

Today's World is Volatile, Unpredictable, Complex, and Ambiguous (Why You Should Get Your CEFP Certification)

By John R. Ferris, MBA, CEM, CEFP, LEED AP

I have been asked many times, “Why should I get a Certified Educational Facilities Professional designation?” I have heard this from people who have been in the industry for several years, seasoned directors and individuals who know they will be retiring in a year or two. The question is a good one. It should be asked. There is not enough time to pursue every training or accreditation opportunity that comes our way. So, we make choices.

Before I give reasons as to why you should get a CEFP, let me give a little context:

Some of you reading this, like me, have over 30 years in this industry we call “facilities management”



(FM). When we started, computers were a novelty. There was no Americans with Disabilities Act. Energy conservation was less of an issue than it was 10 years earlier. Very few states had any mandates concerning waste-disposal reduction. The Internet was predominately used by university professors. Most phones were connected with coil wire, and the new cellphones weighed as much as a brick. Technological change was happening, but plant equipment was still as familiar in operation and maintenance as the equipment it was replacing. You could still distinguish yourself by getting an undergraduate degree—and that degree did not saddle you with years of high debt.

NEW DRIVERS AND CHALLENGES

But after three decades, things are a little different. Computers are no longer a novelty. A large proportion of the world's population have more computing power in their pocket than NASA used to put a man on the moon. The challenges of accessibility are everywhere for those with older buildings. Issues of sustainability now drive student populations; they want to ensure that their campus is not only environmentally conscious, but is spending at least some of its money to improve the planet.

The Internet is now the “IoT” (Internet of Things), which is connected to over 10 billion devices—and that is only 1 percent of its capability. Communication is immediate, whether through a cellphone, watch phone, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, etc. Technological change is happening so fast that different skill sets are required with new equipment installations. Finally, undergraduate degrees are so commonplace that graduate degrees are often required in the workplace.

If you got the idea that today's environment is more volatile, unpredictable, complex, and ambiguous than ever, then you understand what I am trying to say. This is the context I wish people to understand when I explain why they should get their EFP/CEFP certification. As promised, here are some answers as to why you should get a CEFP:

Q: *Why should I get a certification when I already have a degree?*

A: A certification is as valuable as a college degree. One reflects knowledge; the other competency. One proves you know it; the other proves you can do it.

Q: *Why should I get a certification when I plan on retiring in a few years?*

A: As a leader in the industry, you have invested a significant portion of your life in this field. You have made lasting improvements in many areas. People look up to you with respect and look to you to show the way.

I can think of no better lasting legacy than to know you have inspired others to reach for higher heights that will often lead them to more enriching lives. In this case, by inspiring others to get the certification, not only are you helping them to enrich their lives and preserve what they have achieved in their workplaces, but you are also raising the level of competency for the entire industry.


Q: *I am new in this field; why should I get an EFP?*

A: What better way to understand the complex world you have just entered? During our careers, we gradually acquired bits and pieces of knowledge, and our understanding of the world of FM grew over time. The EFP highlights all the areas under FM and gives you a clue as to how everything works as a whole.

Q: *I have a degree and a lot of experience. Why should I get a certification?*

A: This question challenges me the most. While it is known that certification can help distinguish you from the crowd when you are doing a job search, if you plan to stay where you are and are professionally seasoned, why would you do it? Two reasons: professional development and personal challenge. Professional development, in that study allows you to sharpen the edge you learned through FranklinCovey. Personal challenge is always needed for personal growth and self-empowerment.

Finally, let me say that to date, APPA has granted 508 CEFPs and 462 EFPs. While all of those professionals had the same question as to why they should get certified, they all answered by saying, "OK, I'll do it." Your region has made a great investment into its membership by giving steep discounts on the cost of acquiring the EFP/CEFP. It's an online

program that has been developed and refined to make your experience in pursuing certification both productive and enjoyable. Hopefully, you will change your "why?" to "why not?" 

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