



**THE INDUSTRY'S
ONLY UNIVERSITY-
AFFILIATED
CERTIFICATION
PROGRAM**



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**MORE THAN A
CREDENTIAL –
IT'S YOUR NEXT
CAREER MOVE**

WELCOME TO THE PROGRAM

Welcome to the Certified Trade Show Marketer (CTSM) program.



Thank you for selecting EXHIBITOR Learning Events and the CTSM program as your source of training in trade show and corporate event marketing.

Our program offers a comprehensive, marketing-based curriculum covering every critical skill required to manage a successful trade show or event program. It is also soundly backed by university affiliation with Northern Illinois University's Outreach program for CEU credits. This affiliation helps us set a standard of excellence unequalled in our industry.

The objectives of the CTSM program are threefold:

- ▶ To provide you with the most up-to-date and thorough training in trade show and event marketing available.
- ▶ To enhance your organization by helping you translate classroom training into skills that you'll use daily in your job, thus increasing the effectiveness of your face-to-face marketing programs.
- ▶ To supply the trade show and event industry with the most qualified professionals available.

The CTSM program has become the most widely accepted and respected certification program in the trade show industry. Our graduates take pride in their accomplishments and have confidence in their ability to manage positive results-oriented programs. We are excited to have you as part of our CTSM community and are committed to helping you make this process rewarding for you personally.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Gibbs".

Stephanie Gibbs, CTSM
CTSM Executive Director

WHAT IS CERTIFICATION IN TRADE SHOW MARKETING?

The Certified Trade Show Marketer (CTSM) program, sponsored by EXHIBITOR, is a certification program for trade show and corporate event marketing professionals. The CTSM program sets the industry standard for excellence by providing a disciplined approach to achieving a high level of competence in this very specialized field.

CTSM is a training program with three components:

- 1** 42 hours of classroom training in 23 required sessions and a combination of 45-minute, 60-minute and 90-minute elective sessions, totaling 7.5 hours.
- 2** A Comprehensive Exam on the 23 required sessions, testing the core skills required of the trade show or event marketer; and
- 3** A Candidate Portfolio through which the candidate demonstrates experience using those skills on the job.

Although the program takes a minimum of one year to complete, candidates may complete requirements at their own pace. Sessions may be taken at EXHIBITORLIVE, EXHIBITORFastTrak or online through EXHIBITOR eTrak.

It is typical for program graduates to return to the conference each year to continue upgrading their education in this dynamic industry. Their experiences as graduates vary, but the consensus is that certification has provided them with more confidence, more credibility, and often promotions and pay increases within their organizations.



“ MY ROLES IN SHOWS TRANSFORMED. I FELT LIKE MY WORK HAD PURPOSE THAT I COULD JUSTIFY, AND I HAD A PATH I COULD FOLLOW. IT'S NICE TO FEEL MY WORK IN SHOWS AND EVENTS IS TRANSFORMING THE COMPANY'S OUTLOOK AND EXPECTATIONS ON WHAT A SHOW SHOULD BE. ”

Rebecca Enyard, CTSM
Senior Marketing Coordinator
Zoeller

PROGRAM POLICIES

Education/Experience Requirements for Certification

The following education/job experience qualifications are required for certification. You may be working toward completing these requirements as you work on the program.

- ▶ Bachelor's degree and two or more years of work experience related to trade shows and corporate events

OR

- ▶ No bachelor's degree with a minimum of three years of work experience related to trade shows and corporate events.

Program Fees

- ▶ A non-refundable fee of \$245 is submitted when the candidate registers for the Candidate Portfolio.
- ▶ An exam registration fee of \$245 is required at the time a candidate registers to take the exam. It's non-refundable if candidate cancels less than three weeks prior to exam date. It may be transferred to another exam date/location if cancellation occurs three or more weeks in advance.

Our Expectations of You as a Candidate

- ▶ Complete the Core Curriculum of 23 required sessions and additional elective sessions for a total of 42 hours of classroom training.
- ▶ Completed quizzes for each of the 23 required sessions and completed affidavits for each elective session taken.
- ▶ Meeting published deadlines for quiz answer submissions, Comprehensive Exam registration and Candidate Portfolio submission.
- ▶ Keeping all session handouts for reference in exam study preparation and portfolio application.
- ▶ Successful completion of the Comprehensive Exam with a score of 75% or higher.
- ▶ Submission of Candidate Portfolio that fulfills the CTSM program's published requirements.
- ▶ Informing the CTSM office of changes to your contact information.

