership expire when the president of the IMA Las Vegas Chapter invited me to a dinner event and asked if I would like to serve on the chapter's board. I accepted and became the newsletter director. As soon as I became involved, my professional confidence and network grew quickly.

The economy was in recession when I completed my accounting degree in 2009, and Las Vegas was especially hard hit. The hiring environment was very competitive, and I knew I had to improve my profes-

sional marketability. I reviewed my skills and developed three goals: improve my leadership skills, obtain a graduate degree, and obtain relevant certifications.

To develop my leadership skills, I volunteered for the treasurer's role within the chapter—a title I still hold today. I enrolled in a Master's of Accounting program to start the journey of earning my graduate degree. In addition, I began studying for the CMA® (Certified Management Accountant) certification in 2011.

As I progressed toward my goals, I started to see significant results from my hard work. In 2011, I obtained an entry-level accounting position with a major hospital-ity company and was quickly promoted into a supervisory role. IMA provided the resources I needed to strengthen my leadership skills. I earned my graduate degree, CIA (Certified Internal Auditor) certification, and CRMA (Certification in Risk Management Assurance) in 2011 and earned the CMA in 2013. Also, I've received additional promotions in a short period of time. When I earned the CMA, I was promoted to my current position of senior internal auditor. I'm also prepping to step into the president role of the IMA Las Vegas Chapter this year.

As I reflect on my involvement with IMA, I can honestly say I started realizing the return on my investment when I became truly involved in the organization. As I continue my journey, I invite you to start your own IMA life. **SF**