

Understanding the Bigger Picture

This is another in a series of interviews with working LP professionals who have earned their LPQ or LPC certifications from the Loss Prevention Foundation (LPF) to hear in their own words why they pursued certification, and how it benefited their careers.

Why did you decide to pursue certification?

I saw certification as a means to validate my knowledge and understanding of the business and how I approach what I do. However, after fourteen years in the profession, I also saw a means to expand my skills and knowledge base beyond my own experiences. I wanted to seize the opportunity to learn from the brightest minds in the industry. I completed my LPC certification in April 2014.

Was the course what you expected?

It was exactly what I expected it to be. It challenged me on relevant topics that can help craft anyone into a more well-rounded business leader, not just an LP professional. In some courses, you can get lost in theory with no practical application, but this course offers real-world perspective. Throughout the course, you can imagine yourself in the situations and think through how you would react.

I was extremely excited by the opportunity to jump into learning the material, passing the exam, and earning my certification. I dedicated my lunch breaks a few times per week to reviewing modules. In the evenings I would spend time after the kids went to bed, and I spent a couple of weekends pushing through the material.

I really enjoyed delving into the content focused on the creation of a team. While I felt comfortable with the basics of LP, the key aspects of safety, the principles of business continuity, learning more about the development of a team and the implementation of a program from the ground floor was both very exciting and eye opening.

The quizzes at the end of each chapter were a very helpful part of the process. If I missed a question, I would retake all ten questions until I got 100 percent. I would recommend this approach, as it reinforced the messages within the lessons and helped ensure I learned the material.

After I completed all of the course content, I scheduled the exam for the soonest possible date. While waiting for the exam date to arrive, I rotated between the pre-test review and the Study Gopher questions to help me prepare. When exam day arrived, I felt confident that I not only could answer the

Interview with Brent Smerczynski, LPC



Brent Smerczynski, LPC, is the corporate asset protection manager for operations for 7-Eleven. Prior to his time at 7-Eleven, he held various roles in the public and private sector, including serving as an OSHA safety consultant for the Oklahoma Department of Labor and holding district-level positions in safety, asset protection, and operations for ten years at The Home Depot.

exam questions, but also fully grasped the concepts, which is the greatest difference between the exam and the reviews.

Looking at your own personal development, what information within the course has helped you the most?

It really helped give me a better perspective of the big picture. Early in your career, your focus can be narrowed based on the role you are in. As your knowledge and experience grow, you begin to see things in a different light—you see the big picture. The course reminds you that while the details are important, you cannot get lost in the details if you want to find success on a global scale.

Accept the challenge to certify. I truly believe that you won't have a true picture of what you don't know until you jump into the process. While it will validate and reinforce much of what you already know, you will also realize that learning never ends.

I believe that becoming certified has made me a better LP professional. Now that I've completed the course, I take the steps to make sure that my focus, my team's focus, and our work product are all aligned with the company objectives. I look at the effect my decision-making will have on the field and the operators in the stores. If it is not the right call for the company or does not align with our shared goals, then I have to step back and reassess.

By taking this path, we have ensured continuity, partnership, and support regardless of the road we go down. We are all aligned with a common purpose, making the team and the company more efficient and productive.

Would you recommend certification to others?

Absolutely. Regardless of how long any of us have been in the profession, there is much that we can learn from each other. There are many concepts that can help make you better at what you do, and you might just pick up a few new tricks

along the way. The LP profession touches almost every facet of business, and the opportunities are almost endless. Certification shows that you are vested in your own growth, and you are committed to the improvement of the profession as well.

Accept the challenge to certify. I truly believe that you won't have a true picture of what you don't know until you jump into the process. While it will validate and reinforce much of what you already know, you will also realize that learning never ends. Either way, the learning experience will help you grow as a professional. I know that if there was another level above LPC, I would jump right in.

Newly Certified

Following are individuals who recently earned their certifications.

Recent LPC Recipients

Lisa Albers, LPC, DICK'S Sporting Goods
 Nelson Badillo, LPC, Bealls
 Vernon Bales, LPC, Pep Boys
 William Borer, LPC, American Eagle Outfitters
 Zakare Brownlee, LPC, CFI, Bealls
 Jeffrey Coburn, LPC, Walmart
 Denise DeLorey, LPC, Sobeys
 Allison Entsminger, LPC, Delhaize America
 Javion Hutchinson, LPC, Walgreens
 Stephen Hyle, LPC, AFA Security Services
 Stephen Kellison, LPC, 7-Eleven
 Peter Owen, LPC, Shoppers Drug Mart
 Byron Smith, LPC, 7-Eleven
 Fiordaliza Ventura-Edwards, LPC, Walgreens

Recent LPQ Recipients

Troy Bostick, LPQ, Dynamic Security
 Merete Ciafone, LPQ, Hermes of Paris
 Astor Concepcion, LPQ, American Eagle Outfitters
 Patrick Courteau, LPQ, Goodwill Industries of Seattle
 Denise Coyle, LPQ, Publix Super Markets
 Sasha Dean, LPQ, Sobeys
 Michael Ferrell, LPQ, QVC
 Kevin Franklin, LPQ, Goodwill Industries of Seattle
 Justin Gingery, LPQ, 7-Eleven
 Jolene Halbach, LPQ, Festival Foods
 Christopher Havis, LPQ, 7-Eleven
 Mary Krieger, LPQ, Panera Bread
 Craig Laprath, LPQ, Ross Stores
 Galina Pluto, LPQ, Swarovski
 Rachael Prieto, LPQ, Genesco
 Andrew Radak, LPQ, Rite Aid
 Lizette Sandoval-Bishop, LPQ, Staples
 Ryan Scherschell, LPQ, 7-Eleven
 Ryan Slagle, LPQ, American Eagle Outfitters
 Jennifer Sleeter, LPQ, AMF Bowling Centers
 Denis Sunderland, LPQ, Prairie North Co-op
 Tomasz Szustak, LPQ, eBay
 Michael Tanner, Sr., LPQ, USCG
 Michael Trella, LPQ, Binny's Beverage Depot ■

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