



by Britt Wood

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Myths, Rumors, and Misinformation

Setting the Record Straight

As I have traveled to the different trade shows and conferences this spring, it has come to my attention that there are some myths, rumors, and misinformation floating around about The Loss Prevention Foundation. Much of these misnomers can be explained by the newness of this effort, but it did make me realize that we at The Foundation need to do a better job of communicating with you, the loss prevention professionals who we are striving to serve. With that said, I would like to address what I perceive as the biggest inaccuracies regarding The Loss Prevention Foundation and our programs.

The Choice is Yours

The board of directors of The Foundation made the decision that we had an opportunity to serve the loss prevention community in two unique ways. The first method of service was a two-tiered certification program designed to provide education to the loss prevention community—the Loss Prevention Qualified (LPQ) and the Loss Prevention Certified (LPC). The second was the creation of a membership program that would focus on serving LP professionals by providing them career and other educational resources. These resources, including a career center, are designed to provide the individual loss prevention professional with the resources needed to have a successful career in loss prevention.

So, how does a loss prevention professional decide what program to take advantage of? The key word here is “decide.” The Foundation programs are designed to give you a choice. You can participate in our certification program and not become a member; or you can become a member and not participate in our certification program. Of course, you can choose to do both. The choice is yours. Please visit our web site and decide for yourself.

Will 20-Plus-Year Veterans Have to Get Certified?

The answer is “No.” No one *has* to be certified. The objective of this certification initiative is to provide education, draw more people into our industry, raise the level of professionalism, and create a common language in the loss prevention community. The certification will probably be most beneficial to those in the first ten to twelve years of their career.

With that said, there may be some twenty-plus-year veterans who will find good educational value in The Foundation’s certification programs, especially the more advanced LPC, which includes extensive supply-chain security and crisis management modules. If I had to guess, I think the seasoned veterans of the loss prevention industry will find the most value in The Foundation’s membership program. Again, I invite those with a few years under their belts to visit our web site and choose for yourself.

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Will There Be Grandfathering?

Again, the answer is “No.” The Foundation’s requirements and exemptions committee, composed of a wide array of loss prevention professionals, and The Foundation’s board of directors felt strongly that there will be no grandfathering. There was a strong sentiment that if individuals were grandfathered, the certification program would lose credibility. Keeping in mind that one of the primary goals of this certification program is to raise the level of professionalism in the industry, the two groups thought this loss of credibility would seriously undermine this goal.

How Will the Money Generated Be Used?

As you can imagine, developing and delivering educational tools and an accredited certification program requires a substantial investment. The fees from Foundation membership and certification will be used to offset those costs. It is not intended as a for-profit venture. That’s why The Loss Prevention Foundation was set up as a not-for-profit organization. That means that any revenues generated that exceed our costs (meaning profit) must go into a reserve account that can only be used at the direction of the board of directors. Since the

board cannot authorize paying itself, all money raised from this effort will be put back into programs and activities to benefit the LP profession and keep certification affordable. This organizational model is no different than an industry association like the National Retail Federation (NRF) or the Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA).

Isn't The Foundation Run by LP Magazine and RILA?

Given that the certification initiative was announced last year by *LossPrevention* magazine and RILA, it's not surprising there is some confusion. But the answer is "No" to both.

The original concept of a loss prevention certification program was developed at the magazine, which approached several retail associations about supporting the initiative. RILA was the first association to pledge their support, which prompted the certification announcement. Since then, several other associations have pledged their support, including the Food Marketing Institute, National Food Service Security Council, HospitalityLawyer.com, and the Certified Forensic Interviewer program.

As the certification concept evolved with the input of a number of industry executives, The Loss Prevention Foundation was organized to manage the program, independent from any company or association. The Foundation answers only to the board of directors, which is made up of a cross section of industry executive volunteers.

It is true that two of The Foundation staff are former employees of RILA, but we are no longer employed by that association. Both the magazine and RILA remain strong supporters of certification and The Foundation, but neither of these organizations "run" The Foundation.

I hope this column has been helpful in clearing up some of the misinformation about The Foundation that exists in the loss prevention community today. Please remember this organization was developed in an effort to serve you, the loss prevention professional, and we welcome your ideas, thoughts, and suggestions. Please visit our website, www.LossPreventionFoundation.org, and see for yourself if The Foundation's programs are right for you. ■



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