PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Have you ever thought about the impact ABSA has had on your position as a biological safety professional, on the way you are perceived in your facility as a biological safety professional, or on how you are seen in relation to your peers in the environmental health and safety field? The ABSA Council and committee members have invested their time and efforts over the years toward building upon the organization's professional image, and the most recent efforts have been the institution of the credentials for the Registered Biosafety Professional (RBP) and the Certified Biological Safety Professional (CBSP). These credentials give ABSA, and the professional, the recognition needed within the scientific community. We have always wanted our peers to associate ABSA, and our profession, with the highest standards in biological safety, and providing credentials has enabled us to meet this goal.

Does the value of the RBP and the CBSP influence an employer in hiring an employee or in choosing a consultant? I have polled several Environmental Health and Safety directors, and every one of them have said that it was important to them to hire a person with a certification or credential in the desired field. (Other factors being considered, such as experience.) If an industrial hygienist position was available, the employer would look favorably on the applicant with a CIH; in hazardous materials, a CHMM; in physical safety, a CSP; and in biological safety, a RBP or CBSP. The reason would be because these credentials indicate that a person had taken related educational courses, and had shown competency in a field of work. In the biotechnology industry, the preferred certifications would differ from the ones needed in a large university research facility. The CSP may be more valuable as a general safety certification in an industry where the safety staff must wear several hats, but in a university, the CBSP, CIH, and CHMM would be preferable since the staff is usually dedicated to one field of expertise.

Our job then remains to make the segment of the industry that is outside of our usual customers knowledgeable of the RBP and CBSP credentials and their inherent value. I encourage you to use the RBP and CBSP in order to get as many people as possible to talk about our biological safety credentials. Your co-workers and customers should be made aware of your specialized knowledge so they can, in turn, pass this information along to members in their organizations. We will then have planted the seed of information in people's minds, and therefore, customers needing our help will have a better chance of being made aware of our expertise and of the quality of services we can provide.

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