

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE FOR THE CERT CM

IN OCTOBER 2001, THE FIRST SITTING OF THE ASSOCIATION'S NEW CERTIFICATE IN INTERNATIONAL CASH MANAGEMENT TOOK PLACE. NEIL LAKELAND TALKED TO ONE OF THE SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS TO FIND OUT WHAT HIS IMPRESSIONS WERE, AND THE REASONS BEHIND HIS CHOICE FOR TAKING THE EXAM.



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■ **WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE CERTIFICATE IN INTERNATIONAL CASH MANAGEMENT?** Many reasons, really. I am keen on personal development, and I saw the Cert CM as a chance to gain a relevant and valuable qualification in a subject I already knew something about. I felt undertaking a formal study programme would enhance my knowledge, which could improve my performance – as it has done. Then there was the chance to gain that all-important certificate – proof for any customer that the individual before them has achieved the industry benchmark. Finally, I'll not deny an element of peer pressure – many of my colleagues have already gained the Cert CM, and many more are now studying hard!

■ **WHAT PART OF THE COURSE DID YOU FIND THE MOST INTERESTING/HELPFUL?** It's difficult to point to one thing. The progress tests were a great way to check I was on the right track, the residential course was an ideal opportunity to reinforce my understanding on more complex issues, look at a few case studies, and get the word on the street from the various presenters. The most helpful part, for me, was the availability of a detailed standard text. The quick questions were also useful and, together with the mock exam paper, helped facilitate the revision process.

■ **HOW DO YOU SEE THE CERT CM QUALIFICATION BENEFITING YOUR CAREER?** I think it is going to benefit me in two distinct ways. First, it will help me to perform my job better on a day-to-day basis, providing that broader and deeper knowledge base to develop the best solutions to meet customers' real needs. Second, I feel I can now demonstrate to my current and any future employer that I have the commitment, as well as the ability, to achieve the industry standard of excellence. In today's market, qualifications are as important as ever – and this one is portable.

■ **WHAT IMPACT HAS THE ADDITIONAL KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED HAD ON YOUR CURRENT ROLE?** There's one answer to that: improved confidence. The programme has gone a long way to de-mystifying, for me, many aspects of cash management, particularly on the international side. I now have a clearer understanding of what is – and, more importantly, what isn't – possible when it comes to constructing a global solution. This has

improved my confidence when it comes to negotiating, and has helped me recommend, with that confidence, alternative solutions that I know are deliverable.

■ **HOW WOULD YOUR MANAGER DESCRIBE THE RETURN ON THEIR INVESTMENT?** David Jessop (Managing Director, Payments, Trade & Banking Services, RBS) wrote in the April 2001 issue of *The Treasurer* that [RBS] recognises the importance of the ACT Cert CM as being a vital knowledge base for sales, relationship and product teams. This view is endorsed by my Head of Sales, Harry Bell, who sees many potential returns from a fully qualified sales force with an enhanced skills set. One of these would be gaining quality new business from prospective customers who are attracted by the fact that nearly all RBS cash management consultants are ACT qualified. Putting money into improving staff performance is always worth it – and never more so than in the case of Cert CM.

■ **WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE ENROLLING NOW ON THE CERT CM?** There are so many things I could say now it's over. But here are a few points: identify your learning style and stick to it; read the whole text, not just bits of it; make yourself a good set of revision notes; force yourself to do the mock exam; don't forget your exam technique; read the questions properly and be pragmatic when faced with a complex case study, as there's usually no single right answer – it's up to you to recommend and justify something you feel will work based on the customer's situation.

■ **WOULD YOU RECOMMEND IT TO A FELLOW COLLEAGUE? IF NOT, WHY NOT?** Absolutely. I would also tell them about the level of commitment required as it's not something to be taken lightly.

■ **DO YOU NOW UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUR CORPORATE CUSTOMER WANTS BETTER THAN YOU DID BEFORE? HAVE YOUR CORPORATE RELATIONSHIPS IMPROVED?** Yes, although I have also learned that they do not always have the right information to hand to be able to work out exactly what they do want – or what is really best for them. The course goes to great length to underline the importance of due diligence – the customer best knows his business, the banker best knows the banking system. This is why banks and corporates must collaborate, as a jointly developed solution is always going to be the winner.

■ **HOW HAS THE STUDY PROGRAMME EQUIPPED YOU WITH A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE?** I certainly have a far better idea now of the implications of developing cash management solutions for businesses with a global footprint than I did before.