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No matter what field you're in, chances are there's a certification program available. During good times, everyone looks for great talent and often what separates one resume from another is an acronym symbolizing accreditation. During tough economic times, this is even more important because hiring is a huge financial investment and employers only want the dedicated individual who has committed to their profession. Whether you are in IT, operations, medicine, financial industries or healthcare, certification enhances your knowledge and chances of advancement.

Accountants are required to be certified if they perform certain job duties. Other occupations, such as

an HVAC technician, must have certification in the proper handling of refrigerants. The health care industry requires certification for a certified nursing assistant (CNA) and also requires certification for nurses that work in specialized areas.

There are even certification programs for glass blowers, cake decorators, pet trainers, Tarot card readers and biofeedback professionals. So what certification programs are available to hospitality sales professionals and are they worth the time, energy and investment? Many of them are and here's why.

For the credibility of the profession, it is important to recognize hospitality sales professionals who have met and surpassed high standards of education, experience, knowledge, and ethical conduct. In addition, today's job

market is highly competitive during a turbulent economic time.

Four generations are bumping up against one another rivaling for the same jobs. Undergraduate degrees are almost viewed as passé as more and more professionals earn their MBA's and graduate degrees. In fact, about 1.5 million students are expected to graduate with an undergraduate degree this year and will enter the work force. Due to the turbulent economic environment, many organizations have had to undergo staff reductions.

Generally organizations have tried to retain the most skillful and knowledgeable employees, but in some cases, were forced to let go of very marketable and highly successful sales professionals.

And nationwide, the unemployment rate is up with fewer jobs available. So if you're a sales professional, with or without a college degree, you should always remain committed to on-going learning and development. This will ensure that you continue to show value to your current employer or your future employer, and to your customers. Certification programs can also enhance your confidence, credibility, and marketability in the workforce. While continuing your learning and accreditation is no guarantee against being laid off, it is certain that the more education, expertise, and skills you can demonstrate, the better. The key is to never stop learning. In fact, there are sustainable results shown by those sales professionals that have engaged in a blended learning approach including workshop training, e-learning, web based sessions and participation in industry organizations. Corporations have seen a spike in sales productivity based on this learning approach.

That is why the certifications offered by Hospitality Sales and

Marketing Association International (HSMIAI) are more valuable today than ever. HSMIAI has taken a new approach and elevated and re-launched its sales certification program (CHSE – Certified Hospitality Sales Executive) to enhance the credibility and value of individuals achieving certification.

This new certification will open doors to those in the hospitality sales arena whether you are in hotels, restaurants, DMC's, transportation, venues, or attractions to name a few. Customers today want to work with a subject matter expert (SME). This SME gives the customer a feeling of trust and credibility much needed when competing for business.

Certification programs have proliferated enormously in the past several years. At a minimum, there are nearly 1,600 certifications available, according to the definitive directory on the subject, the Certification and Accreditation Programs Directory, as

well as an additional 227 accreditation programs. The directory notes that the growth of certification programs is largely the result of explosive population expansion. Where we once could determine the competence of professionals and purveyors of services through word of mouth, our global and technologically advanced society needed new ways of recognizing competence.

The Certification and Accreditation Programs Directory explains certification is defined by the National Organization for Competency Assurance as "the process by which a non-governmental agency or association grants recognition of competence to an individual who has met predetermined qualifications specified by that agency or association."

Typically, sales certification programs are programs that teach work-related skills to students seeking certification in specialized areas. A degree may be awarded along with certifica-

tion, depending on the program. Here are some ways you may benefit from getting a sales certification:

Sales Managers, Marketing Managers, Executives:

- An additional credential on the resume for promotion or job transfer;
- Validation of knowledge in the areas of sales and/or marketing;
- Possible group training program for sales force or marketing staff;
- If group study is used, an additional opportunity to network with other soon-to-be certified professionals.

Small Business Owners and Managers:

- An educational opportunity which is less expensive and time consuming than a degree program;
- Validation of knowledge in the areas of sales and/or marketing;
- If group study is used, an additional opportunity to network with other soon-to-be certified professionals.

Consultants:

- An additional credential on the bio or brochure that will help to attract business;
- Validation of knowledge in the areas of sales and/or marketing;
- An educational opportunity which is less expensive and time consuming than a degree program;
- If group study is used, an additional opportunity to network with other soon-to-be certified professionals.

Service Providers:

- If group study is used, an additional opportunity to network with other soon-to-be certified professionals;
- An additional credential on the resume for promotion or job transfer;
- Validation of knowledge in the areas of sales, marketing, revenue management and business acumen;



- An educational opportunity which is less expensive and time consuming than a degree program.

Sales Representatives, Account Managers, Business Development, Distributor Representatives:

- Validation of knowledge in the area of sales giving you possible preference over non-certified competitors;
- Signifies you are a professional and adds a credential on the resume for promotion or job transfer;
- If group study is used, an additional opportunity to network with other soon-to-be certified professionals.

Perhaps you're feeling stuck in your job. You feel as though you need a boost—something that could help you advance, make more money, and become more valuable to your employer. Or maybe you're looking for something that would powerfully propel you into a different field... something that could set you apart and make employers take notice. Maybe you could accomplish your goal with more education or training, but you're not in a position to go back to school at this point. The answer just might be earning a certification in your field—or in a new field.

Join HSMAI and support your industry, our profession and the need to elevate the client's awareness of our knowledge and value of this industry, and consider applying today for one of HSMAI's prestigious certifications:

CHSE – Certified Hospitality Sales Executive

CRME – Certified Revenue Management Executive

CHBA – Certified in Hospitality Business Acumen

CHME – Certified Hospitality Marketing Executive



“I decided to get my CRME certification.”

READER RESOURCES

What's New With HSMAI Certifications? Watch for more information on <http://www.hsmai.org/resources/certification.cfm>

Certified in Hospitality Sales Competencies (CHSC) becomes the Certified Hospitality Sales Executive (CHSE)—The new CHSE will be launched in July 2010 with the addition of e-Learning from Master Connection Associates, points for attendance at HSMAI Webinars and Chapter events, a brand new study guide covering need-to-know material for today's sales executive, and a 20/20 Assessment to help you grow in your career and become more valuable to your employer. Those currently certified as CHSCs will be grandfathered into the CHSE certification.

Certified Revenue Management Executive (CRME)—The new study guide for the CRME, *The Evolving Dynamics of Revenue Management: A Comprehensive Revenue Optimization Road Map for Hotel Owners, Operators and Practitioners*, has just been published and is available for purchase at www.hsmaipublications.com or when you apply and qualify to pursue the CRME certification. The old exam, based on the study guide, *Defining Revenue Management: Top Line to Bottom Line*, will be taken down from the HSMAI online exam platform on July 15 and the new study guide will be issued to qualified applicants to study for the new exam.

Certified in Hospitality Business Acumen (CHBA)—This certification requires the applicant to have taken the unique seminars in Business Acumen and Revenue Management given onsite in previous years at Lynn University or Johnson & Wales University. But before the end of 2010, we expect to have the course available online! Watch our website for the announcement!

Certified Hospitality Marketing Executive (CHME)—This gold standard in the industry for decades is still available now, and will be updated and upgraded in the near future. Stand by!