



# IMA t talks to MCI

## Interview from Jeffrey C. Thomson President and CEO, Institute of Management Accountants (IMA®)

**IMA is the leading association for management accountants focused on driving business performance in the areas of decision support, planning and control. Jeffrey Thomson joined IMA in 2005 where he conceived and launched the IMA Research Center of Excellence, which has delivered global applications, tools and guidance, enabling management accountants to perform as strategic business partners. He was appointed President and CEO in 2008.**

**MCI: What has changed for you since the start of your collaboration with MCI?**

Jeffrey Thomson: We – MCI and IMA – have valued and learned from each other and from our experiences. We find ourselves closer to our customers than ever before. We consider MCI Middle East as our ears and eyes on the ground.

**MCI: How does MCI help IMA achieve its objectives in the Middle East?**

JT: MCI has given IMA the ability to rapidly expand our presence in the Middle East with a knowledgeable, talented and flexible workforce. The ability to tap into a wealth of experience not only in the region but also in the association management

profession has helped IMA achieve our very aggressive growth goals.

**MCI: How would you rate your overall collaboration with our team?**

JT: We are developing a long-term partnership based on shared interests and the MCI team has given us the ability to grow in regions throughout the world. MCI has been a good partner in our expansion.

**MCI: What in your opinion is the key attribute for a long-term collaboration?**

JT: Mutual trust.

**MCI: How would you describe your current relationship with MCI?**

JT: Professional, forthcoming, friendly and warm.

**MCI: What is your impression of MCI today?**

JT: MCI has grown enormously and we have been able to leverage this growth to help IMA achieve success. The quality of its people will always be its number one strength.

*MCI works with IMA from its Dubai office serving the Middle East and from its Beijing office serving China.*

### Insider's view

**MCI: How do you ensure that you design and offer a sustainable business model for IMA in the Middle East?**

Tarnbir Kaur: We have a team that understands the region very well and has worked closely with IMA to serve the market. The key to developing a successful business model is understanding IMA's objectives and developing strategies to achieve those goals while keeping in mind the cultural nuances and business behaviour in the region.

Our focus is to help IMA seize relevant business opportunities through strategies that meet their objectives and turn them into action. IMA has a very business-focused and culturally-sensitive team that makes our job easier!

**MCI: What are the main particularities of the Middle East market that impact on an association's ability to achieve its objectives in the region?**

TK: The perception of the Middle East is that it is a region deeply rooted in tradition. While this is true the governments and

decision-makers are getting more progressive. They understand that the world is changing and often recognise when their own institutions must change but without losing their unique cultural identity. The region grapples with the issue of reconciling unlimited information on digital media with the priorities of local culture. Understanding these subtleties within the region is the key to achieving success for any association.

**MCI: What in your view are the key factors for successful long-term client partnerships in the Middle East?**

TK: Trust and flexibility are crucial: to have an understanding that both parties are working towards a common goal and to adjust to changes based on environment, culture and other factors.

**MCI: How do you see growth prospects for associations in the region in the medium-to long-term?**

TK: The Middle East is a rapidly developing

market. Professionals in the region today want what other parts of the world have in terms of education and professional development, within their own cultural norms. Many countries are focusing very heavily on education which translates into the need for better and advanced professional development tools that associations can offer. We see a strong interest for association products and services in the region. Associations that see this potential and establish a presence in the region will have a role to play in the development of the region and grow their community in the process as well.

Read the full interview at [www.mci-group.com/interviews](http://www.mci-group.com/interviews)

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