

CIMA Research Initiative

Beyond recession

Following the 08/09 financial crisis, the world is hoping for a brighter future. But this may not mean a return to business as usual. The economic conditions and hubris that gave rise to the crisis were not a sustainable norm. The future will not be as it was before.

Confidence in free markets and business ethics has been rattled. Regulation and better governance are required. Credit may not be as freely available or as cheap. Taxes may be higher too. Consumers will be more price-sensitive, they may become more discerning, questioning the value of brands. Concern for the environment may be more than a fad.

Will recovery mode create new demands of management accounting information and/or change the importance of the management accountant's organisational role?

Decision makers and stakeholders may require management accountants to provide a better and different service. Will this be radically different? If so how will this be achieved? Will it involve changed information systems for governance and performance management including leading indicators of opportunities, risks, competitive position and future performance. Will these changes permeate through the business, ensuring that it is managed in the long-term interests of the stakeholders?

"Are management accountants being responsive to how organisations' changing prospects and priorities after the crisis could impact on the practice of management accounting and the nature of their roles?"

Management accountants' roles may encompass organisational position and influence as well as their training and the way in which they interact with other organisational players.

Research proposals, employing any appropriate research methodologies and with a remit addressing these issues are invited.

Possible topics include:

- Will the recovery create new demands of management accounting information and/or changes in the importance of the management accountant's organisational role?
- What part do management accountants play in responses such as cost reduction, efficiency improvement, investment constraint, governance strengthening or business partnering? Does traditional training prepare them for these roles?
- Is the relentless drive for greater efficiency in an e-enabled, globalised world, segregating accounting and finance into different disciplines requiring different skills?

- Do management accountants have the skills or systems expertise to expand their remit beyond financial reporting to assess a wider range of data and conduct higher value analysis to provide decision makers with better information?
- Commercial accountants for 'business partnering' roles may be in demand. How can accountants' training and development provide the skills and expertise required for these roles? Are different leadership skills required? Can these be learned?
- As the accounting operations that traditionally provided the training ground for accountants are increasingly streamlined, automated or outsourced, are new career paths emerging?

Please note:

CIMA funds research that is relevant to management accountants and responds to current business conditions. As a global institute, its research is international in scope and applicability. Therefore proposals with timeframes exceeding 15 months or with a national bias, are less likely to be successful.

Grants are typically between £5,000 and £40,000 depending on the scope of the project and its outputs. Proposals where co-funding with another organisation has been obtained are strongly encouraged to apply.

Applying

Details and application forms can be obtained at www.cimaglobal.com/research

The closing date for applications is 22 August 2010 and shortlisted applicants will be invited to present their proposals to a CIMA review panel in mid October 2010.

The review panel will be chaired by the CIMA Professor, Falconer Mitchell, from the University of Edinburgh.

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