



by Britt Wood

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LPQ Coursework Is Available

The Early Reviews Are In

For several years now many of the leaders in the loss prevention industry have discussed the idea of a certification program that will take the profession to the next level. The idea is that a certification program will help drive a better mix of new candidates to our industry, while helping current LP professionals grow and develop in the profession. Their vision took another step to becoming reality when The Loss Prevention Foundation released its Loss Prevention Qualified (LPQ) certification coursework in mid-August.

The LPQ coursework, delivered entirely on-line, contains over 500 pages of text that is divided into three sections, entitled:

- Retail Environment,
- Becoming a Successful Business Person, and
- Loss Prevention Basics and Tools.

Each of these sections contains not only the written coursework, but video examples that vividly demonstrate the concepts.

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Another innovative feature of the program affords participants the opportunity to read about real-life stories from current loss prevention professionals that relates to the coursework. This feature is designed to give those taking the coursework a view of how the material they are studying gets applied in the real world.

Reviewers' Comments

Obviously, we at the Foundation are extremely excited about the LPQ. But just to show you that it's not just those of us at the Foundation who are excited, I will share some of the feedback we received from our beta testers. The beta testers were loss prevention professionals whose companies generously donated their time to review the coursework and its functionality. Here are what some of them had to say:

“Overall, the LPQ modules were informative, well written, and would be an excellent guide for beginning loss prevention associates.”

“The LPQ would have been extremely beneficial at the beginning of my career. It explains the business of retail as well as the protection of assets. My retail career began on the front end and cash office of the store. Clearly my understanding of the business would have been broadened much sooner if I had access to this information early in my career. As a result I would have been more effective.”

I think the last quote really speaks to the objective of the certification programs—making loss prevention professionals better by giving them access to a well-rounded curriculum that not only focuses on loss prevention, but the business of retail as a whole. This comprehensive approach is reflected in the coursework that loss prevention industry professionals have developed and will be tested for on the LPQ certification exam.

The LPQ Exam

As you may have read in our previous columns, before an individual can earn their Loss Prevention Qualified certification, they must pass the LPQ exam. It is important to note that an individual does not have to purchase the courseware to take the exam. However, as the questions for the exam were drawn in large part from the coursework, it is recommended that individuals take advantage of the coursework before taking the exam.

With this in mind, it is important to understand how the exam is created and who is involved in the process. The Foundation has hired Knapp & Associates to assist in the development of both the LPQualified and LPCertified exams. Knapp & Associates has over eighteen years of experience in helping organizations develop credentialing programs for their industries. Most notably, Knapp & Associates worked with the National Retail Federation's Foundation on their retail operations credentialing programs.

In early October the LP Foundation brought together professionals from the loss prevention industry with representatives of Knapp & Associates to write the questions for the LPQ exam. These individuals spent two days together with a

test question writing expert to write the questions. The objective of this exercise was to come away from this session with a large pool of questions...two to three times more than will appear on the exam...so questions can be interchanged on the exam to keep the exam fresh and fair.

Once all of the questions have been created, a second group of LP professionals will gather in November to evaluate the questions, decide which ones will be on the exam, and finally decide how long the exam (the number of questions) will be. This group, referred to as the Foundation Exam Council, will also meet in the spring to help determine what the passing score for the exam will be.

Next Steps

As we continue to work on the LPQ exam, work has already begun on the LPCertified coursework. With five modules of

coursework, the LPC will be significantly longer than the LPQ. We hope to have two of the modules ready this month for preview. Please visit our website for more details on how you can preview the LPC.

As for the LPQ, we encourage you and your company to further investigate how this program might fit for you and your company. Many retailers have taken advantage of our offer to preview the LPQ coursework for several weeks so they can evaluate how this curriculum fits into their organizations. We invite you to do the same. If your company has an interest in previewing the LPQ coursework please contact Rhett Asher at Rhett.Asher@losspreventionfoundation.org.

If you are an individual who wants to learn more about the LPQ for your own use, please visit our website and go through the LPQ demo. You'll be glad you did. ■

BILL TURNER, NIKE

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TURNER: Loss prevention has not been a career that people can see. They can see a career in retail, but they do not understand that LP is a real career choice. For many years, the training has not been there. It has not been a formal career path with all of the things that support that in terms of education and knowledge.

EDITOR: With your varied background and experience, Nike recently asked you to take on additional responsibilities. Describe those.

TURNER: Nike has asked me to not only supervise LP, but to head up store operations—the traditional operating pieces such as staffing, expense control, procedures, policies, store development, store planning, store construction, and so on. So it is fun because we are growing, and we have a need for it.

My philosophy has always been that if you understand the retail business and understand the store, you will understand where potential leaks are. And if you understand that, you can institute controls and policies that will reduce paperwork errors and employee theft.

EDITOR: You talked about being a teacher and a leader. Have you also had mentors in your life?

TURNER: Several. I had one when I was a kid. I worked in the flower business for many years, from age 15 to 21. The owner of the shop was my best friend's uncle. The two of us worked for him for years. He put so much trust in us that, for example, he would go on vacation and let us run the business. And here we were maybe 17 years old. He was my first mentor because he imparted so much trust and gave us so much responsibility. That helped me grow up in a hurry.

My second mentor as a young professional was the director of distribution and eventually senior VP of operations at Bullock's in Los Angeles. I tell people that a lot of whatever I am today comes from him. He gave me huge responsibility, but expected results. I worked for him almost twelve years. He was also the person I was in partnership with in the restaurants.

You have to look for someone who believes in you. Learn from those mentors, be loyal and support them...assuming they are doing the right thing. On the other hand, do not get the idea that the only reason you have been successful is that someone has been making you successful. Be successful on your own.

EDITOR: Nike is well known for the statement "Just Do It." If you had it to do all over again, would you "Just Do It" again?

TURNER: If you mean retail, no doubt about it. That is why I came to work at Nike. I was out of retail for twenty years. I love it. That is also why I came back to LP, I love doing it. People often ask me about transitioning from the huge scale at Disney to the smaller scale job I have now at Nike. The answer is simple. For thirty years I did what I *bad* to do. Now I am fortunate to be able to do what I *want* to do. I'm a happy guy. ■