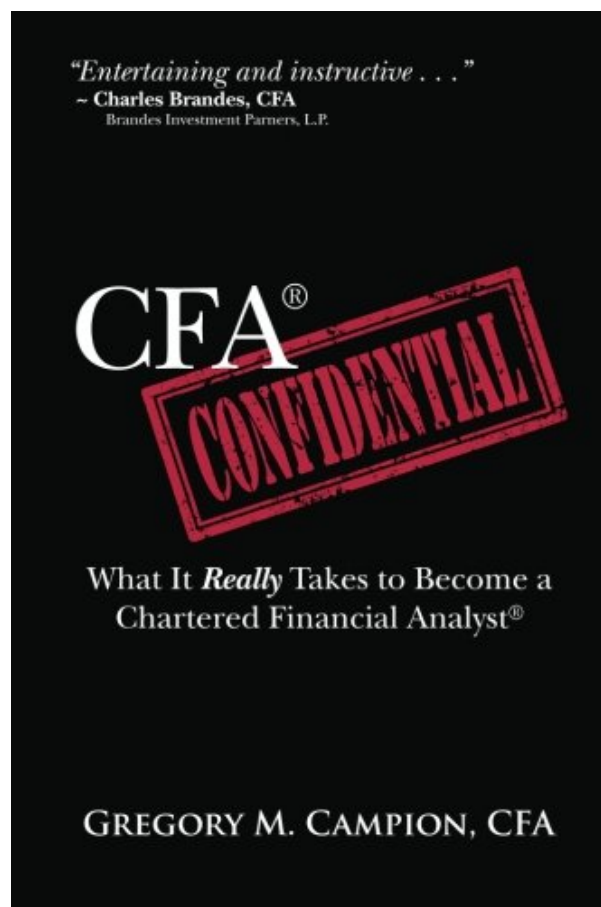


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Chartered Financial Analyst[®]

GREGORY M. CAMPION, CFA

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Chairman/CEO

Renaissance Macro Research, LLC

About the Author

A CFA Charterholder, Greg Campion honed his investment skills on the trading floors of Lehman Brothers, becoming a trusted capital markets advisor to some of the savviest hedge fund and mutual fund investors in the business. His investment commentary has been widely read by many of Wall Street's most influential investors. Greg is a graduate of Stonehill College and earned an MBA in Finance from New York University's Stern School of Business. He currently lives in Charlotte, North Carolina, with his family.

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A must-read for CFA candidates or those considering pursuing the CFA designation, *CFA Confidential: What It Really Takes to Become a Chartered Financial Analyst* is a refreshingly honest take on the mental marathon that is the CFA Program. A veteran of the exam process and current CFA Charterholder, Greg Campion tells you everything you need to know to get through the CFA exams successfully--and with your sanity intact:

- Find out if the CFA Charter is right for you, and see how it stacks up against an MBA and other credentials
- Get the lowdown on what pursuing the CFA Charter will really mean for you financially, personally, and professionally--from someone who's been there
- Zero in on crucial differences between each CFA exam level and strategize the smart way
- Learn the Do's and Don'ts of CFA success: create the perfect study space, craft a week-by-week plan that works, manage your time, and maintain your mental health
- Tackle exam day with confidence: choose the right location, show up with what you need, manage stress and anxiety, and ace the test

The perfect companion to the official CFA curriculum or third-party study guides, this accessible and entertaining read will guide you safely through what may be one of the most challenging--and rewarding--endeavors of your life.

- Sales Rank: #669387 in Books
- Published on: 2013-11-16
- Original language: English
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .30" w x 6.00" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 130 pages

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Most helpful customer reviews

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

Gregory M. Campion, CFA - the Motivator

By Scott P. Tochterman

Gregory Campion, CFA is not a gifted writer, but he is a gifted motivator. I read all of the prior reviews on this book prior to purchasing (the bottom line is that Mr. Campion's book is definitely worth purchasing) and my summation is that the 5 star ratings are a bit too glowing, and the substandard reviews are far too critical.

Essentially, there are two books on the market now that are written by recent CFA charterholders, which makes their "take" on the CFA process more relevant to pre- and existing CFA candidates. Rachel Bryant's book - Direct Path to the CFA Charter - is a far more detailed "blueprint" on how to pass each of the three CFA exams. Nearly twice the length of Mr. Campion's book (though still an easy read), she offers a multitude of very specific recommendations not contained in the CFA Confidential, written from the perspective of someone who actually passed each level on her first attempt.

