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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Take Into Account a Career Switch to Accounting

Montvale, N.J., March 31, 2009 – While failed financial institutions compete with massive layoffs for the headlines of the day, one profession continues to quietly grow: accounting. From college grads to jobless executives looking for a career change, thousands have the opportunity to meet the recession's need for skilled, ethical accountants.

With most companies concerned about cash flow and managing expenses, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts the accounting profession will grow faster than the national average of other job categories – creating more than a quarter million jobs over the next decade. The diversity of responsibilities offered in accounting, says Dennis Whitney, senior vice president of certification at the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA, www.imanet.org), allows experts from all backgrounds to find positions that best suit their skills.

For those curious about switching to accounting, Mr. Whitney suggests a few tips:

- **Identify your skill set.** What do you do really well? The best accountants are able to use analytical skills, like decision-making and evaluating costs vs. benefits, as well as “soft” skills, like leadership and strategic communication.
- **Join a professional association.** Belonging to a professional accounting association offers access to a network of colleagues and mentor opportunities. In addition, professional associations offer publications and other resources that prepare you for your new career.
- **Earn your education.** While some may choose to go back to school to pursue an accounting degree, earning a certification like IMA's Certified Management Accountant (CMA[®]) can be achieved with less time and money. The CMA credential demonstrates ability to work across the entire accounting process within organizations and establishes commitment to ethical behavior – a critical need in light of how certain challenges with the current economy have arose.

When applying for jobs, start your search within your company. “If you are already familiar with the organization, your transition to your new position will be much smoother,” said Mr. Whitney. If that isn't a possibility, look for a position within the same industry – e.g., technology or pharmaceuticals. Again, already knowing how the industry works will give you a leg up on the competition.

IMA is the world's leading organization dedicated to empowering accounting and finance professionals to drive business performance. For more information about IMA, please visit www.imanet.org.

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