ICE Digest: 2013 Fall Edition

ICE in Brief

Register for the 2013 ICE Exchange

2013 ICE Exchange: Trends and Solutions for Leaders in Credentialing
Monday, Nov. 11 - Thursday, Nov. 14, 2013
Omni Amelia Island Plantation Resort
Amelia Island, Fla.

Mark your calendar for the 2013 ICE Exchange.

The Institute for Credentialing Excellence is thrilled to provide you a forum for networking with industry peers to both share and discover practical insights into the success of national and international credentialing organizations. Join us this November in Florida for a rewarding annual conference program that offers keynote speakers, concurrent sessions, special interest groups, and plenty of networking events to grow your skills as a credentialing professional and situate your organization as an innovator within the credentialing community.

Educational Program

Exhibitors and Sponsors

Full Conference Schedule

Registration Rates

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Discover the ICE Virtual Conference

Unable to take time off for education this year? Has your organization cut the budget for professional development or travel in 2013? Not yet familiar with ICE and want a sample of our educational offerings? Let ICE bring the 2013 ICE Exchange to you through virtual education!

The Virtual Conference allows you to participate in the following select sessions broadcast live from ICE Exchange in Amelia Island, Fla.:

- Tell Me Something Good: NCCA Accreditation and Good Certification Practices
- Teach an Item Writer to Fish
- Is Your Certification Board Competent?

- Maximizing the Value of Public Members
- Who's Lurking in Your Testing Room?
- Models of Recertification
- A Global HR Credential: Steps to Encourage Success

The 2013 ICE Virtual Conference is brought to you by:

Read more about the ICE Virtual Conference.

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The ICE Academy: Certification 101 Online Modules

The ICE Certification 101 Online Modules are designed as training tools for new certification staff and as an on-boarding tool for volunteer leaders. They provide staff members and volunteers the basic knowledge needed to effectively perform in their respective roles.

This dynamic training tool will allow you to educate your staff and volunteers in the best practices of administering a certification program based on the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) *Standards for Accreditation of Certification Programs*. These on-demand modules include interactive assessments that will allow you to measure how quickly your staff and/or volunteers are grasping the concepts.

The six modules include:

- The Business of Certification
- Program Governance and Operations
- Policies and Procedures
- Psychometric Concepts and Analyses
- Assessment Development and Delivery
- Legal Concepts Related to Credentialing

Purchase of the modules indicates confirmation that you have read and agree to the Course Subscription Agreement. To purchase, please visit the online ICE Store.

Executive Director's Message

Strategically Creating Your ROI from the 2013 ICE Exchange
By B. Denise Roosendaal, CAE

November is just around the corner, which means ICE Exchange 2013 is quickly approaching! Typically, my messages in *ICE Digest* discuss a theme or hot topic in the credentialing world, but, for this issue, I'd like to focus on the upcoming conference and provide you with advice on how to think strategically about your investment in this exciting event.

I'm stealing from David Letterman's brain to create this top 10 list of tips we've heard from your colleagues and ICE staff:

1) You're only one person, right? **Bring additional staff** (and take advantage of the multiple registrant discounts). This is a great way to cover all the sessions. Strategize ahead of time with your team on which sessions you each should cover. Then compare notes afterward and create a follow-up or to-do list for your return to the office.

2) **Bring your public member.** There are a host of resources for the public member (and their registration is free when your organization's executive registers.) Plus, talking with other public members helps them create their own network of colleagues and brings even more value back to your boardroom.

3) **Use the virtual conference featured sessions** to involve those who couldn't travel. (The pre-selected featured sessions are only part of the overall conference, but at least it's a taste.) Only a selected number of sessions are featured in the virtual conference lineup, but this is a great way to include someone back at the office who could benefit from the information. Better yet, host a pizza party in the office for several team members to watch a few of the virtual conference sessions together.

4) If you are a newcomer to the ICE Exchange conference, **go back over those chapters in the *ICE Certification Handbook* and seek out those authors at the conference.** They are a great resource for your toughest questions. Plus, it's fun to just put a face with the name. See how many you can meet at the conference.

5) **Use the online member community** to create your own ICE Exchange experience. Post your questions or issues and make plans to meet with colleagues for a drink or coffee to explore the topic further. Watch the online member community as well as LinkedIn to hear about other ICE leaders in credentialing who are planning to attend.

