

Growing value in association membership

by Grant Lee, FCInst.M., RPM

Executive Director

Canadian Institute of Marketing

grant.lee@professionalmarketer.ca

glee@aglmarketing.com

When I graduated from university with an undergraduate degree in 1973, I believed that my parchment was all that was needed for a “ticket to ride.” Indeed, my degree opened doors to the kind of work that I liked, but my life was different then, and living day-to-day was all that was needed.

I had no concept of professional credentials or long-term career planning. I dare say, I was not alone—and I quickly add that I doubt that much has changed for new graduates today. Fewer than most are graduating with full knowledge of professional credentials that have a foundation on academic achievement.

When I returned to my alma mater eight years later to tackle a post graduate degree, I had become aware of the professions in my blossoming career and the need for credentials to advance the prospects of my own fortunes and to secure a lifestyle that I was enjoying. Along the way since graduation, I had obtained certifications for the work that I found myself engaged in, but they were not enough to enter the higher income levels associated with corporate management. And even now, I do not believe much has changed for today’s graduates, years after their graduation.

While taking my masters degree, I realized that I had an investment to protect. I could never relive the years of pure enjoyment and hardship, and I did not want to start over. I decided to get involved in protecting my intellectual assets.

I knew that if I did not engage in protecting the value of my degrees, I would have no foundation for advancing my personal interests. If my college were to disappear and my university fail, my parchment would be less than a sheet of blank paper, regardless of the level of knowledge that the degrees represented. Nobody would care about my academic achievement and a high level of suspicion would be cast on the source of my knowledge.

From the time of the early 80s to the mid-nineties, I spent well over a decade heavily involved in alumni association work, rising to Chair of the University of Guelph Alumni Association in 1992. All the while making sure that my college was funded and my alma mater making policy and taking decisions that were good for my faculty and degrees. In the 80s and nineties, I took executive level positions in marketing associations in Canada and the USA, and vigorously supported other professional bodies that influenced my career development by directing attention and resources into activities that supported my ambitions.

Members of the Canadian Institute of Marketing; - this I know well through experience and living long enough to say so. No-one other than you will take care of your own well-being and career development. You are on your own. You are alone!

Many times, I am asked about what value the Canadian Institute of Marketing has for its members. In other words, "What are you (the Institute) or can you (the Institute) do for me in return for payment of my annual payment of dues?" And I politely respond with my experiences where membership has served me, my clients/employers and the public well. As executive director and a member, I have repeated my mantra too many times to remember.

This I know. I have a passion for academic achievement, application of knowledge and experience to make good things happen, and defence of professional credentials that matter. Peer-reviewed credentials and life-long learning matters in medicine, engineering, architecture, geomatics, law, accounting and many others—including marketing. These professions survive and thrive because practitioners care about their own well-being and what the public demands.

Every professional member of the Canadian Institute of Marketing has choices of actions to take to protect their own interests as professional marketers. Following is a list of many actions that colleagues carry out every day as a member of the Institute:

Participate in social media sites of the Institute and share knowledge and initiatives on Twitter, facebook and LinkedIn. Go to these links and get involved.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/8099252591/>

http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=105823&trk=my_groups-b-grp-v

http://www.linkedin.com/groups/AgoraVox-4157134?trk=my_groups-b-grp-v

<https://twitter.com/regprofmarketer>

Join the sites. Many of us are waiting for you.

Our Web site has a Directory Page for professional marketers and consulting marketers. We need you to authorize listing of your name before it can be added. Every professional marketer should be listed on this page. Why is your name missing, along with your professional marketing credentials?

The Institute has committees and webinars, and the ability to create virtual special interest bureaus for members to build their networks, hone skills and influence change. If you wish to protect your credentials, get involved.

Marketing Canada, journal of the Canadian Institute of Marketing is read throughout the world and has a large subscribers list where it is distributed directly to members and non-members. If you are advancing the knowledge and understanding of professional marketing or have a case

study to share, why not take the time to publish your work? Nobody will remember what you did, unless it is documented and shared.

Get involved in local events and organizations and speak publicly about marketing and mention how credentials matter.

If you are a professional marketer, sign your documents with MCInst.M, and if a Registered Professional Marketer, wear your lapel pin and stamp your marketing reports and professional opinion letters/proposal with your professional stamp and sign it. You can make a virtual signed stamp and use it on digital documents. You can place your Institute credentials on business cards and email signatures.

Talk to colleagues about membership and when hiring, ask for membership in the Canadian Institute of Marketing. Build the ranks of professional marketers, because there is strength in numbers and the Canadian Institute of Marketing has much growth potential.

The Canadian Institute of Marketing has value for each member, if you really want it and take the time to see it for yourself. For those of us who want the Institute to succeed, we make our own value and build our careers on the benefits of being a member. Every member is an advocate of professional marketing, and every member can take comfort in the fact that credentials have been peer reviewed and certified. Now it is up to you to protect what you have earned.

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