



by Gene Smith

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It's Time to Step Up

Over the past year and a half, I have discussed the topic of industry certification with dozens and dozens of industry leaders, industry professionals, and members of the academic community. I have heard all the reasons why certification is a good thing and why it should be done. A few have been hesitant to embrace it, but quickly became supporters once they learned how the certification process was being developed.

Isn't it true that many of us are often slow to embrace new ideas? Why is that? Is it because we as a group don't like change? We are habitually cautious and often skeptical.

Oh, how I remember what many said when the Certified Forensic Interviewer (CFI) certification was first introduced. Now look at how it is accepted and expected as a measurement of one's competency in interview and interrogation techniques.

While it is an important aspect of our profession to be careful and cautious, we must also embrace the value of change; the type of change that moves us forward; the type of change that allows us to evolve as a profession and as an asset to the retail community.

Facts about LP Certification

Following are a few facts about the certification programs developed by the Foundation.

- 130-plus loss prevention professionals have dedicated themselves to providing content.
- 60-plus retail and vendor companies have allowed their professionals to participate.
- 18 months were required to develop the LPQualified (LPQ).
- 2-plus years will be required to develop the LPCertified (LPC).
- 500 pages of text were written for the LPQ and over 1000 (estimated) pages for the LPC.
- 3 modules and 25 sections for the LPQ and 6 modules and 41 sections for the LPC.
- 3 Ph.D.s were involved in developing the LPQ exam.

There are many reasons why certification was never done before—cost, lack of resources, and industry leadership are just a few. Why now? Simple. A group of dedicated industry leaders took the initiative to organize other loss prevention professionals. They developed a plan, raised the necessary funds, and assembled a team to spearhead the efforts. Have you ever heard the phrase, “You have to do the right thing, in the right way, at the right time, and when you are ready for it?” Guess what...

Certification is the right thing. There is no consistent knowledge base between loss prevention programs. There

is no way to fully demonstrate your level of competency and understanding of this industry for promotional consideration or employment selection without completing a course and a proctored examination. Certification gives us that consistency, adds credibility to our profession, and helps to validate our role in the retail community.

Certification is being done in the right way. This certification could have been developed in six months if that was the desire of the Foundation board of directors, but it was not. They chose to do it in the *right* way by carefully selecting specific individuals to determine what would make up the content. They made sure each segment of retail was represented and each executive level was involved. Established and highly respected members of the academic community participated in the development of the programs as well, along with the direction from Knapp & Associates International, the leading management consulting experts serving the credentialing community. Plus, the board took the extra step and spent the extra money and resources to establish a not-for-profit foundation, ensuring that our efforts and resources continue to support *the industry* and all of the future leaders of our profession.

While it is an important aspect of our profession to be careful and cautious, we must also embrace the value of change; the type of change that moves us forward; the type of change that allows us to evolve as a profession and as an asset to the retail community.

Certification is being done at the right time. With the increase demand to fill homeland security, law enforcement, and government positions, identifying and attracting quality candidates is at the most difficult and challenging point in our history. Certification is a tool to help recruit and educate candidates who might be interested in our profession. It is also a tool for management to use in assessing and evaluating talent, thus increasing their accuracy and enhancing their decision-making process.

Certification is being done when the industry is ready for it. Our industry has accepted the industry-leading CFI. We are familiar with what it can do for individuals and companies

and recognize the value, and yet the CFI only certifies an individual on one specialized aspect of our industry. This is certainly an essential skill that should be tuned and developed, but is that all that we are? Why not have a certification program that validates our overall knowledge of the profession, and not just one aspect? What skilled professions don't have certification? Nurses, accountants, auditors, electricians, insurance agents, realtors, fireman, auto mechanics, dental assistants, financial advisors, safety professionals...need I list more? We are familiar with certifications in today's society and expect those companies that we solicit services from to employ certified professionals.

Why Should You Get Certified?

Why does anyone want to pursue a college degree? Read industry books and publications?

Have you ever heard someone say it is a bad idea to acquire a degree? Is it a bad idea to learn as much as you can about the profession that has provided your livelihood?

Would you ever advise your kids not to take courses to better themselves?

What harm is there in taking responsibility for your own career development and demonstrating that you care about learning?

Education is an investment that we make in ourselves. It is not simply a commitment to learning more, but also to getting better. It demonstrates a devotion to your career and career growth. We are part of a dynamic, fast-paced, highly competitive business that is constantly evolving. It is essential that we move forward and evolve as well if we hope to further our careers, support our profession, and enhance our value to the retail community.

The Benefits of Certification

Certification can benefit loss prevention professionals in several ways.

- Demonstrates to both current and prospective employers your desire to learn and further develop industry knowledge.
- Designates a level of knowledge and understanding of the core competencies that our industry leaders have identified

and acknowledged as critical to excel as a loss prevention professional.

- Validates the knowledge level of LP professionals and promotes industry professionalism by demonstrating your level of competency.
- Serves as a valuable resume builder, endorsing your knowledge base and promoting your commitment as a retail professional as well as a qualified LP professional.
- Qualifies you for career opportunities as companies are now adding certification as a preferred requirement in their job descriptions.
- Most importantly, certification is a means to enhance performance, expand our knowledge and expertise, confirm our understanding, challenge our perspective, and reinforce industry goals and objectives.

Get Involved

I would like to personally thank the hundreds of dedicated people who

have been involved in the development of *your* Foundation over the past two years. No matter how large or small of a contribution, it all helps to build a better Foundation.

Unlike other on-line LP groups and clubs, we are a 501c6 not-for-profit organization by design. As such, any future profits must go back into improving the Foundation, and developing resources for the industry.

We are here to support and partner with all retailers, vendors, trade associations, academic programs, and other certifications.

Most significantly, we are here for *you*—the individual members of the Foundation. We are committed to representing you in the most professional manner possible and to continue to develop resources that further your personal and professional development. So, please get involved in the Foundation and help us to continue to build a better foundation for tomorrow. ■

Access Control

- ◆ Control up to 8 doors
- ◆ 10,000 Audits
- ◆ 40 Users
- ◆ Authentication Options
 - Pin Code
 - Dallas Key, Fingerprint or Card Swipe

And MUCH More!

Remote Access

Receive Audits and have administration control via the Internet!

Exception Reporting

Instant Response If Things Go Wrong

SafeWizard® Access Control System

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