



by Gene Smith

Smith is president of The Loss Prevention Foundation, the not-for-profit organization charged with the responsibility of building a certification and membership program. He was formerly president of the industry's largest executive search and consulting firm specializing in providing human resource solutions for the retail loss prevention, safety, and audit industries. During the past fifteen-plus years, Smith has provided career counseling for thousands of industry professionals nationwide. He can be reached at 704-837-2521 or via email at gene.smith@losspreventionfoundation.org.



Why Does the LP Industry Need Certification?

Which of these answers to the above question are correct?

- To establish a common language for our industry.
- To establish core competencies so candidates can demonstrate their understanding to prospective employers.
- To help LP professionals learn and improve their current performance through education.
- To enhance the perception of our industry with those outside of our profession.
- To help criminal justice majors and college graduates understand our industry better before they enter it.
- To increase the awareness with college and university professors that loss prevention is an excellent career opportunity for their students.
- To give LP professionals who work for retailers who lack superior LP education programs an equal opportunity to learn on their own.
- To demonstrate to other segments of the occupational workplace that retail loss prevention is worthy to have its own certification program.
- To give candidates an opportunity to put themselves above their competition.

The answer, of course, is all of the above.

I've recently received several reminders that clearly demonstrate why our industry has developed loss prevention certification. I've taken the liberty of including excerpts from some of the many email correspondences received and conveying their message through the following two scenarios.

New to LP Finds Success after LPQ Certification

Dear Mr. Smith,

As I hope you will recall, a couple of weeks ago you contacted me in reference to my success with the LPQ program. During our conversation, I stated I was having some difficulty finding a position in the field, leading to some frustration. Well, I am happy to report that thanks to your words of encouragement and some persistence, I have finally found success.

A couple weeks after our last correspondence, I checked LPjobs.com and found that a retailer had a position open for a Loss Prevention Officer close by my home. I applied and received an interview a few days later. I thought the interview went very well and had the suspicion that they were thinking about hiring me after they contacted my references. After not hearing back from them after a week or so, I thought

something had gone wrong and they hired someone else. Much to my surprise, I received a call back from the DLPM who I interviewed with. She told me they still wanted to hire me, but she was trying to find a supervisor's position for me. That being said, she received permission to bring me on as a Loss Prevention Supervisor, and I started just 3 days ago!

Now that I have found success, I hope to learn as much as I can and start the LPC program here in a couple months. Thanks again for your words of encouragement!

*Sincerely,
New to LP*

Dear New to LP,

That is great news! That retailer is a very good company.

Do you feel the knowledge gained by taking the LPQ coursework helped you and, if so, in what way? Did it help you during the interview?

Please keep in touch. I'd love to keep track of your progress.

Best Regards,
Gene Smith

**What industry in today's society that hopes to project an organized, professional stature does not have certification?
Is loss prevention less deserving?**

Dear Mr. Smith,

I think the LPQ program contributed significantly to my success during the interview. It allowed me to use vocabulary found within the industry and understand the interviewer much more than I would have using just my security knowledge. The interviewer was pleased to see that I had obtained training on my own, but was unfamiliar with the LPQ course. I think it has helped more with their in-store training program as I understand much more about what individuals are trying to convey and will allow me to move that much more quickly through their own in-house process with greater success than others in the past.

As stated previously, while I am new to loss prevention I have a strong knowledge of security and think that standards and certifications are long overdue in any security

discipline. While I certainly understand the necessity for in-store training, I would love to see this education program become a standard, and looked at for promotions. I would be more than happy to help in the future. I look forward to keeping you posted on my progress.

Sincerely,
New to LP

Military Officer Seeks Help with Transition to Private Life

A military officer serving abroad inquired as to whether the LPQ certification program was approved under the G.I. bill. We informed him that it currently was not, but we intend to gain approval in the future. After some additional thoughts and considering the many sacrifices that our military personnel make, we approached KPMG, a doctorate-level foundation partner, and asked them if they would consider donating one of their scholarships to this military officer.

“It would be a privilege and an honor to help one of our military members,” replied Al Voels, director advisory services at KPMG. “This is an individual who has sacrificed much for all of us. He is simply trying to make himself more marketable in a tough economic time when he returns. It is the least that we can do.”

Why do we need and value certification? Hopefully, we’ve answered that question for any of you who were wondering.

Two last questions for your consideration: What industry in today’s society that hopes to project an organized, professional stature does not have certification? Is loss prevention less deserving? ■



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