[Click here for the CTSM Code of Ethics](#)

What You Can Expect of Us

- ▶ Transcript maintenance of program requirement status (including sessions, Comprehensive Exam and Candidate Portfolio).
- ▶ Notification of your program status with post-conference updates.
- ▶ Continuing Education Units (CEUs) awarded by Northern Illinois University (NIU) Outreach for all session hours completed. One CEU is earned for 10 session hours, thus a total of four CEUs are awarded for certification.
- ▶ EXHIBITOR pays all CEU fees to NIU Outreach.
- ▶ Notification when you qualify to take the Comprehensive Exam and when your portfolio registration has been received.
- ▶ Session requirements can change from year to year; however, once you have fulfilled a requirement, you receive credit for it even if the session changes.
- ▶ Candidate support services to guide you through the program requirements - CTSM office assistance and communication, mentors and portfolio advisors.

PROCEDURES

The chart on the following page provides an overview of the requirements for certification. It is an overview only. For more details see the section “Program Requirements.”

The Enrollment Form

Completing the enrollment form online and receiving notice of acceptance into the program ensures that you receive all critical directions and guidelines for certification.

The Session Component

A Core Curriculum of 23 required sessions and additional elective sessions for a total of 42 hours of classroom training.

The Comprehensive Exam

The exam can be completed online after the session requirements are fulfilled. This exam is designed to demonstrate knowledge transfer from the 23 required sessions.

The Candidate Portfolio

The purpose of the portfolio is to present a collection of materials which showcase a candidate’s trade show and/or event marketing capabilities. The portfolio requirement is designed to demonstrate the candidate’s application of the skills taught in the program.

Certification

After all components of the program (sessions, exam and portfolio) have been completed successfully, candidates are notified that they may begin using the CTSM credential behind their name. A public recognition ceremony is held at the annual EXHIBITORLIVE conference.

