

A CV boost and a great deal more



OBTAINING A PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN GRINDING THROUGH A COURSE OF DUBIOUS RELEVANCE AND ATTENDING EVENTS FILLED WITH YESTERDAY'S MEN. FOR **SCOTT J VAN DER VORD**, THE AMCT EXPERIENCE HAS OPENED UP A WHOLE NEW WORLD.

Professional qualifications are often billed as a way of making yourself more employable. While this undoubtedly holds true for the qualifications offered by the ACT, having now been an AMCT for the last 12 months I believe that there is a lot more to be gained than that.

As a qualified accountant at 24, I embarked on studying toward my AMCT for the very reason I mentioned first: to boost my career. When I started a year-long rotation in a global treasury department, I thought the AMCT looked like the perfect way to build on the day-to-day tasks I was performing, cementing the knowledge and experience gained by way of accredited examinations and a course of study. But what I have gained from my membership has far surpassed my original simple CV goal.

Knowing very little about the AMCT, I wrongly assumed that it was a home for the elder statesman, the mature bankers, the financiers and the corporate treasurers who had earned their stripes in years gone by. There were no electric pink logos at www.treasurers.org, as per the CIMA website, nor flashing graphics adorning the home screen to attract the passerby, à la ACCA. But as I delved deeper, it became clear that the AMCT offers a thoroughly modern educational experience by way of elective modules dealing with up-to-the-minute financial matters: pensions, corporate finance and funding, and risk management, to name but a few.

Relevant current affairs-based examination topics equip the student with knowledge and understanding of issues that affect the corporate world today. In recent times we have all been privy to the news of further defined benefit pension scheme closures, funding issues driving companies into administration, and the increasing requirements for hedging non-deliverable currencies.

Having now attended several ACT meetings and the recent breakfast briefing on credit ratings, I am also pleased to report that

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my fears about member demographics could not have been further from the mark. The register for the recent breakfast briefing illustrated the knowledge pool that these events can give you access to, with representatives from financial giants and leading corporates, and attendees ranging from students to those who have weathered similar financial storms before. The time allotted for questions from the floor allowed people with differing backgrounds and experiences to highlight additional factors and probe for solutions to recent problems they themselves are experiencing.

As a body offering professional development and qualifications, the ACT provides a service where you really do get out what you've put in. I chose to study towards the CertCFF (Certificate in Corporate Finance and Funding) to build on my interest in the subject with a view to opening the door to a career in corporate finance. In gaining the qualification, I now feel a great deal more confident and able to report on funding and make funding suggestions. CertCFF has heightened my awareness of issues that need to be controlled in my own role to ensure that corporate funding remains available and forecasts are as accurate as possible.

Moving into a more commercial bid team environment later on during the course, I decided that my second elective should not be too specialised but still relevant and decided that the CertRM (Certificate in Risk Management) would be the perfect choice. It would help me to understand the generic risks and to ensure that our contract proposals address these risks, both for my employer as a business and for the customer. CertRM has the additional benefit from my perspective of helping me understand the specialised way in which these risks can be mitigated, which in turn should allow me to improve internal departmental efficiency and reduce delays in actioning any processes.

I have found that the ACT runs events that enable me to keep up to date with industry current affairs and to develop a network of key contacts across the financial sector. It has also allowed me to tailor my AMCT qualification to make it personal and relevant, and to complement the career path that I want to tread.

Scott J Van Der Vord is finance manager at Cable & Wireless.

