

On the Move? Let's Start with the LP Foundation

It's been a busy year for the Loss Prevention Foundation (LPF). When the LPF was established in 2006 there was a clear mission to advance the retail loss prevention profession by providing relevant and challenging educational resources that would promote positive growth and strengthen our value to the retail community. While the business of retail has faced its challenges since those early days of the LPF, the leadership of the loss prevention industry has been persistent in establishing a stellar platform for growth and development by implementing a strategy designed to move the industry forward in a positive and constructive manner.

These efforts, under the leadership of the LPF team, the board of directors, and the committees that guide the many initiatives of the Foundation have provided both opportunity for its members and direction for the industry in general. But what's next? We recently sat down with the LPF team—Gene Smith, David Phillips and Donna Murphy—for their insights on what we can expect.

Laying the Groundwork

Supporting the LP community and the diverse needs of the industry requires an effective portal where information and support can be effectively channeled to its members. As the Foundation takes its next steps, a solid delivery platform is a primary objective. This helps establish a strong foundation for learning while providing the groundwork for guidance, direction, partnership, and communication.

“First, we wanted to ensure that we provided a quality website,” says David Phillips, operations manager. “We believe that a crucial aspect of our continuing growth is implementing a robust program that ties all of our assets together. While we felt we had the groundwork, we wanted to take it to another level. We've completely retooled our website, organizing the content into clean categories to make it easier to navigate and find information. We wanted to consolidate information and make it more user-friendly. By taking steps to make it simple and convenient to access the information, we make the entire process more manageable. Considering the mobile demands of our membership, we also wanted to make it easier to use with different devices.”

Enhancing the Membership Program

An important element of the LPF mission is the ongoing development of a quality membership program that provides value

By **Jacque Brittain, LPC**



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to its members. But there are different ways that value can be measured. For some, the greatest value falls within the educational resources provided by LPF. For others, it's the networking, mentoring, and team-building aspects that come with membership. Still others are looking for other sources of value, to include more tangible benefits. Identifying and understanding the needs of the membership is a fundamental building block of the program.

As membership has grown, so has the reach of the possibilities. Corporate membership programs are now available. There are partnerships benefiting students, veterans, and fallen loss prevention professionals. There are even local chapters forming so that like-minded professionals can come together to reap the benefits of collaboration and cooperation.

“The LPQ and LPC certifications and our other learning tools are naturally an important part of what we offer,” says Phillips. “But we wanted to do more. Our membership includes many different benefits that support the growth and development of the loss prevention professional. In addition to the different learning resources that are available, we also have internal resources for interactive networking, assistance in publishing white papers that includes a committee review, first access to breaking news, a future leaders program, and many other features that provide benefits to our members.”

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partnerships benefiting students, veterans, and fallen loss prevention professionals. There are even local chapters forming so that like-minded professionals can come together to reap the benefits of collaboration and cooperation.

As mentioned, some are more interested in tangible benefits. While the professional advantages of membership may be clear, it's only natural that financial considerations are going to weigh on our decisions as well. When budgets are tight, value is at a premium. These concerns have also been addressed.

"We've recently expanded our membership offerings through our 'Member's Only' program, which significantly boosts these benefits," adds Donna Murphy, LPF's marketing and operations coordinator. "This is an exceptional program that will not only save members money, but will likely beat most other member and retail discount programs. The program offers discounts on thousands of products, from theatres and department stores to hotels, car rentals, and plane tickets. Members can get deals at some of their favorite restaurants, or even buy a car at tremendous savings. There is a small opt-in fee, but we are sure that they will save far more, easily besting the cost of membership."

Raising the Bar for Academic Excellence

A core component of the LPF mission remains the development and implementation of the industry certification programs, LPQualified (LPQ) and LPCertified (LPC), the retail industry's only internationally sanctioned certifications. These accredited courses have drawn professional accolades as well as academic recognition, to include an academic honor of excellence—the first academic distinction of its kind to be granted to a loss prevention industry association.

"While we're very pleased with the depth and quality of the courses and the way that the industry has responded to LPC and LPQ, we understand that the bar is constantly being raised," states Gene Smith, president of LPF. "This requires that we approach certification—and all of our learning resources—as a living process that must evolve with the changes in the business and the needs of the loss prevention community."

Updates and revisions to the content have been part of an ongoing process with the certifications. However, more enhancements will be forthcoming that will support exam preparation and additional developments that enrich the courses and presentation.

Upgrades have also involved the exam facilities. "We recognized that this was an important aspect of the process, and an area of opportunity," says Smith. "Following extensive research, we then identified the best proctored exam provider available and secured the services of Pearson Vue. More site options are available for students, with a large percentage of those facilities found on college campuses. This also gives us greater flexibility moving forward as we continue to expand our reach."

That reach has continued to grow as well. While the focus of certification efforts remains in the U.S., the LPF recently announced additional expansion into India and the United Kingdom. "Although the certifications were constructed based upon U.S. laws, these are global concepts. Most of the policies, procedures, and loss strategies are universal, and will

apply across a broad retail spectrum," states Smith. "We have organizations around the world coming to us and asking us to support their efforts. We've identified top markets and partners within those markets that can help get the message to the people. Additional expansion is anticipated very soon, with Australia, South America, and the Caricom Nations of the Caribbean showing significant interest in certification."

This Is Your LP Foundation

While Smith, Phillips, Murphy, and the rest of the contributors to the Loss Prevention Foundation deserve accolades for their efforts and winning attitude, Smith reminds us that this is *your* LP Foundation. "Everything that we've accomplished has been part of the collective efforts of the loss prevention community. Without the tremendous support that we've received from LP practitioners, solution providers, our academic partners, and everyone else who have contributed to our success, we would never be where we are today. We're standing on the shoulders of giants, and those shoulders are growing broader every day."

With membership expanding, the number of certified professionals growing and interest continuing to mount, this year promises much more of the same. "We're never sitting still at the Foundation," proclaims Smith. It's hard to know what will happen next.

Newly Certified

Following are individuals who recently earned their certifications.

Recent LPC Recipients

David Alvarado, LPC, California State University at San Bernardino
Dave Collins, LPC, Sterling Jewelers
Richard Connell, LPC, Staples
Christopher Harris, LPC, Weis Markets
Christopher Harris, LPC, University of Massachusetts at Lowell
Pamelyn Harvin, LPC, T.J.Maxx
Jeff Hetherington, LPC, 7-Eleven
Ryan Hogan, LPC, Lowe's
John Hudson, LPC, Weis Markets
George LaCorte, LPC
Aaron Lawyer, LPC, TJX
Justin MacIntyre, LPC, Von Maur
Adam Post, LPC, Spartan Stores
Tonya Sjolin, LPC, Sur La Table
Brent Smerczynski, LPC, 7-Eleven
Darrel Timan, LPC, 7-Eleven
Bryan Varns, LPC, Rite Aid
Jason Weiss, LPC
Keith White, LPC, The Gap Inc.

Recent LPQ Recipients

Jeremy Carr, LPQ, Walmart
Larry David Halbe, LPQ, The Sports Authority
Katie Hultman, LPQ
Jean-Henri Laprime, LPQ
Marissa Ramon, LPQ, PETCO
Lamar Underwood, LPQ, Amazon
Sharon Wiltshire, LPQ, 7-Eleven
Patrick Zweber, LPQ ■