

Chairman's Letter



Why MAS/CAS Recertification?

In my February Chairman's Letter I described education as one of our Association's core competencies. Obviously, the role of PPAI's education program is to establish and maintain our individual core competencies as practitioners in this industry. However, competency is a target that moves continually upward, and as our Association must continually improve to keep pace with our evolving industry, so must we as individuals.

Recently, I've found myself on the opposite side of an issue with several industry friends whose opinions I value. The issue is the establishment of curriculum and testing standards, and the recertification process for the MAS/CAS designations. Although this topic has been debated in a number of formal and informal settings over the past two years, I'd like to provide some historical perspective, and offer a few of my own opinions.

A Member-Driven Effort

The move to establish core curriculum, testing and recertification requirements was initiated by everyday industry practitioners like you and me—PPAI members serving on the Education Committee and MAS/CAS Certification Board. Past PPAI boards of directors approved these recommendations as put forward by committees, and directed

staff to implement them. I would like to publicly applaud those past and present committee members for pursuing their vision, for turning a mere designation into a more meaningful certification, when it would have been far easier and less controversial to maintain the status quo.

Curriculum and Testing

For years one could acquire a CAS designation simply by attending a number of randomly chosen courses over a period of years. There was little guidance given or expected on which courses to take, minimal enforcement of procedures and no performance standards. Would you send your child to a school with a curriculum like that?

The new curriculum adds structure to the process and helps to insure that someone with the CAS certification has at least experienced the broad instructional basics of our industry. For both certifications, the new criteria set performance expectations. Like all things worthwhile, it now requires effort to achieve and maintain the certifications.

Why Recertification?

From a personal perspective, recertification means that I remain current with industry trends, new markets, new selling techniques, new business regulations, etc. This will help me continue to provide maximum value to our mutual customer, the buyer.

Several long-time MAS/CAS designees have asked me why they should be required

to recertify. They typically offer three arguments. I'll try to answer each of them.

1. *"If I choose not to recertify, how can you take away a CAS or MAS degree that I earned a long time ago? My college cannot revoke my university degree."*

An industry certification is not the same as a college degree. Industry certification programs are designed to keep practitioners current on the latest industry trends and practices so they maintain an edge over those who do not participate. It is unlikely, for example, that an education session on distribution channels held 10 years ago would impart the same information as one held today. This is the primary reason that over 90 percent of industry

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PPAI CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

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