6) **Plan to meet ICE Leaders.** Members of the Leadership Council (past ICE presidents and NCCA chairs) as well as the current Board of Directors are individuals who have faced challenging times and situations. Make it a point to meet them and hear and learn from their experiences. Find out what their strategic priorities are and how they plan to solve the bigger issues of the day.

7) **Bring your list (yes, write it down) of *your* top 10 issue that you are struggling with** — short and long term. Challenge yourself to find at least one other person who either shares that issue or, even better,

has solved it. Bring your top 10 dashboard statistics to be able to use in conversation and compare with other credentialing organizations.

8) **Make appointments with the leaders in the Innovation Hall**. Our industry partners have a wealth of information and are a great resource for problem solving. Ask them what trends they see coming down the pike and how can they help you solve your challenge.

9) **Bring your open mind to the brand new Learning Lounge**, which will feature different learning modalities in quick, high-energy learning bites. (The session topics will be released soon, so be sure to strategize on how to use this time well during the Exchange.)

10) **Use the session recordings strategically post-conference.** Circulate the recordings among your staff post-conference and feature one of the innovative topics or best sessions at a team meeting. It's a great way to include more staff and extend the learning opportunity.

I would love to hear your top 10 list for how you plan to strategically create return on your investment in the ICE Exchange. Email me at droosendaal@credentialingexcellence.org. The best suggestions will be posted online!

B Denise Roosendaal

B. Denise Roosendaal, CAE
ICE Executive Director

Evaluating Your Recertification Program: Important Questions to Consider
By Rory E. McCorkle, MBA, PhD

A major activity of certification programs includes recertifying credential holders. While many programs implement a recertification program, it is difficult to determine whether the recertification program actually works. Further, forming a list of criteria for a functional recertification program is even more difficult.

During the past few years, we have been asking the initial questions to develop such criteria. Below is a list of questions to begin sketching an evaluation of your recertification program.

Figure 1: Recertification Validity Factors

Question 1: Why do you recertify?

Let's begin with a concept called recertification validity.

Some of you may remember the elderly lady in the 1984 Wendy's commercial stating, "Where's the beef?" In the commercial, three ladies talked about the competitor's very big, fluffy hamburger bun, but there was only a tiny beef patty in the hamburger.

In this article, we hope to ask you a similar question about your recertification program: Where is the meat? In other words, where is the competency in your recertification program? While this question is important to address, the questions below begin to evaluate whether you are *really* measuring your candidate's ongoing competency, which we term Recertification Validity.

Question 2: What is the purpose of recertification?

We believe that most credentialing organizations see the purpose of a recertification program as ensuring that their candidates are meeting and maintaining a specific level of competency. Others refer to this as continued competency or maintenance of competency.

Question 3: What are the methods used to recertify a certificant?

Recertification programs use either one or both of these methods: 1) Retake an exam or assessment (e.g., multiple choice exams, performance assessment); and/or 2) Complete a number of recertification activities allocated in units/credits (e.g., courses, webinars, seminars, conferences, reading literature, work experiences)

Question 4: What do you want to achieve when recertifying a candidate? What is the purpose of your certification program (e.g., protect the public from incompetent professionals)?

As a first step with a new or existing recertification program, organizations should aim to understand and revise (if necessary) the purpose of their initial certification program. To accomplish this, we often begin with the question, "At the end of the day, what will a certified professional do?" Similarly, we have asked organizations about recertifying a certificant: "What do you want the recertified professional to do?" Frequently, answering these questions elucidates the purpose of recertifying a certificant. Additionally, it assesses the congruency between the purpose of recertification and certification.

Question 5: Is the candidate being assessed against the important knowledge, skills and abilities (such as from a practice or job analysis) when they complete their recertification activities?

We are frequently surprised that certificants who are not being retested for recertification are allowed to select recertification activities in certain areas from the job/practice analysis while ignoring others. We recognize the customer service benefits of allowing certificants to select recertification areas in only some areas of the exam blueprint. However, allowing certificants to select recertification areas in this manner diminishes the intent of the certification weakens the ability to maintain minimal competence and questions whether the certificant is qualified in the areas that the certification purports.

