



by Gene Smith

Smith is vice president of The Loss Prevention Foundation, a newly formed 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 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](mailto:gene.smith@losspreventionfoundation.org).



## The Time Is Now!

**F**or years many of us have dreamed about what is currently happening in our industry. Never before in the history of retail loss prevention has any organization ever attempted to develop an industry-wide certification program and a professional membership organization. It takes a tremendous amount of time, money, determination, and involvement from retailers and vendors to successfully accomplish such a feat.

We are proud to announce that the retail loss prevention industry finally has its own membership organization, developed by retail loss prevention professionals for retail loss prevention professionals. What is also special about our organization is that it falls under the “not-for-profit” umbrella, governed by a board of directors that is comprised of leaders from the retail loss prevention industry. The Loss Prevention Foundation (LPF) is truly an organization for you—the retail loss prevention professional. It is one of the few times in our history when retail competitors have sat across from each other, put aside their differences, and focused on what is truly important—elevating the educational level of this industry.

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### Why Should Our Industry Have Its Own Membership Program?

Consider the following:

- Industrial security has the American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS).
- Safety has the National Association for Safety Professionals (NASP).
- Human resources has the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).
- Accountants have the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA).
- Business professionals have the Association for Professional Business Management (APBM).
- Sales associates have the National Association of Sales Professionals (NASP).

And the list goes on.

Are we any less capable or deserving of our own professional membership organization? The answer is obviously, “No!” As a result, the Foundation staff was directed by the LPF board to develop a membership program to represent you, the retail loss prevention professional.

### LPF Membership Is Educationally Focused.

Without question, there are several industry-related websites that offer great informational resources for the industry. However, none of them offers the comprehensive selection of on-line, ongoing educational resources that we will offer.

LPF provides comprehensive, self-directed, on-line educational resources so your learning never stops. We all understand that a professional's learning and education *cannot* come to a standstill; because if it does, so does your career advancement. This is *your* industry resource for finding the best self-help information that can enhance all of your skills and developmental needs.

We intend for the membership program to be yours. If you see something that can make the site better, or if you know of a better resource than what we are currently using, tell us about it. We promise to do everything we can to improve our offerings regularly.

### Why Does Our Industry Need a New Educational Resource?

First, we all know that you have everything to gain by acquiring additional education and knowledge. It has been proven that there is a direct correlation between the amount of education that you have and the amount of money you will make, as well as how far you will go in your career. Recently, we conducted a survey with six national executive search firms that have collected college degree data for years. While all statistics are debatable, the fact remains that this is the most significant data gathered on the LP industry to date.

Simply put, the findings were not favorable. Their databases indicated that only 20 to 30 percent of LP applicants had a two-year degree or better, which means that an overwhelming percentage of our industry is without a college degree. If you are one of the many who do not have a degree, what are you doing to educate yourself, increase your knowledge base, and advance your career? What resources are you using? Where do you go to learn now? How much time do you waste trying to piece meal resources together? What resources do you recommend to your people in order to improve their developmental needs? There

will be no more wasted time jumping from one website to the next looking for educational resources. LPF has put them into one convenient location within the membership program, anchored by the Career Center.

### What Is Unique about Our Career Center?

The Career Center is not intended to tell you how to find a job. We all know there are plenty of great firms that already do that. Our program is designed to help you learn as much as you want to, as often as you want to, whenever you want to. Our objective is to help you maximize your career advancement opportunities within your current company for as long you can; and if you do choose to consider other options, provide the guidance to help you make sound, well-informed decisions.

One of our newest members, a corporate LP project manager for a multi-billion dollar retailer, summarized it best when she said, "As I have been clicking from page to page and wanting to linger for longer periods of time on some of the valuable information that's been collected here, I continue to wonder how much further along I would be had I had this sort of resource at my fingertips when I first started out in my career."

### What Do I Get with My Membership?

**Book Recommendations.** The Career Center has over 600 professional book recommendations, selected from thousands that were reviewed, offering you the most industry-appropriate texts available. Topics include everything from leadership, personal development, business, and retail loss prevention techniques to recommended readings from our very own industry leaders.

**White Papers and Articles.** The center gives you career-enhancing articles and white papers by the dozens from the best resources that we could identify. Topics such as "How to Be a Good Leader," "Mentoring Is a Two-Way Street," and "Ten Self-Defeating Behaviors to Avoid" are just a few samples.

**Self-Assessments.** How about conducting a self-discovery exercise and completing one of the 28 different self-directed personal assessments that we offer in the Assessment Center? Define your personality type or determine your management or leadership style. Do you know what your emotional intelligence is?

**Brain Teasers.** When you are in a less serious mood, but really want to be intellectually challenged, then try our Brain Games or Brain Teasers section offered to stimulate your cognitive thinking abilities.

**Webcasts.** On the other hand, if you really want to be impressed, select a topic from the Education Center's webcast library, and listen to industry topics such as "Time Management for Investigators," "Using New Video Surveillance Technologies to Accomplish More and Increase Your ROI," and "Managing the Personal Aspect of a Crisis" just to name a few.

**Career Planning.** There is even a section on career plan development that gives you a blueprint on how to develop your personal career plan and the important role that a mentor can play in your overall success.

**University Database.** Have you thought about finishing your degree, but find it challenging or difficult to identify the right college or university? The Foundation has developed a college and university database designed around twenty different degree programs that will help you streamline the process of finding the right campus or on-line program. With

much more to come, it is already the largest industry-related college/university database available.

**Best Practices.** The Foundation membership further includes our Best Practices Center, designed to gather information from LP professionals in several different formats, all in one place. The Best Practices Center will feature information boards, tips from the field, and a survey section, all designed to provide the LP professional with the relevant information they need to do their jobs more effectively.

### Membership Packet and Cost

Each new member will receive a membership packet that will include a membership certificate, a lapel pin, a navigational guide for the on-site offerings, and other information.

There are two options for joining The Loss Prevention Foundation. The first option is to join on an annual basis at \$149 per year. The second option is to take advantage of our charter membership, which gives you membership for life. Charter membership in the Foundation will cost \$795, but is the only payment you will ever make. For less than the cost of a single seminar registration, you can receive a lifetime of value from The Loss Prevention Foundation. Charter membership will only be available for a short time, so take advantage of it while you can.

As a Foundation member, you can also save 10 percent on the soon-to-be-available certification programs. That is a savings of \$69.50 for LPQUALIFIED and \$149.50 for LPCERTIFIED.

So why wait? Sign up now and become a member of *your* Loss Prevention Foundation. Visit our website, [www.losspreventionfoundation.org/membership.html](http://www.losspreventionfoundation.org/membership.html), for more details. ■

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