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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Value of Professional Associations for Building Your Career

Montvale, N.J., January 22, 2009 -- With the economy in a tailspin many industries are suffering; however, some job prospects remain strong, such as accounting, for example. "While the demand for accountants is growing, being at the top of your game, in terms of the latest knowledge and skills, is a tremendous competitive advantage," said Jeffrey C. Thomson, president and CEO of the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA, www.imanet.org). "In fact, for all professionals, this mindset is critically important."

Mr. Thomson advises that whether you're a job seeker, or a professional looking for new challenges or career development, professional associations – including IMA for those in finance and managerial accounting – offer great value to their members, especially in these challenging times. In any profession, an association membership can:

- Offer access to a network of colleagues in the same field, which is valuable since often "who" you know is as important as "what" you know. Associations create networking communities of professionals with similar interests; by industry, job function, or geographic area.
- Provide mentor opportunities at the local or national level. Professionals can enhance their leadership skills through volunteer work within the organization, as well as speaking and publishing opportunities with an association's events or publications.
- Provide access to expert information that reflects industry trends and primary research. This information can help you keep pace with changes in the profession.
- Deliver professional development opportunities, through certification programs (such as IMA's CMA certification), courses and local chapter meetings to continue one's education. Some professions have continuing education credit requirements, which can be earned through an association's learning resources. Completing courses or earning a certification can help job seekers demonstrate technical skills and give a competitive advantage.
- Demonstrate a commitment to your chosen profession. Along with adding the organization's name to your résumé, you can develop new skills that you might not be able to acquire on the job.
- Offer career resources and job postings that may not be available elsewhere.

"In these economic times, joining an association can be a career-building decision. What you put in, in time, money, and energy, you can surely recoup by gaining valuable knowledge, experience, and opportunity," said Mr. Thomson.

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