As an example, a facilities management job analysis finds that the knowledge of snow removal is important and critical to the role. A certified facilities professional has been working at the University of Florida for 20 years and never had to conduct snow removal activities. In fact, since holding his certification, he has never participated in recertification activities unrelated to his University of Florida position, such as snow removal. Recently, this facilities manager resigned from the University of Florida position and accepted a position at the University of North Dakota. When he begins his new job, he is asked to manage the snow removal process. He responds to the University staff by stating "I don't know anything about snow removal."

In the above illustration, it seems obvious that the certification's intent has not been met. The certified facilities manager lacks knowledge and competency in snow removal and is consequently unqualified for the position. If the certification organization required that all of the important areas of the job/practice analysis be met during recertification, this certificant may have been qualified.

Question 6: If the credential's eligibility criteria have recently changed, do the recertification activities reflect these changes?

If the eligibility criteria for the credential are no longer equivalent to your recertification activities, your certificants may no longer be minimally competent. For instance, a college degree is now required to take the examination. In this example, is a certificant who does not hold a college degree less than minimally qualified? Do the recertification activities create equivalency for those certificants not holding a college degree?

Question 7: Does your requirement for completing recertification occur within a timeline that mandates candidates to be up to date with current information?

We have consulted with organizations to determine timelines for completing recertification activities or retesting. Surprisingly, many timelines are arbitrary. For example, one organization may require that their certificants complete 20 recertification activities within three years to maintain their recertification. To address this issue, organizations should benchmark timeline information and solicit the opinions of subject matter experts. The timeline information may be tracking the number of recertification activities (hours or units/credits) reflecting how quickly they should be acquired. If this is not addressed, certificants may be applying outdated knowledge that may cause harm to others.

Question 8: Is the intended level of competency for the certificant being met by the recertification activities? For example, if the certificant completes the required recertification activities, can you say that the certificant continues to be minimally competent to practice?

We find that the strongest programs have subject matter experts reviewing the current definition of minimal competency against the recertification activities to determine if those activities contribute to maintaining competency. In addition, subject matter experts may develop competency requirements across years of experience, job titles, and so forth. The certification sponsor may expect a higher level of competency from recertification applicants.

Question 9: Is there an expectation that your certificants should be above minimally competent, particularly after practicing for a number of years?

Question 10: Who is impacted when your recertification program fails to measure ongoing competency?

The impact of a certificant lacking minimal competency affects employers, other certificants, the profession, the public and the credentialing body.

Question 11: How do you assess usability factors (e.g., clear communications, easy process), or how easy is it for your candidate to understand and use your recertification program?

Often, recertification activities are complex and difficult to communicate. In these instances, we recommend user testing by enlisting subject matter experts to provide critical and exceptional feedback. We usually ask clients two questions:

- When was the last time you experienced the recertification process of a credential holder?
- If you were a candidate, what would be the top three to five things you would want to know about the recertification program?

Finally, the client enhances this process by developing a one-page document to describe the requirements and steps to recertify.

Conclusion

These questions are only a start for crafting a better recertification program. However, they can work toward obtaining a level of confidence in assessing minimal or higher competency through recertification of certificants. Implementing changes to a recertification program requires an assessment of resources, commitment and risks, but this effort can result in many benefits.

Rory McCorkle, MBA, PhD, *is the president of International Credentialing Associates (ICA), an organization specializing in expert consulting services for credentialing organizations in test development, market research and marketing. He specializes in the product management, new product development, marketing, globalization and portfolio management aspects of the certification industry. McCorkle has worked with more than 50 associations as a consultant since beginning his career in the industry in 2003, including working at Prometric and the Project Management Institute (PMI). Rory serves on the board of directors for the Certification Network Group (CNG) and has served on volunteer committees for the Association of Test Publishers (ATP), American Psychological Association (APA) and American Evaluation Association (AEA).*

The Value of Credentials to Careers and Organizations
By Jeff Thomson, CMA, CAE

Despite a challenging economy and ever-changing job expectations, things are looking up for certain groups of qualified professionals. For instance, there's good news for those in accounting and finance: Salaries are on the rise, and certification continues to provide expanded earning power. In fact, according to Institute of Management Accountants' (IMA) 2013 Annual Salary Survey, published in the June 2013 issue of *Strategic Finance* magazine, professional certification is one of the key factors driving salary increases for accountants, along with advanced degrees and experience.

