

CEM Exam Development Summit Raises the Bar for CEM Learning Program

Through the efforts of the International Association for Exhibition Management (IAEM), its Board of Directors and the CEM Commission, the exhibition management industry has continued to advance the knowledge, the art, and the science of exhibition management. Established in 1975 by the IAEM Board of Directors as a voluntary certification program, the Certified in Exhibition Management (CEM) credential is recognized throughout the exhibition industry as a means of raising professional standards. IAEM endorses and recognizes industry professionals who have attained the CEM credential.

An integral part of the CEM Learning Program is the review and update of the curriculum on a regular basis. Professional organizations offering credential programs hold exam writing and development meetings and/or have standing committees in place that review questions annually. According to Jane Dahlroth, CEM, CMP, 2005 CEM Commission Chairman, from there, the concept of a CEM Exam Development Summit, which would provide CEMs with an exclusive opportunity to review and update the exam bank, as well as write new test questions was conceived.

The CEM Exam Development Summit made its debut 20-21 April 2005 in Orlando, Florida, and was hosted by the Orange County Convention Center and their various service providers. The Center's support of the program was instrumental in the success of the meeting and demonstrated their ongoing dedication and continued support of IAEM and the industry.

In an effort to continue improving the program, exam writing experts and a psychometrician (a psychologist who devises, constructs, and standardizes tests) led the program. The CEM Exam Development Summit benefits both future and current CEMs. For current CEMs this was an opportunity to provide input and apply experience to the questions and exams. It was also a great place for

networking with other CEMs and the CEM Commission. “I was able to meet new people, see some old friends and review several CEM modules. It was an incredible learning experience and since I earned my CEM before the new process, I was glad to be able to review much of the new material and see many of the improvements in the program,” says Gary Tolbert, CEM, a Summit member and member of the CEM Commission.

Bob Kelley, CEM, another Summit participant said, “I was amazed at the work we accomplished and how the test writing guidance helped make such a difference in the way questions were expressed. I believe we are certainly moving forward with the CEM program.”

The end result, is a complete review of three existing databases and the writing of more than 100 new exam questions.

Tolbert feels that the Summit was a success because, “We were able to do what we had planned on doing, and that was reviewing and adding what we hope will be more updated questions to several of the programs. It wasn’t the end of the process, but it was a continuing step in what will be an ongoing, never-ending process of reviewing and improving the program and meeting the needs of the candidates.”

Plans are already underway for the 2006 CEM Exam Development Summit to be held in April 2006 in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.