

Certification: Your Competitive Edge!

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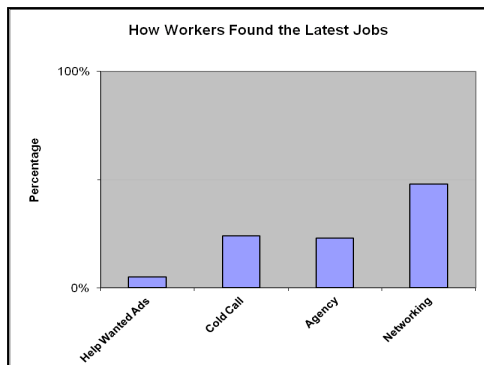
As a quality professional, you worked hard to get your undergraduate degree, or you may have even received your degree from the ‘hard-knocks university’. Some of us may have even gone on to complete a masters degree. So you may have been like myself and asking, “*Why should I become certified?*”

Individuals

If I learned anything in developing a career path, I learned to remain flexible in your abilities and always be prepared for the right opportunity. Experience and continuing education can assist in being prepared, while networking may present the ‘right opportunity’.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, about 5 percent of job seekers obtain jobs through the open job market which consists of help wanted ads, the internet and print publications. Another 24 percent obtain jobs by cold-calling companies directly. Twenty-three percent obtain jobs through employment agencies, college career-services offices and executive-search firms. The remaining 48 percent obtain their jobs through referrals or “word of mouth.” These individuals get the job referrals by networking.

Networking can be accomplished through affiliations, meetings, conferences, speaking, writing, teaching and continuing education. Your local ASQ Section can offer these avenues of opportunity.

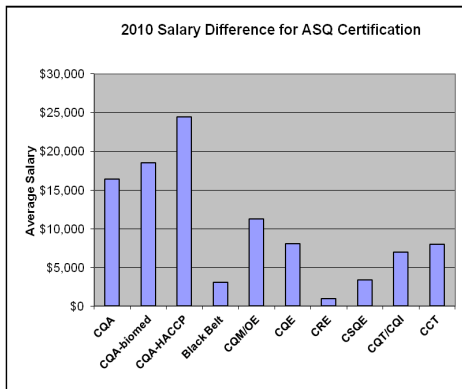


Continuing education, in particular, certification demonstrates your lifelong commitment to the quality profession. It acknowledges your proficiency and comprehension of a specified body of knowledge. Using this body of knowledge, may even make your job easier and even successful.

It has also been stated that individuals who achieve certification have enjoyed monetary benefits. The data to support this claim is derived from the annual ASQ Salary Survey published in Quality Progress.

More than half (58.2%) of the quality professionals who responded to the survey indicated that they achieved one or more ASQ certification. This is up significantly from previous years at slightly less than half.¹

¹ Quality Progress, December 2010, “Salary Survey”, page 44.



With a very competitive job market, certification makes your resume stand out from that big stack of submittals and may give you that competitive edge. Results from the recent survey demonstrated that more and more individuals are sharpening their edge through certification. For those of you who do not have a degree, certification may be your way of acknowledging your knowledge and experience.

Employers

As certification acknowledges an individual's proficiency and comprehension in a specified body of knowledge, employing certified individuals can promote more predictable results in obtaining organizational goals. For example, the Quality Manager and Software Quality Engineer Certifications certify an individual's knowledge in project management.

Certification can also be used as a tool to differentiate those people who are knowledgeable from those who claim they are knowledgeable by just using the buzzwords. ASQ certification also requires a certain level of experience before an individual may take the exam.

Finally, employers that value certification demonstrate a level of commitment similar to that individual commitment. Supporting certification programs proves to the employees that you are serious about their professional development. This contributes to employee retention and satisfaction, possibly reducing long-term training costs.

Summary

Certification can be a win-win for both employees and employers. Individuals enjoy both personal and professional benefits that come from being certified and companies can obtain the business rewards from certified employees. For those of you have embarked on that lifelong commitment, ASQ Pittsburgh looks forward to your continued participation. We welcome the opportunity to assist other individuals and employers on that journey!

Ms. Dudash has been a Senior ASQ member since 1994 and the ASQ Pittsburgh Education Chair for the last 10 consecutive years. She has also taught the CSQE Refresher course based on the ASQ BOK. Robin has degrees in Computer Science and Applied Mathematics, and an MBA, concentrating in finance, from the University of Pittsburgh. Ms. Dudash holds CQM/OE, CQA, CQE, CRE, CSQE, CCT, ANAB-LA, and TS-16949 Lead Auditor certifications. She may be contacted at www.iqps.net.