The Compensation Advantage

Consistent with survey results from previous years, certification is a strong factor when it comes to earning power. Professionals holding the Certified Management Accountant (CMA) credential, for example, reported an annual salary of $115,290, or 25 percent more (compared to $92,570) than those without a certification. The average annual total compensation for CMAs was $139,578, a difference of more than $34,000 (or 32 percent) compared to their noncertified peers. Predictably, those differences in salary and compensation grew even more with each additional certification.

The certification advantage is evident at all stages of one's career, as certified professionals in all five of the survey's age categories reported higher earnings. Even at the early stages of one's career (19 to 29 year age category), CMA-certified professionals earn 44 percent more in total compensation than those who are not certified.

Data collected from IMA members participating in the survey reveal the highest salary levels in 24 years. The survey also demonstrates a rise in average salaries to $112,625 in 2012, an increase of 3.3 percent or $3,624. The average total compensation (base pay plus incentives) climbed from $6,063 to $135,654 — the first time total compensation topped $130,000 in the history of the report. This is good news for the profession and the economy overall.

A Growing Skills Gap

Despite the increase in accountant's salaries, a serious problem — a skills gap — still looms over the profession. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics says that employment of accountants and auditors in the U.S. is expected to grow by 16 percent, or nearly 200,000 new jobs, this decade. At the same time, the ManpowerGroup recently released its eighth annual Talent Shortage Survey on the top 10 jobs that are the hardest for employers to fill, and for the third year in a row, "Accounting and Finance" made the list. Both of these factors point to the need for a highly qualified workforce.

Accounting and finance is a changing field, and new abilities are increasingly needed on the job, requiring professionals to come prepared with a broader set of skills and knowledge. They are being asked to do more than just "crunch the numbers"; they are also being asked to "create" economic value, participate at the strategic planning table, and demonstrate leadership and influence in organizations.

There is a shortage of professionals who can master this diverse skill set, which includes far more than what is often taught in school. Most undergraduate accounting majors are educated to become financial accountants — doing audit, attestation and compliance work. If the individual goes to work at a company, either right out of school or a few years after that first audit job, they soon learn that they are missing the soft skills and business know-how needed on the job. Accountants working in business are leaders in performance management, budgeting and forecasting and work cross-functionally to make the best strategic business decisions.

Certification as a Continuing Education Tool

Earning a professional certification can be a source of continuing education to fill the skills gap. Some organizations, in fact, have caught on to this idea and have used IMA's CMA credential as a "turnkey" continuing education solution for their accounting staff. It's also a way to identify, train and retain top talent. Many reputable certification programs offer a defined curriculum, study programs, exams to assess knowledge and continuing education requirements.

For this reason, certification by a credible professional body can be a résumé differentiator for job seekers. It signals to employers that a job candidate is committed to continuous learning and has a mastery level of knowledge. In turn, professional credentials have an obligation to enhance professionals' knowledge base and bring value on the job, and they must be backed by a rigorous testing process to attest that this level of knowledge has been achieved. With a skills gap and ever-changing employer expectations, credentials mean more than just a boost in salary. Particularly in the accounting and finance profession, a high standard of excellence in certification is needed to maintain growth for the profession, and for business and the economy as a whole.

Jeff Thomson, CMA, CAE, *is the president and CEO of [The Institute of Management Accountants], the association of accountants and financial professionals in business.*

Leverage the Web to Drive Your Certification Program
By Keith Morical and Alexandra Muller, PhD

Credentialing services include a broad spectrum of responsibilities and a high level of complexity. As a credentialing organization, you enroll candidates, schedule exams, collect payment, track progress toward certification and/or recertification, provide information on status, send out confirmations, distribute exams, report program data and exam results — all while keeping program participants aware of all the benefits your organization offers.

By doing business on the web, your credentialing organization can:

- Provide instant worldwide availability via a website that is open and accessible to anyone, anywhere, at any time.
- Minimize paperwork all the way through the ordering, buying, delivery and reporting processes.
- Reduce errors, processing time and overhead costs by minimizing the need for data entry.
- Substantially reduce time between order placement, payment and delivery of services.
- Facilitate access to new and geographically remote markets, collect and store information about who is purchasing your offerings, leading to improved service to your marketplace.
- Release your staff to focus on personal customer service and marketing of your credential.

