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Credentials Pay Off

by Jack Vivian

Upgrade your skills or get left behind. In a world of rapidly changing business environments, upgrading skills is essential.

Ice arena professionals can acquire professional updates by returning to college for a master's degree, taking courses in business or management at a local college, or attending seminars conducted by arena management associations, the American Management Association, or similar organizations. Although these educational experiences are no doubt helpful in enhancing skills as managers, there could be a better option. An industry specific certification program could be less arduous and more convenient for ice arena professionals.

The Ice Skating Institute is proud to announce the first ice arena industry management certification program. This unique, innovative program offers ice arena managers, programmers and operators the opportunity to hone their skills - and demonstrate their expertise - by earning professional certification through course work and rigorous testing.

Ice Arena Institute of Management

The Ice Skating Institute has embarked on a new program called iAIM (Ice Arena Institute of Management) to train industry leaders, provide opportunities for education and advancement, and provide the first certification program in the ice arena industry.

Professional certification sends a clear signal. People who seek certification challenge themselves to stay current and to live up to nationally recognized standards. Certification programs are characteristically organized by an oversight committee or regulatory body and are updated to reflect the latest in technology, research and practice in the field.

iAIM is ISI's targeted ice arena management program for the industry leaders of tomorrow.

The iAIM program is supervised by a Board of Regents representing a cross-section of leaders in the public, private, manufacturing and supplier segments of the ice arena industry. The Board of Regents is charged with providing a wide range of schools, seminars and educational programs to fit the ever-changing needs of ice arena professionals. Furthermore, the Board of Regents is charged with keeping the program standards high by requiring evaluation through a standardized, comprehensive examination. Candidates for certification must complete course requirements and pass the exam prior to being awarded a certificate.

The recently announced iAIM school at the Oglebay Resort in Wheeling, West Virginia is a school, not a conference or seminar. There will be comprehensive course materials mailed to participants prior to the school. Participants will be strongly encouraged to study the materials prior to the school to maximize the effectiveness of the course. Lecturers will augment the text and expand attendees' knowledge and understanding of the materials with in-depth discovery, examples, work sheets, and interactive questions, answers, and illustrations. Discussions will be lively, informative, and helpful in bringing "learning" to practical application.

Management Education and Certification

The newly developed iAIM Certificate of Ice Arena Management, Certificate of Ice Arena

Operations, and Certificate of Ice Arena Programming offer general managers, maintenance/operation managers, and hockey and skating professionals a way to expand and improve their knowledge and sharpen their skills. The certificate in programming (for hockey and skating professionals) and the integration of the operators and maintenance professionals into the main stream of the industry are firsts for the industry.

Due to a shortage of ice arena managers, hockey directors, skating professionals and arena operators are often thrust into managing a facility without formal training. In recognition of this industry issue and ISI's leadership role, iAIM is providing the opportunity for aspiring ice arena professionals to acquire, not only required knowledge and skills, but certification that will allow them to assume higher leadership roles in the future.

iAIM's goal is to improve the competencies, skills and image of all professionals in the ice arena industry. The iAIM program offers aspiring professionals an opportunity for continuous growth and development.

Beyond improved image and credibility in the industry, there are other benefits of the iAIM program. Participants in the program will identify mentors and learn from the experiences of some of the most knowledgeable instructors and practicing professionals in the industry. The program offers excellent opportunities for networking, an important byproduct of any educational program. Plus, graduates of the program will increase their job opportunities, and, perhaps most importantly, certification can impact the manager's paycheck.

Research indicates that those who acquire certification in their industry earn $2,500 to $3,000 more than their non-certified colleagues. Over a lifetime career, when considering annual raises, this can amount to significant dollars in the professional's pocket. This is without factoring in the benefits of increased visibility in the industry and credibility in the local community. Indeed, certification has value to anyone wanting a career in the ice arena industry.

Certified Ice Arena Executive

In addition to the three designated areas of certification available through iAIM (Certificate of Arena Operation, Certificate of Arena Programming, and Certificate of Arena Management), there's a higher level of certification – Certified Ice Arena Executive. This designation will be reserved for those who pass the iAIM exam in all three certificate programs (manager, programmer and operator) and register and attend annual executive level courses held before, during and after the ISI annual conference. These courses will focus on decision-making and leadership skills and will cover community awareness and advanced human resource management. Moreover, management and leadership training will be part of every certificate program along the way, as iAIM instructors will be the leaders of our industry.

iAIM's Inaugural School

The inaugural Ice Arena Institute of Management School will take place March 25-30, 2001 at the Oglebay Resort and Conference Center in Wheeling, West Virginia. This is the most far-reaching, dynamic educational opportunity the ice arena industry has ever undertaken.

To be placed on a mailing list for additional information about the iAIM program, fill out the form below and return it to ISI.

Conclusion

In order for the ice arena industry to take its esteemed place among facility management certification programs, the iAIM program must have support from the industry as a whole. It's up to experienced ice arena managers to teach and plan the courses, for rookie managers to attend and

bring their maintenance manager and their hockey and skating professionals, and for suppliers of industry products and services to provide sponsorship support.

Everyone must make a commitment to improve, to contribute to this industry, and to enhance our industry's professional image. That's how our industry will evolve and continue to develop and grow. Those who take advantage of the iAIM program will be on their way to developing talents and credentials that can carry them to the top of the ice arena industry. Credentials do pay off.