A Top Down Look at Credentialing

Where’s the Value?

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Interstate Renewable Energy Council
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Abstract

Certification, certificate, accreditation, licensing – all terms we hear and use. However, each one is different, conveying that a different set of criteria, requirements and achievements have been met. There is often confusion among these designations as they are used interchangeably and frequently incorrectly.

This presentation will take a hard look at the essential elements in developing a professional certification scheme and why it is important to follow international guidelines and standards. Professional certification programs are not built overnight – certain tenets need to be followed. The International Standard ISO/IEC 17024 provides the framework for the development and management of bodies that certify people. There are very important parts of ISO/IEC 17024 that if followed, can help prevent awarding credentials to unqualified people.
Quality is a primary standard for competitive success...

Meeting performance standards some of the time is not enough

Anthony Carnevale. *The Workplace Realities*
Degrees of Assessment

Certification based on international standards & guidelines

- Self declaration
- Endorsements & Association Memberships
- Certificate Implying Certification
- Certification Programs
Credentialing must hold value for all stakeholders
Qualified workforce

Sustainable workforce

Flexible workforce
Certification vs. Certificate

But what do they mean?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Certificate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Results from an assessment process</td>
<td>Results from an educational process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically requires some amount of professional experience</td>
<td>For both newcomers and experienced professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awarded by a third-party, standard-setting organization</strong></td>
<td><strong>Awarded by training and educational programs or institutions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicates mastery/competency</td>
<td>Indicates completion of a course (s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards set through a defensible, formal process</td>
<td>Course content set a variety of ways</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has on-going requirements to maintain</td>
<td>Is the end result</td>
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</tbody>
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*Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management*  
*August 13, 2008 Memo*
What’s ultimately at stake is a consumer who expects that a "certification" claim ensures good workmanship.
Solar/Renewable Certification

A year ago...
Solar/Renewable Certification Today

North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners

Electronics Technicians Association International

UL University

National Roofing Contractors Association
Multiple credentials...

Do they help or confuse the market?
It depends.

Depends on how they’re built; what competencies they’re assessing; and how they assess the competencies.
How do we recognize good credentials?
A certification scheme requires a defensible, balanced, and transparent assessment and set of criteria.

ISO/IEC Standard 17024
Job Task Analysis

The job/task analysis (JTA) is a formal process for determining what people do, under what working conditions they do it, what they must know to do it, and the skills they must have to do it.
Certification process should provide objective identification of valid competencies.

**Elements of a Certification Process**

- Clear Definition of the Job
  - Job Duties
  - Major tasks
  - Knowledge, skills, traits, attitudes, abilities
  - Tools, Equipment
- Prioritization of tasks
- Frequency of tasks
- Who Performs the Job Task Analysis?
  - High-performing incumbent workers
  - Veteran workers
  - Balanced
  - Facilitator
  - Observer or shadow method
  - Survey interviews
  - Validation Survey

Results depend heavily on the job definition, the method used to analyze the job, and the individuals supplying the data.
ISO/IEC Standard 17024

Addresses impartiality and independence – meaning separating training from assessment
North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners

Accredited by ANSI to the ISO 17024 Standard

ANSI/ISO/IEC 17024 Accredited

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCREDITATION ID</th>
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<td>ORGANIZATION</td>
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<td>LETTER CODE</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEBSITE</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nabcep.org">http://www.nabcep.org</a></td>
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LIST OF SITES

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCOPE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Certified Solar PV Installer</td>
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Some questions that a good credentialing body will answer easily and with documentation

- How is the JTA developed?
- What are the requirements for sitting for a certification exam?
- How is the exam developed and administered?
- How long is the certification award cycle?
- What are the re-certification requirements?
- How is professional development measured?
- Is there due process for the certificants?
- What policies are in place for grievances and appeals?
Looking Forward

- Clearly define and portray the difference between a certificate and a professional certification.

- Certification process includes objective identification of valid competencies and objective assessment of these competencies.

- Make sure that unqualified individuals are not receiving a “certification”.
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