

Case Study

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Title: **Training Director**

Company: **Columbia Insurance Group**



How have The Institutes' programs benefited your organization?

The Institutes' programs are valuable sources of knowledge and professional development for all our employees and have become part of our overall learning environment. For the past four-and-a-half years, Columbia Insurance Group (CIG) has offered and I have administered all of The Institutes' exams at our on-site testing center. In addition to the professional designations our employees can earn through The Institutes' programs, they can also continue to grow as professionals by taking any or all of the courses The Institutes offer. Depending on the individual needs of the employee and the requirements of the specific job, I visit with both employees and their immediate supervisors to determine which course or courses would benefit them most. We look beyond the employees' immediate jobs to their goals and aspirations for the future and determine which courses or designations would be most beneficial for their growth and overall knowledge.

How does your organization encourage employees to pursue professional development?

In addition to reimbursing employees for most if not all of their expenses for study materials and exam fees once an exam is passed, CIG also offers financial assistance up front to encourage greater participation in The Institutes' courses. In 2009, we set a corporate goal to increase participation in industry education by at least 20 percent. Our senior management team fully supported this initiative.

What is the main factor that influences participation in The Institutes' courses?

After the financial-reimbursement incentive, the biggest factor that influences participation in The Institutes' courses, from my perspective, is the addition of an on-site testing center at our home office. Over my 25 years in the industry, many of us have taken The Institutes' exams in college and university classrooms or in Prometric testing centers, sitting at uncomfortable desks for two or three hours at a time. Many of these locations had proctors who probably unknowingly put additional pressure on us before the start of the exam. Because we were taking the exams with many other people at the same time in these locations, the temperature of the room was based on a one-size-fits-all rationale. Try taking a three-hour exam when you are too cold or too hot! Most people do not function well under such additional stress.

Our on-site testing center allows CIG employees to relax until the time of the exam. It also allows them to adjust their testing day or time much more easily than with a Prometric center. Generally, on-site centers have fewer employees taking exams at the same time, which promotes a more relaxed environment. We generally have no more than two people taking an exam at the same time at CIG.

The Institutes' decision to segment some of the course exams was a positive move. From my perspective as a training director, I think the segmented exams help individuals learn more, primarily because they are studying smaller bits of information before being tested. Too many times, I think individuals cram when taking an exam over an entire book and then most of the information is lost shortly after taking the exam.

CASE STUDY

Professional Development



▶ The Institutes' proven knowledge helps individuals and organizations achieve measurable business results. Columbia Insurance Group uses The Institutes' programs as valuable sources of knowledge and professional development for their employees. **Learn what we can do for you at www.TheInstitutes.org.**