How Do We Get Started?

One of the biggest difficulties for certification programs implementing web applications is deciding where to start. Which applications would be most beneficial? The specific characteristics of your certification program can impact the types of web-based applications that will serve you and your membership best. These characteristics include the purpose of the certification program, the type of audience you serve, and the types of examinations, educational programs or other certification activities that must be administered and tracked.

Where Are You Spending the Most Time and Money?

Every component of a successful certification program has its own challenges, and the complexity of managing these needs becomes greater as the number of candidates and offerings increases. Consider the certification program steps that follow.

Key Certification Stages that Cost Time and Money

Stage 1: Marketing

Stage 2: Registration

Stage 3: Scheduling

Stage 4: Purchasing

Stage 5: Program Management

Stage 6: Exam Delivery

Stage 7: Reporting

In this day and age, there is an expectation of nearly instant turnaround. Handling purchases by mail or phone can be time-consuming and difficult to track, especially if there are changes in the order or ordering information. Simple changes like correcting the spelling of candidate names can be a time drain.

Registration and scheduling is another time-consuming area that often requires multiple transactions per candidate. Candidates sometimes wish to change the date of their certification exams for a variety of reasons. Manually generating and sending confirmations of specific exams or status updates on progress toward certification can take a significant amount of time.

Capturing and addressing questions and problems during the certification process is another important activity. Manual data entry of the information from these various activities has tremendous potential for error with each entry and is relatively slow. Providing adequate staffing for service inquiries in this 24/7 world is also a challenge.

Additionally, there is the need for results reporting and sending exam credentials. You need to manage and provide information about providers of certification services for your organization such as authorized exam sites and examiners.

Which Activities Should Be Automated?

Using the steps in the Certification Program Pyramid, interview your staff to determine the activities that consume the greatest part of their day. Consider whether this is the best use of the time of the people doing the work. What activities generate the greatest program costs? Which activities lend themselves best to automation? Also, ask yourself what aspects of your program you would like to make easier and more accessible to candidates. Improvements your candidates might like could include:

- Faster confirmation of registration
- Quicker turnaround on particular service requests
- Easier access to credential status reporting
- More timely exam reporting

Based on the interviews and meetings with your staff, develop a list of priorities based on how well these activities are currently being performed and their importance in terms of user satisfaction and program profitability. Activities that are relatively lower in current performance and higher in importance are probably the highest priorities for automating on the web.

Prioritizing Certification Activities to Automate

1. Activities high in importance, but low in performance

2. Activities high in importance, and high in performance

3. Activities low in importance, and high in in performance

4 .Activities low in importance, and low in performance

Potential Certification Program Web Applications

There are many ways that you could leverage the web to improve the efficiency, service and reach of their certification programs. Potential certification program web applications include:

1. Registration of candidates

2. Scheduling of exams

3. Collecting payment for services

4. Program management

5. Exam delivery

6. Reporting results and

7. Marketing your certification program

Web-based reports allow program administrators to track all sorts of data, such as attendance, spending, exam sites and site contacts.

Moreover, you can choose to automate only certain program components or develop an integrated system.

Evaluating How to Acquire the Capabilities You Need

When you decide to buy or build a system to manage some, or all, of your credentialing program, you will find that there are a number of options.

- Build it yourself: Your organization builds the system components itself with internal resources and manages the system in-house.
- Software purchase: Your organization purchases software, installs it and manages it in-house.
- Service purchase: Your organization uses software that is housed and managed remotely and both program administrators and users access the system over the internet.

To determine the option that is right for your organization, consider your organization's:

- Technical capabilities
- Certification program needs
- Technical support requirements
- Personnel resource availability
- Anticipated future upgrades

If your organization has an internal technical staff, it may make sense to build the applications yourself or make a software purchase to be managed internally. However, if not, it may be a better use of your staff to go the service purchase route, so they can concentrate on customer service and marketing.

Whatever route you choose, the web has capabilities that can help drive your certification program forward.

