

Managing

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Educational Opportunities

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FOR STUDENTS OR THOSE in other fields considering security and for those in the field who wish to advance their careers, there are many ways to get on the knowledge train. Below is a look at some options apart from full degrees (not addressed here), particularly with regard to continuing education. Some of the best trends in continuing education in the security industry include certification programs, mentoring, and specialized programs for experienced professionals.

Certifications

For security professionals who meet the basic experience qualifications and have the requisite knowledge to pass the examination, going for a certification, such as one of those offered by ASIS—the Certified Protection Professional (CPP), the Physical Security Professional (PSP), and the Professional Certified Investigator (PCI)—is a way to gain recognition for specialized knowledge. There are certifications for related fields as well, such as for IT security. Professional certifications can be earned at all levels of professional development, and may eventually take the place of a degree in some fields. Employers will increasingly look for professionally certified individuals to distinguish high achievers.

While classes aren't necessarily required—only the knowledge to pass the certification test—most people going for the certifica-

tion go through an intensive study period, often taking classes to ensure that they will know what they need to know; thus, while certifications are not in themselves continuing education, such a course of learning generally occurs beforehand.

Some professional certification programs have even been married with college degree programs while others are offered to students or presented as part of an on-the-job training program.

In some cases, degree programs and professional certifications work together. In the IT world, for example, when earning a Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) designation from (ISC)², an applicant may swap out some of the required experience with a relevant advanced degree.

For operational security, those who

want to prepare for the exam with study courses will find that John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City offers the Professional Security Management Course, which the college says covers all of the topic areas students need to know to earn the CPP.

Another strategy, exemplified by the Loss Prevention Foundation, is a program that allows college graduates to obtain an associate version of its full certification. The not-for-profit association offers a Loss Prevention Certified (LPC) designation for those already working in the field who have amassed a certain amount of experience. However, the group also offers the Loss Prevention Qualified (LPQ) program to those who are fresh out of college or who have less than three years of experience in the field. The association has also founded the Academic and Retail Partnership Program, which connects retailers with colleges offering loss prevention courses. Beginning in their junior year of college, loss prevention students may sign up for the program, which allows them to sit for the LPQ exam. If the students pass the exam, they are given an opportunity to interview with one of the retail companies involved with the program.

Certificate Programs

Certificate programs are distinct from certifications in that they are about taking

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a course of study to gain proficiency, not passing an examination to earn a designation. These programs generally consist of a series of classes designed to initiate someone into a particular field of study but at a level below what would be entailed in getting a full bachelor's degree in a related area. Some of these programs are extensive and can span two years, but others are tightly focused and can be completed in a few days. For example, Kaplan University is offering a Private Security Certificate program that includes courses in loss prevention, risk management, investigations, and white collar crime.

Starting in December 2013, those attending ASIS International's Executive Protection Program can earn an executive protection certificate. After attending a two-day classroom program on executive protection, attendees can take an online exam to receive the certificate. Other certificate programs in physical security, corporate investigation, and asset protection are planned in the future.

Some of the most comprehensive programs are currently being offered in the contract security officer field. Large security officer service providers, such as Securitas, AlliedBarton, and G4S, offer professional development training and certificates based on the industry the officer works in. Most of these are online programs that fit certain criteria. For example, AlliedBarton's healthcare training modules include guidelines based on Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act requirements, and other issues that officers in that environment will need to be prepared for, such as management of aggressive behavior and handling of bloodborne pathogens.

Mentoring

Mentoring programs can help young professionals learn about a particular job first-hand from an expert. Though such programs have traditionally been sponsored by large companies, some associations have launched industry-specific programs that help place mentees in a wider range of smaller organizations.

Several ASIS chapters developed a mentorship pilot program last year that operates at the chapter level in cities around

the country. Chapters spread the word among members to encourage those willing to serve as mentors to join the program; they must have at least five years of experience in the field to participate. Candidates for the protégé opportunity must have at least one year of experience.

Both parties fill out an online evaluation form and a computer program matches the mentor to the protégé. The two then set up an informal contract establishing goals and logistics. The mentor and protégé then meet at least once a month.

Those overseeing the program have found that the interest extends well beyond young professionals. Almost half of the people applying are seeking a second career as a security professional and are coming from government or law enforcement.

Last year, the program was rolled out in ASIS chapters in Chicago, San Francisco, Phoenix, and Boston. In the upcoming year, chapters in Atlanta; Los Angeles; New York City; Washington, D.C.; Toronto, Canada; Sweden, and the United Kingdom are scheduled to host programs.

(ISC)² has also launched a similar mentorship program, which it set up through its 35 and younger Young Professionals group this year. Those who join the Young Professionals can be matched with more experienced practitioners from the broader (ISC)² membership. Mentors are matched with protégés via (ISC)² chapters.

Top Level

Though not as prevalent, there are also programs aimed at the most senior and experienced security professionals. Most of these are full-fledged high-level MBA programs, but at least one, offered by The Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, is a two-week course geared toward top-tier chief security officers and others in high-level security management positions.

The program classes are taught in two separate week-long segments, each of which requires travel to the Philadelphia campus, but the two are separated by a one-month interim. The curriculum covers the core business concepts to enhance each participant's strategic perspective and sharpen business instincts. Modules bridge theory and practice on such topics

as strategic thinking, managing people, negotiation, finance, and marketing. Emphasis is also placed on communicating effectively with other corporate leaders, especially when tackling the bottom-line implications of security decisions.

Another executive program is Effective Management for Security Professionals, a four-day executive program that will be held in Madrid, Spain, from June 3 to June 6, 2014. Sponsored by ASIS International and the IE Business School in Madrid, the program is specifically designed to assist mid- to senior-level security managers in developing their business acumen.

The custom-designed program focuses on business fundamentals and helps participants develop a salient voice in business matters. The content is built around interactive discussions, case studies, and teamwork. As a course project, participants develop and present a sound business case to ensure funding for a specific security initiative. Upon successful completion of the program, participants receive an IE Business School/ASIS certificate.

The American Public University is working with the CSO Roundtable to offer a postgraduate program, Business Essentials for the Security Executive, which is designed for high-level security professionals. The program is the equivalent of 18 semester hours and concentrates on the management skills that security professionals may not have mastered before taking on high-level positions. For example, the program offers instruction on supervising personnel, developing budgets, and planning operational strategies. After completion of the program, the professional is granted a graduate certificate—a credentialed award that is less extensive than a postgraduate degree.

No one can predict the future, but lifelong learning is certain to be a part of it and to be an asset in facing it. Whether online or in a classroom, through certifications or mentoring, successful security professionals will always be students at heart. ■

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