



FROM CONCEPT TO CONCRETE: ENVISIONING A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR CONTINUED COMPETENCY

SUMMARY

Ensuring continued competence is paramount to the purpose of professional certification. More certifying agencies are focused on building and maintaining frameworks for continued competence that meet the needs of diverse stakeholders, including the Competency & Credentialing Institute (CCI).

In 2016 CCI contracted with SeaCrest to facilitate review of the recertification requirements for CCI's primary credentialing program. The project included guiding the Board of Directors to envision a modern, effective framework for continued competence to replace the Institute's existing 20-year old recertification program. SeaCrest's role as CCI's strategic partner hinged upon the team's expertise and knowledge of current best practices, accreditation standards, and experience in making broad improvements to an existing program.

BACKGROUND

CCI has offered credentialing and competency assessment and education programs to more than 35,000 nurses within the perioperative nursing community. For more than 35 years, CCI has administered the CNOR credentialing program—the focus of this project and largest of CCI's credentialing offerings. They contracted with SeaCrest to ensure new programming upholds an exceptional level of quality and thoroughness.

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THE CHALLENGE

After monitoring the environment for professional, technological and industry developments, CCI determined conditions were conducive for a shift in its current CNOR recertification program. "What really created the urgent platform for change was our sense that the accrediting bodies were no longer going to accept the status quo, and that if we didn't define a different path forward, we would be challenged to maintain our accreditation. More importantly, we felt an obligation to take a leadership role in helping to define alternatives to the current methods for recertification," said Shannon Spear Carter, EdD, CAE, former Executive Director & Chief Executive Officer, CCI.

The fast-tracked project spanned only three to four months and included creating a competency program that 1) measured and validated knowledge and skill according to the most up-to-date demands within perioperative nursing and 2) met the stringent requirements for accreditation under the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) *Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs*.

SeaCrest spearheaded the development of an updated competency program for the CNOR specialty nursing certification program—a formal process validating a nurse's knowledge, skills, and abilities in a defined role and clinical area of practice. A continued competency program seeks to measure and ensure proficiency throughout the life of the certification and for the purposes of recertification—rather than simply knowledge and skills at the time of certification.

THE **SeaCrest** APPROACH

STEP 1 INFORMATION GATHERING

SeaCrest conducted an environmental scan – within healthcare and nonrelated industries – to determine current recertification requirements, identify trends, highlight any potential challenges, and describe models of successful recertification programs. The scan included surveying CCI Board members to help frame a discussion about a desired direction, identify essential decision-making factors, and envision elements of the new framework.



STEP 3 STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK AND RECAP

SeaCrest synthesized the discussions and provided a comprehensive summary report that clearly summarized the steps and path forward based on feedback and direction from the CCI leadership. The report included a conceptual framework serving as the basis from which CCI designed the operational tactics necessary to execute the vision and supporting certification maintenance activities.

A FOCUS ON STRATEGY

At the heart of SeaCrest's role in any client project is a heavy focus on strategic thinking. SeaCrest's responsibilities lay in building a discussion foundation through extensive research and pre-work to ensure a fruitful, yet productive, leadership meeting and a logical path forward.

STEP 2 PLANNING & MEETING FACILITATION

SeaCrest led the volunteer leadership through a focused, face-to-face, strategic planning workshop, which included detailed discussions and exercises to pinpoint goals and brainstorm strategies. SeaCrest facilitated this highly focused strategic discussion to ensure the development of a useable model for the new competency program, assessing questions including:

- What is the purpose and goal of a continued competency program?
- How can we ensure all program components link back to the program's purpose and target audience?
- What does the ideal program entail?
- How does this new program change current financial, staff time, leadership demand, and other requirements, and how can CCI prepare for these changes?
- In building a new program, how can we ensure we meet NCCA reaccreditation requirements?

By connecting back to these key principles, the CCI leadership team was able to ensure the program direction and framework were both realistic and functional, while responding to the goals of the program and the requirements of the NCCA accreditation standards.

"At a tactical level, SeaCrest's knowledge of accreditation standards was a critical factor in our interest in partnering with them. However, their understanding of how to fit this new model within our desire to measure competence, elevated them from accreditation experts to strategic planning consultants," said Carter.

"What I highly valued was their ability to connect the theoretical with the practical. It is one thing to work with people who can design conceptual frameworks." Where SeaCrest excelled was creating an actionable plan that is based on a strategic vision. That has given our work with them a longer shelf life more valuable return on the investment. - SHANNON SPEAR CARTER, EdD, CAE