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## Benefits of an Ongoing Training Program

# FCICA



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By Bruce Reeve, LEED AP

The personal characteristics of true professionals are the desire to become experts in their field, maintain the highest quality of work, and continue their education by keeping their occupational knowledge and skills up-to-date with the latest innovations.

Throughout my life and career one thing has remained true, the only constant in life is change. Many of us will remember using typewriters, carbon paper, or multi-line phones with 50 wires running through ducts in the floor. This was our form of communication. We then fast forward to today with cell phones, video conferencing, text messaging and emails. These advancements drastically changed the way we communicate by leaps and bounds in the last three decades. Just like technology, our industry has changed and advanced.

The trade apprenticeship system emerged to provide a structured approach to the training of unskilled workers by master craftsmen. This system was marked by three distinct stages: the unskilled novice, the journeyman, and finally, the master craftsman. Together, they formed an organic process whereby the novice grew into a master craftsman over a period of years. We then moved into not only utilizing the apprenticeship system, but also witnessed the emergence of training and development as a profession, resulting in the creation of training associations and societies.

In my 40+ years in the flooring industry, I have seen that it takes an entire team to conduct a successful project, which is defined by happy customers, profitable sales, and professionally executed processes.

The Installation Manager is one such team member. This position is largely responsible for handling the process of collaborating with sales to establish the commitment to and expectation of the customer. They manage and document the process, as well as, the communications throughout the installation.

Also, this same person is also largely responsible for: continuous training; management and safety/risk management of the warehouse and installation teams; and in some companies, identifying proper uses and installation methods; and sundry products. This one position requires a tremendous amount of knowledge, experience, and education to keep up with all the changes in products, installation methods and tools. They need to know what works, what works better, what is right and what is best.

An ongoing training program benefits the craftsman by providing the ability to stay updated on new techniques. It provides the knowledge of new industry standards. It educates the installer on innovative tools that help to work smarter not harder and how to incorporate environmentally safe products and practices into the jobsite. Best of all, it improves the quality of the end product to the consumer.

The good news is that within our industry, leaders have emerged that provide education and training for our skilled craftsmen. The International Standards & Training Alliance (INSTALL), is an alliance of over 100 floor covering mills,



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manufacturers, hundreds of contractors and thousands of installers working together to address the needs of the industry. The International Certified Flooring Installers Association (CFI) is an organization of flooring professionals whose purpose is to identify, train and certify flooring installers according to skill and knowledge. There are also a number of good product supplier partners who provide hands-on training programs, some in-house and some in-field, most at no cost to the contractor.

Further, the Floor Covering Installation Contractors Association (FCICA) offers their in-house Floorcovering Installation Training (FIT), which is continuously updated, and the web-based Certified Installation Manager (CIM) Program.

Moreover, education and training teach you how to gather, learn and apply knowledge. No matter what career you choose, you will need to learn procedures, information and skills related to your job. The bottom line: education is paramount to future success.

Lastly, have you ever noticed that the word learn contains the word earn? Perhaps that is because the higher level of education you share, the higher level of success you can likely command.



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