Keith Morical *is the founder of 4ROI, a company dedicated to best-in-class assessment and certification systems and a proud member of Institute for Credentialing Excellence. Since 1983, he has implemented assessment systems for certifying skills and improving individual performance and business results used by more than a quarter of the Fortune 100 companies and more than 20 certifying bodies. He has also provided consulting to various certification, e-learning, human performance support and performance management providers to enhance their assessment, development and certification offerings.*

Alexandra Muller, Ph.D., *is a senior consultant at 4ROI and has directed and managed an extensive number of assessment and certification projects throughout the years. Muller has been actively consulting with clients to develop and implement reliable and valid assessments that promote individual and organizational competence for nearly 25 years. She has worked with clients in a wide variety of industries such as pharmaceutical, automotive, construction, financial, high tech, telecommunications and retail.*

"The Trust Business": A Look at the Industry from the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards
By Kevin R. Keller, CAE

Certification programs and organizations — such as the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. (CFP Board) — are in the standards-setting business. But we are also in the trust business. When someone earns the CFP® certification, for example, the public trusts us to ensure that those who've earned it have demonstrated a high level of competency and ethics.

We take this responsibility seriously. In order to establish competency standards, organizations like ours administer programs and establish a wide variety of educational and experience requirements for those earning certifications. And many will find, too, that organizations worth their salt establish strict ethical standards of conduct for certification. All these activities provide a benefit to the public, which includes consumers, such as clients, patients and employers. Organizations such as ours also play a societal role in lessening the burden of government, as we serve a regulatory function in the absence of regulation of financial planners.

Another important function of certification programs is advancing the establishment and further the development of a profession. It certainly is a role that we embrace, as the certification itself is, for now, the identified designation for the financial planning profession. Just like when one thinks of accounting they think of the Certified Public Accountant license; so, too, when someone thinks of financial planning, we want them to think of the CFP® certification.

In so many ways, the functions of a certification program are closely aligned with the building blocks of a profession. The criteria for a profession, as described in several *Harvard Business Review* articles throughout the past few years relative to the status of business management, are helpful to this review. A profession generally includes:

- Common body of knowledge based on a well-developed, widely accepted theoretical base;
- Professional body and system that oversees membership through examination/assessment and certification, as well as maintains continued competence through ongoing education or training; and
- Established ethical standards or code of conduct, which includes enforcement activities.[1]

Certification organizations and the programs they administer serve an essential role in standard setting for competence and the granting of certification. They are core activities just as is the establishment of continued competency standards. In fact, it's the rigor and level of continuing education that is so important for the public to see a certification as a profession. Many certification programs also develop and deliver continuing education programs, either directly or through related corporate entities, which is the route CFP Board has taken. Similarly, most certification programs include ethical standard setting and enforcement activities, or at a minimum, require a commitment by those holding the designation to uphold aspirational ethical responsibilities.

The element of certification that is often overlooked relates to the role that a certifying organization can play in defining, expanding and building a body of knowledge beyond what's needed for passing the examination or initial certification. This function typically is viewed from the perspective of preparing individuals for certification or an examination. For emerging professions, the establishment and common recognition for a body of knowledge, however, is a foundational block in the journey to establish a profession.

Helping to increase standards and further the profession does not mean though that growth of a certification will be sacrificed. To the contrary, as over the last six years, CFP Board has seen the number of CFP® professionals grow by 24 percent to nearly 69,000. This occurred as we strengthened the requirements to obtain the certification and added even more rigor to the certification process. In other words, a certification serving as the leading edge — or rather the central figure — in an emerging profession strengthens the certification by making it even more valuable to those who obtain it.

Consistent with best practices and accreditation standards, certification programs conduct a job analysis study, which is a "systematic definition of the components of work and essential knowledge, skill, and other abilities at the level required for competent performance in a profession, occupation, or role"[2] The job analysis study is valid and reliable research that can establish and develop a common body of knowledge required to perform tasks required in an occupation or specialty. Some certification programs create or establish specialized or required coursework for their education requirements, as well as examination or assessment blueprints, based on the job analysis study results.

The certification organization can play a leadership role in the development of a widely accepted and recognized theoretical knowledge base in a specific discipline for the advancement of a profession. And the job analysis research provides a starting point to identify the essential knowledge required to perform an occupation or specialty. Last year, for example, the CFP Board undertook a year-long project built on the CFP® initial certification's education requirements, as well as continued competency, to produce a seminal work titled, "Financial Planning Competency Handbook." The purpose of the handbook was to outline the knowledge, actions and contexts associated with financial planning with an intent to serve the entire emerging profession, including students, faculty, researchers and practitioners.

