

Professional Certification

TOP TEN REASONS TO SEEK IT OUT

With the passage of the GCSAA Professional Development Initiative, superintendents will be focusing on meeting a set of performance standards to achieve and maintain Class A Superintendent status. Once the self-assessment program is in place, superintendents may want to consider taking the next step - certification. Here's another association's look at why certified professional status has value. It is applicable to golf course superintendents as well.

Everyone knows that M.D. following an individual's name means he or she is a medical doctor; and CPA signifies the individual has met standards and fulfilled requirements to be a certified public accountant. More than a few cryptic initials following a name indicates that thousands of associations utilize professional certification to recognize individuals for their dedication to their chosen career and their ability to perform to set standards.

Ask a certified professional "why," and they'll tell you that the certification process is one of the single most important steps you can make in career development. Here are the top ten reasons you should consider professional certification:

1. **Demonstrates your commitment to the profession.**

Receiving your certification shows your peers, supervisors and, in turn the general public your commitment to your chosen career and your ability to perform to set standards. Since university degrees can no longer represent the full measure of professional knowledge and competence in today's evolving job market, certification sets you apart as a leader in the profession.

2. **Enhances the profession's image.** Certification programs seek to grow, promote and develop certified professionals who can stand "out in front" as examples of excellence in the industry or field.

3. **Reflects achievement.**

A certified professional has displayed excellence in his or her field and fulfilled a set of standards or requirements.

4. **Builds self-esteem.**

Certification creates a standard for the profession, complete with performance standards, ethics and career paths. You'll begin to define yourself beyond a job description or academic level. You'll see yourself as a certified professional who can control his or her own professional destiny and find a deep sense of personal satisfaction.

5. **Establishes professional credentials.**

Since it recognizes your individual accomplishments, certification stands above your resume, serving as an impartial third-party endorsement to your

knowledge and experience. When the industry looks for individuals qualified to perform services, they seek individuals like you who have achieved certification.

6. **Improves career opportunities and advancement.**

Certification gives you the "edge" when being considered for a promotion or other career opportunities. Certification clearly identifies you as an employee who can adapt to changes in work, technology, business practices and innovation.

7. **Preparation for greater on-the-job responsibilities.**

Since certification is a voluntary professional commitment to an industry or field of knowledge, it is a clear indicator of your willingness to invest in your own professional development. Professionals are aware of the constantly changing environment around their profession, and possess the needed tools to anticipate and respond to change.

8. **Provides for greater earnings potential.**

As a certified professional, you can expect many benefits, but for today's down-sized, right-sized, topsy-turvy world, salary increases speak for themselves.

9. **Improves skills and knowledge.**

Ideally, achieving certification shows your individual competence by confirming proficiency and career involvement and assuring knowledge.

10. **Offers greater professional recognition from peers.**

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As a certified professional you can expect increased recognition from your peers for taking that extra step in your professional development. Check into certification soon. It will give your career and professional life a real boost.

Credit: New Hampshire GCSA Newsletter. This article is reprinted with permission from the Grounds Management Forum, the official online forum of the Professional Grounds Management Society.

It's All About Attitude



Jim Martello, right, had a good attitude about golf also, and was a perennial contender in golf outings. Jim is seen here with Kevin Downing, left, and Buck Buckner playing a round at the media opening of The Slammer and The Squire GC at the World Golf Village. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Jim Martello

Superintendents have a tendency to get battered around pretty good sometimes, but I have always tried to keep things in balance so I can maintain a positive outlook at work.

Employees are the backbone of our operation. They either help us excel to the next level or they can keep us at a mediocre level. Being a firm believer in having a good attitude, I'd like to share with you a story about the best employee I ever had and how we came together.

I had just started a new position at Halifax Plantation and we were in need of some good employees to get things turned around. On my third day of work I was sitting in my office and I noticed a fellow walking around the perimeter of the maintenance shop. He would stop and look over our equipment and mumble something to himself and move on.

I went out to see what was going on and after introducing ourselves I invited him into the office. He told me he was looking for work and he'd like to come to work here and that he could operate every piece of equipment in the shop, and probably better than anyone I had on the crew.

That was pretty cocky I thought and I asked him about his work history and background. I quickly figured out he probably was the real McCoy. I needed help, so what the heck, I've got nothing to lose. So I asked him how much I would have to pay for someone with all this talent and experience.

He said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll work for you for one week and do whatever you need done. After the week is over we can discuss

hourly wage and benefits. If you don't like my work just be honest with me and I'll be gone. In fact you won't even have to pay me.

Well, he took me by surprise with his matter-of-fact offer, but it only took me about ten seconds to decide to give him a try. I told him to be in the next day at 6 a.m. ready for work.

There are many days when I think back on that encounter. It helps me to balance out all those employee problems that happen at the other end of the attitude spectrum. What a blessing it was to have an employee walk in the door with the right attitude, a working knowledge of the business, a willingness to please, and an all around team player.

I share this with you because I hope that everyone in our business could have the pleasure of having such a person on their crew. Also, it challenges me personally to check my own attitude every morning before arriving at work.

Editor's Note: We lost Jim Martello, superintendent at Halifax Plantation in Ormond Beach, this year to a battle with cancer. While Jim was home trying to win the fight against the disease, he wrote this article to share a reminder that with all the negatives we sometimes face in this business, there are always positive things that happen to us and we need to remember them during trying times.

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