

WILD About Testing



Volume 2, Issue 2
June 2010

A newsletter aimed at certification professionals interested in continuously improving the certification experience for their certificants and other stakeholders (employers or government agencies that might use the certificate).

From the Editor

Welcome to the second year of WILD About Testing. I am delighted to report that during the first year of producing this e-zine, I learned that certification professionals like and want information on improving quality in testing. Colleagues are generously contributing ideas and content through interviews and on-line (right on my web site at www.wildandassociates.com). Please let me know what is on your mind and what you want me to write about next. Finally, I've learned that many more people would like to receive this information than are currently receiving it.

When I attend meetings or workshops, participants are excited to learn about my e-zine and wish they had heard about it sooner. You can help about this – with the new campaign – **Share the Wealth of Information**.

Why do I spend the time writing and distributing this newsletter?

I truly believe that certification and educational testing are critical parts of everyone's lives. In school, tests are used for grades, for placement, and for helping you understand what you know (and what you don't know). As consumers, we depend on certifications and licenses as a way of indicating that the doctors, lawyers, accountants and many others we employ have the basic knowledge and training needed to provide those services. And we use certifications as ways of bolstering our credentials and improving our work prospects.

Because testing is so much a part of our lives, **everyone** believes they can develop a test – after all, we have all taken tests for years in school and anyone can ask a question!

In the certification field, many certifications are begun by zealots in the field – people who know the subject matter of the certification and believe strongly in the need for certification, but may have no psychometric or process management expertise. That is fine, if the founders understand what they don't know and obtain the expertise elsewhere. **Although tests can do good, they can also do harm.** Not everyone in the certification field understands the need for sound psychometric development of tests and the application process management to assure fair, valid, and reliable test results.

I write **WILD About Testing** because I want every certification professional to have the opportunity to learn techniques for producing certification programs that provide excellent benefits to their certificants and other stakeholders and to help avoid risks inherent in developing and delivering tests. Please help me share the wealth of information with others in the certification field.

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Dr. Cheryl Wild
President
Wild & Associates, Inc.

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How can you help Share the Wealth of Information?

I am working hard to make this e-zine relevant and useful. But this information is only useful if others receive and read it. You can help in two ways. Please click the "Forward to a Friend" button on the bottom of the e-mail that brings each issue to you, or just spread the word and ask them to go to my web site and subscribe. Second, please continue to help shape the e-zine by reader feedback. (Anyone who would like to provide additional feedback may go to www.wildandassociates.com to help with the design of future issues.)

What is in this month's issue?

This issue is the first since my husband passed away in March. It is intended to honor my husband and everything he did to support me personally and professionally. This issue is short – it makes me sad, but it also promises a future of new opportunities for working with certification programs for improvement, expansion, and growth.

I ask for your help in selecting locations for *Improving the Quality of Your Certification Program: A Learning and Planning Retreat*, talk about the oil spill, and have some interesting tidbits *In the News*.

Enjoy the newsletter and share it with your colleagues. Please use the "Forward to a Friend" link and help me reach out and find everyone who can benefit from years of great experience, which I am delighted to share.

An Invitation

Are you proud of the work you are doing to improve the certification experience for your certificants?
Would you like to contribute ideas to a future article in WILD About Testing on this topic?

If so, please contact me at
cheryl@wildandassociates.com

In Memoriam



My husband, Edgar Bing, passed away on March 5th, 2010. I want to thank all my readers who have been writing and calling to support me during Ed's bout with cancer.

Ed was an integral part of Wild & Associates, Inc. As Chief Financial Officer, he kept his eye on the bottom line and reminded me that I couldn't do ALL volunteer work for ATP or NOCA. He made sure that clients were billed and that payments were deposited. He paid bills promptly and made sure the checkbook balanced.

More importantly, he reminded me that life is about more than work, and surely more than about testing. Family was important to him and we were sure to have family meals, visit our kids, and play with our grandkids. Sailing was a favorite pastime and I will miss sitting on the boat and enjoying his companionship.

Implications of Oil Spills on Certification

Alan Weiss, a guru on consulting, and frequent mentor to me in my practice, sent out the following sage advice in his May 24th *Monday Morning Memo*:

“What we’re seeing in this disastrous gulf oil spill is that preventive action is never sufficient by itself. It may not work, it may be outdated, it may be inappropriate for a new development. What’s always necessary is contingent action, ready to be applied when preventive actions fail. The contingent actions for this emergency were neither immediately available nor totally effective. In your client dealings (and in your personal dealings) you should always have both strong preventive and contingent actions. You need a fire marshal and ‘no smoking signs,’ but you also need sprinklers and an insurance policy.”

What can you, as an association leader, do to create your contingent action plan? The first step is to **identify risks**. Then you decide how to **mitigate the risks**.

One example of risk for a certification is that the test form you plan to administer is compromised. Maybe the items were stolen from your test delivery vendor and they are for sale on the Internet. Great security is a preventive action, but sometimes security breaks down. If you have an extra form of the examination stored in a different, secure location, you can substitute your secure test. This is your contingency. Of course a good contingency plan addresses **many** risks and determines how you can address these risks.

What is the biggest risk of all? Never discussing risks as part of your planning. **Risk assessment is an important part of improving your certification program – if you want to learn more, think about participating in my workshop!**



Alan Weiss, Ph.D., is a consultant, professional speaker, and author, who has published 36 books.

Rescheduling “Improving the Quality of Your Certification” Workshops – Where to Go?

Thank you all for your interest in ***Improving the Quality of Your Certification Program: A Learning and Planning Retreat***. These workshops (originally scheduled for Florida in January, February, and March 2010) were postponed due to my husband Ed’s illness.

The good news is that I am rescheduling the workshops for the winter of 2011. Although Longboat Key, Florida is my favorite winter spot in the whole world, I don’t know what the oil spill will bring. You can help me – what are your favorite winter spots? Please let me know and I will soon be letting you know about dates and possible locations.

Those of you who asked if we could conduct such a workshop for your management team – the answer is yes! Customizing the workshop would indeed provide a real bonus to your organization. Please feel free to contact me at 732-774-5188 or cheryl@wildandassociates.com to discuss participating in the workshop.

In The News



ATP Career Achievement Award

Congratulations to Dr. Nancy Petersen, distinguished research scientist, Measurement and Statistical Research at ACT.

She is the recipient of the Association of Test Publishers (ATP) 2010 Career Achievement Award and is pictured here with Marten Roorda, chair of the 2010 ATP Board of Directors and chief executive officer of CITO.

He presented the award to Dr. Petersen at the ATP Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida.

Certification: The ICE Handbook (2nd Edition)

Edited by Joan Knapp, Lynn Anderson, and Cheryl Wild, the Handbook is available from the Institute for Credentialing Excellence.

More than three years in the making, this is a must-have for any organization interested in a quality certification program.



The **American National Standards Institute** has announced an agreement with India's National Accreditation Board for Education and Training to develop an accreditation system in India. Read more about it in their press release:

http://www.ansi.org/news_publications/news_story.aspx?menuid=7&articleid=2529

The **Department of Defense** has announced the accreditor of certification bodies for its Information Assurance Workforce Improvement Program. See the announcement in *IT News Online*:

<http://www.itnewsonline.com/showprnstory.php?storyid=100678>