However, what Mr. Campion offers in this worthwhile book is also of value: it is more of a psychological blueprint on how to pick oneself off the canvas in the face of failure in order to persevere through this difficult process (relevant to most readers is that nearly all CFA candidates fail at least one level). He has the (not unusual) distinction of having failed the exams as often as he passed them. His emotional perspective on the ups and downs of the process are very captivating - I sighed out loud when reading the section of the book where he describes the email he received from the CFA institute notifying him of his failure. Following this disappointment, he appropriately titles one of the final chapters "Back in the Ring" to describe his third attempt to pass Level 3. I could actually hear the old ACDC song in the background "Back in the ring.....to take another swing" as he described the final leg of his CFA journey.

I found myself personally relating to Mr. Campion on several levels - as I will also be embarking on this journey with an intense family dynamic (i.e. spouse and children). He comes across as an everyday professional seeking some additional respect in the workplace, likeable, and someone you could enjoy a cold birch beer with on your front porch or back deck on a summer afternoon. What he lacks in writing prose, he makes up for in engaging the reader to believe that normal people can achieve a CFA charter if they work hard enough.

While perhaps not intended by the two CFA charterholder authors, Mr. Campion and Mrs. Bryant are an excellent complement to one another.

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Realistic and pragmatic

By Cynthia Meyer

Are you considering enrolling in the CFA® program? Have you passed one or more exams but are stuck on Level Two or Three? Are you the spouse or significant other of someone in the program? If you answered yes to any of these questions, READ THIS BOOK! Gregory Campion tells you what you need to survive the rigors of the CFA® program.

CFA® Confidential is a story of what else is required to pass all three exams in addition to a comprehensive understanding of the curriculum: persistence, organization, consistent study, multitudes of practice exams, family support and humility. Those are the true lessons of his experience.

More than anything, the real gem in this book is the discussion of what to do, and how to keep yourself motivated, if you fail an exam. If you are considering the CFA® program, chances are you are accustomed to succeeding. So is everyone else taking each exam, but the pass rates are low. This program is like no other in finance in terms of difficulty, with the exception of actuarial exams. The majority of test-takers at each level do not pass the first time they take the exam. In an interesting statistic, Campion calculates the recent odds of passing each level sequentially on the first try at about 9%. For many candidates, resilience after an initial failure is what gets them over the finish line. You have to stay in the game. It's an ultra-marathon, not a sprint.

The author discusses the immense volume of material candidates need to master, the frustrations of devoting the better part of each year to studying, the challenges of staying motivated when you fail an exam and the need to juggle work, family, friendships and exam preparation.

While Campion does make some excellent suggestions regarding how to study, he correctly explains that each candidate will have a different study style. There are some good prep providers. There is no magic bullet for preparing for the exams. You have to understand the content and be to apply what you have learned and explain it in the context of the exam format. For those candidates who are aghast at the piles of books on your desk, I am sorry to say that there are no shortcuts! You have to go through them. However, you can study efficiently, and Campion presents ways to do that successfully that worked for him.

I would have loved to have this book to read before I entered the CFA® program. When I entered the program at the encouragement of a manager who held the CFA® designation, I did not yet have a very clear idea of the time and effort required. Needless to say it is considerable, but worth it. I am sitting for the Level Three exam for the second time in June 2014 and found Campion's book to be just the encouragement I needed to stay motivated.

I don't necessarily agree with Campion that Schweser material makes the best foundation material, although I do use them. I think you have to read the curriculum at least once and do all the end of chapter problems. This can get a bit tricky in the quantitative parts so the prep provider chapters for those topics can be a real lifesaver. I do agree strongly with Campion that you have to take as many practice tests as possible.

I liked this book and found it informative, realistic and useful. I don't know the author -- I found out about the book from a forum on LinkedIn. Thanks to Greg for writing it, and for sharing his experience.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Very useful

By M. J. Lomenzo

This is required reading if you are thinking of pursuing the CFA designation. Greg is very honest and upfront about what it takes to pass these brutal exams as well as a few strategic points which are not to be overlooked. The chapter on CFA vs. MBA will be quite useful to those thinking about a career in Finance

and which option to choose or perhaps both. Having passed 2 of these exams and getting ready for Level 3 exam next June, I can tell you that many of his suggestions are right on point.

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