We believe that the foundational element of an education requirement for competency and a specialized body of knowledge is critical to the advancement of the profession. Much like the business management discipline, we identified that the financial planning discipline was missing a "common body of knowledge resting on a well-developed, widely accepted theoretical base."[3] As the certifying organization, CFP Board's development and publication of the handbook furthers its role and responsibility as the recognized authority in financial planning, as well as its mission to benefit the public by granting the CFP® certification and upholding it as the recognized standard of excellence for competent and ethical personal financial planning.

The project was conceived and led by an education staff director, who recruited, managed and provided leadership for a team of 21 volunteer contributors, which represented academia in the discipline and practitioners in the profession. After recruitment, the team met regularly in person and by telephone to identify a common framework for the chapter development based on theory and practice, accepted definitions for capabilities and complexity, and how to "bring to life" applications of knowledge in practice vignettes. Each chapter would include a "connections diagram," centered on the financial planning process, and including each of the principal topics identified through the job analysis study and learning objectives identified by stakeholder educators. As part of the project management, assignments and work schedules were developed with close follow up. Staff leadership solicited and negotiated a contract with a prominent publisher in the finance field.

In April 2013, the culmination of this work came together in CFP Board's first-ever book published and released by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. The 85-chapter, 735-page book (available in hardcover and e-book formats) included specific chapters dedicated to CFP Board's 78 topic areas, which are based on the job analysis study. The handbook brought together theory and practice through an overview of what a CFP professional should know in theory, as well as how it works in the real world. Response to this work has been very pleasing to both CFP Board and the publisher.

Work has already begun on a project plan for the second edition. In addition to updates based on the upcoming job analysis study, the handbook will include components of emerging trends and areas of study based on academic research and practitioner input. Again, CFP Board plans to invite well-respected and academically qualified faculty, thought leaders in the practitioner field, and subject matter experts as contributors.

We believe that, like CFP Board, certification organizations can further their missions and advance an emerging profession by helping to create the foundational academic building blocks for practice and commonly accepted body of knowledge — all while continuing to increase their ranks and grow the number of people who obtain the certification.

Kevin R. Keller, CAE, *is the chief executive officer of the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. Keller joined CFP Board in May 2007 after serving 16 years with the Association for Financial Professionals (AFP).*

[1] Khurana, Rakest, Nohria, Nitin, and Penrice, Daniel, *Is Business Management a Profession?*, Harvard Business Review, February 21, 2005, and Barker, Richard, *The Big Idea: No, Management Is Not a Profession*, Harvard Business Review, July 2010.

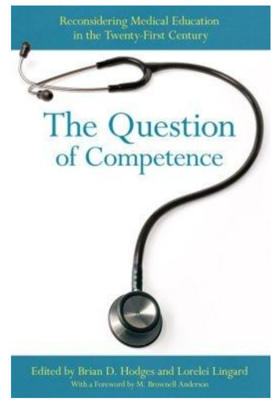
[2] Knapp, Joan, PhD, Anderson, Lynn, PhD, Wild, Cheryl, PhD, Certification The ICE Handbook, 2nd Ed, 2009, page 124.

[3] Heineman, Ben W., Jr., *Management as a Profession: A Business Lawyer's Critique*, HBR Blog Network, November 2, 2010.

Book Profile - *The Question of Competence: Reconsidering Medical Education in the Twenty-First Century (The Culture and Politics of Health Care Work)*

Book Description

"Medical competence is a hot topic surrounded by much controversy about how to define competency, how to teach it, and how to measure it. While some debate the pros and cons of competence-based medical education and others explain how to achieve various competencies, the authors of the seven chapters in *The Question of Competence* offer something very different. They critique the very notion of competence itself and attend to how it has shaped what we pay attention to—and what we ignore—in the education and assessment of medical trainees.



