

Marketing Your Certifications to Raise the Bar

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If you are a highly qualified professional in the indoor air quality, environmental, or health and safety industries, you may have obtained a prestigious certification from a renowned industry organization at some point in your career. You probably took this step in order to better market your services to potential clients by using a certification acronym after your name.

Chances are, your strategy worked, at least some of the time. After all, the average person who sees a designation after a professional's name naturally assumes that the professional has expertise in his or her field. This is good news for you, especially if you worked hard to obtain that certification.

It is just as likely, however, that your potential clients may have no idea what your designation means. In fact, they may not be able to distinguish your accredited certification from one of those so-called credentials pumped out by the "certification mill" down the street - the one where you pay a fee, take a short course and walk away, certificate in hand.

Certification mills don't answer to anyone, so there is no way to verify the quality of their programs. While some offer good courses, others are outright frauds. Worst of all, to an uneducated consumer, a certification acronym from a certification mill may look just as impressive as the acronym of a true accredited certification program.

A recent survey of highly educated professionals outside the environmental industry asked respondents whether they recognized a variety of certification acronyms. Just about everyone recognized CPA (Certified Public Accountant), PE (Professional Engineer) and a few others, but almost nobody could place the acronyms of our industry's most prestigious certifications.

What this means is that if you want your customers to recognize and understand your certifications, you will have to educate those customers.

Luckily, this is fairly easy to do in the internet age. You can publish your certification name and acronym on a company website along with marketing collateral that explains your certification and its extensive requirements. You may also include information about the certifying body that administers your certification program. This kind of information will distinguish your accredited certification from those printed by the "certification mills."

With a little attention and the right marketing strategy, you can help consumers recognize your hard earned accredited certification. When they do, your certification can really go to work for you.

Cochrane & Associates, LLC, the environmental, mold, industrial hygiene, HVAC and indoor air quality industries' only dedicated marketing, public relations and business development consulting firm works with clients to develop ways to maximize their marketing efforts and ROI. We also invite you to visit the IAQ Video Network www.IAQTV.com and submit any videos you may have for inclusion on the website.