Two leading figures in the field of medical education, Brian D. Hodges and Lorelei Lingard, draw together colleagues from the United States, Canada, and the Netherlands to explore competency from different perspectives, in order to spark thoughtful discussion and debate on the subject. The critical analyses included in the book's chapters cover the role of emotion, the implications of teamwork, interprofessional frameworks, the construction of expertise, new directions for assessment, models of self-regulation, and the concept of mindful practice. The authors juxtapose the idea of competence with other highly valued ideas in medical education such as emotion, cognition and teamwork, drawing new insights about their intersections and implications for one another."

About the Authors

Brian D. Hodges *is Vice-President Education at the University Health Network and Professor of Psychiatry, Scientist at the Wilson Centre for Research in Education, and Richard and Elizabeth Currie Chair in Health Professions Education Research at the University of Toronto. He is the author of The Objective Structured Clinical Examination.*

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How to Keep a Positive Attitude in Challenging Times
By Andres Lara

You've probably heard the ancient story of the three blind men trying to describe an elephant. One touches the tail and describes the elephant as a snake. Another stumbles against the side and describes the elephant as a wall. Yet the other touches the leg and describes the elephant as a tall tree.

The point? Perhaps the issue in front of you is not of as much significance as the angle you are experiencing it from. Learning to position yourself at an advantageous angle can make the difference of whether you experience the best or the worst of your current circumstances.

There are millions of things you can do to position yourself on the right side of a stressful situation, but here are four simple mindsets that you can adopt today regardless of the obstacle at hand:

1. Nothing in life is permanent — not even you. So if you are impermanent, how can your problems be permanent? While this might sound negative, understanding that everything in life is transitory will give you an empowering viewpoint in regards to your current challenges. Reminding yourself that whatever turbulence you are experiencing at this moment is temporary will encourage you to keep elevating yourself in search of that perfect cruising altitude.

On the other hand, even when things are perfect, embracing a temporary mindset can be very helpful. You see, people's zest for life is frequently killed not by misfortunes but by their inability to appreciate what's already great around them. Therefore, if you begin to remind yourself that this moment, no matter how perfect, will too come to an end, you will start appreciating all of the positives in your life that you have been taking for granted.

2. Failure is a prerequisite. Your failures exist for one and only one reason: to make your future successes possible. Instead of complaining and asking life to stop throwing things at you, start recognizing your current dilemma as building material. Life tosses bricks to all of us; it's up to you to build an artistic masterpiece or to end up with a pile of rubbles.

Keep this thought in mind by Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude." Be thankful even for failures, for they are an indispensable piece of your success puzzle.

3. Find the silver lining. Constantly ask yourself one simple question: What great opportunity can come out of my current circumstances? Asking this question will direct your energy to look for the hidden positives that lie within your challenges and keep you from wasting it on complaining about the negatives.

Once you start seeing the silver lining in every incident, your challenges will cease to be the heavy blocks that previously burdened you; for they will now become stepping stones from where you can stand just a little taller. It's at this point that you will experience a new height regardless of the negatives thrown your way.

4. Trust the bigger plan. You no doubt have big plans. But understand that however big your plans are, the universe has much bigger plans for you. When you are discouraged and things are not working according to your plans, realize that there's something else out there guiding you; and that which you perceive as a detour might be the actual road you must travel on.

Don’t get so caught up on the way things should’ve been, could’ve been, or would’ve been because looking from where you stand you will never be able to comprehend the magnitude of the grand plan that’s in store for you. Trust that you are where you are because that’s where you need to be; then you might get a glimpse at how insignificant your initial plan was and how grandiose your current one is.

Call to Action

Everyone says in life you have to be positive if you want to get somewhere. The question is how can you become positive when negative things keep happening to you? Just like anything, being positive is a habit that can be developed. All you have to do is for the next 30 days when you are faced with a challenge adopt one of the four mindsets by reminding yourself that 1) Whatever is troubling you is temporary; 2) Your current setback is an indispensable part of the success puzzle; 3) There is a silver lining or a great opportunity within every challenge; and 4) No matter what happens, you must trust that you are part of a much bigger plan.

Andres Lara *is an international-selling author and sought-after motivational speaker who speaks to companies and groups from all walks of life on the psychology of how to move forward when you feel like quitting. Connect with him at info@TheCubanGuy.com, www.TheCubanGuy.com, www.Facebook.com/Motivation911, @motivation911 or call 239-424-9152.*