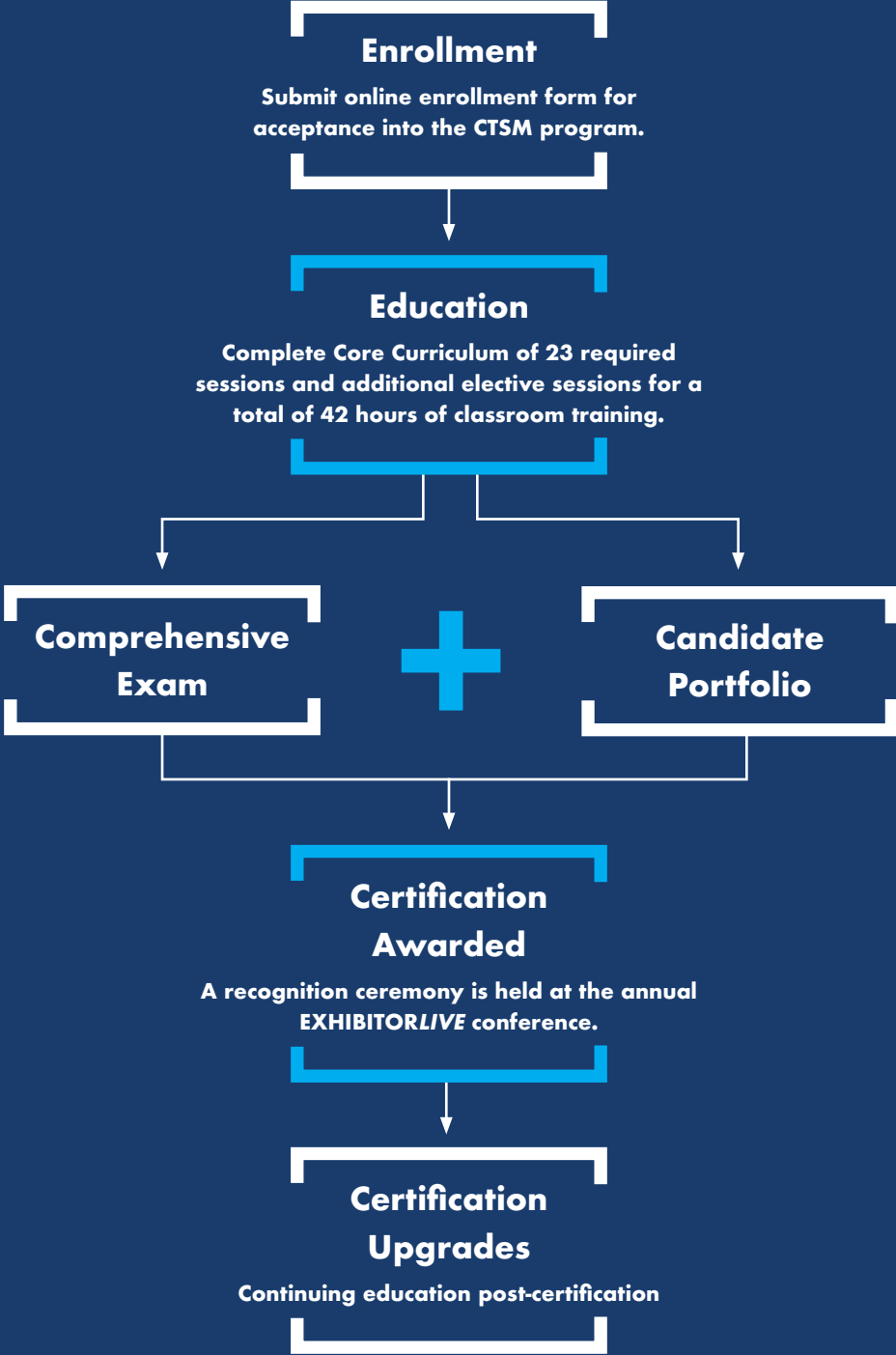
Certification Upgrades

Because of the dynamic nature of the industry and rapidly changing knowledge and skills required, certification upgrades are recommended at a minimum of every five years. Certification upgrades are awarded to graduates at the annual EXHIBITORLIVE conference as follows:

- ▶ **Bronze Level** - one additional CEU (the equivalent of 10 session hours)
- ▶ **Silver Level** - two additional CEUs (the equivalent of 20 session hours)
- ▶ **Gold Level** - three additional CEUs (the equivalent of 30 session hours)
- ▶ **Diamond Level** - based 80% on professional contributions to the CTSM program and the industry and 20% on continuing education



CERTIFICATION PROCESS OVERVIEW





“ I FIND THAT THE EDUCATION I HAVE RECEIVED FROM THIS PROGRAM IS BOTH UNIVERSAL AND ESSENTIAL TO EVERY EVENT. BOOTH SPACES AND SHOW RULES MAY VARY AMONG ORGANIZATIONS AND VENUES, BUT THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE I HAVE GAINED AS A CTSM CANDIDATE HAVE PROVEN THE CORE PRINCIPLES OF A WINNING TRADE SHOW PROGRAM WILL ALWAYS SUCCEED WHEN APPLIED PROPERLY. ”

Tom Peterson
Account Executive
Deckel & Money Penny

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Completing the Session Component

The core curriculum was selected to provide a balance between trade show and event-specific skills and general marketing and communications skills. A commitment to the marketing aspect of trade shows and events has always been a priority and the curriculum reflects this.

Session quality is critical to the success of this program. Each EXHIBITOR faculty member is required to submit session topics and content for evaluation prior to acceptance, prepare comprehensive handouts written in a standard format, and participate in a mandatory speaker training for new speakers. Each core curriculum session is monitored regularly by the Education Committee and has been approved by Northern Illinois University Outreach.

Please find the current list of required sessions at CTSM.com. Candidates must also select an additional 7.5 hours of elective courses to fulfill the 42 hour classroom requirement. The core curriculum is subject to slight changes from conference to conference. Any core curriculum requirement, once satisfied, is honored regardless of subsequent session changes.

Candidates with five or more years of experience may select from among the optional CTSM 5 sessions listed on the CTSM required curriculum to replace some of the more basic CTSM-required sessions.

If there is a change to a curriculum requirement that you have not yet taken, contact the CTSM office at 507.424.4881 to find out the replacement session that meets that requirement.

Registering for Sessions

You will receive advance notice of upcoming EXHIBITOR Learning Events. Before registering to attend a conference, be sure to check your transcript to see what sessions you have remaining. Candidates may access their personal transcripts at any time by going to CTSM.com. Log into My CTSM using your email address and CTSM PIN number. Once logged in, click on “Transcript” to view your personal session record.

Session Handouts

Prior to each conference, you will be sent an electronic link to the handouts for the sessions you have registered to attend. EXHIBITOR requires that each handout follow a similar format and structure. Each handout includes a list of key points called Essential Learning Components (ELCs). The ELCs form the foundation of the content you will receive in the session. The handouts should be saved digitally or printed and brought to each session as a reference tool. The Comprehensive Exam is based on ELCs for each required session, and you will be referencing both required and elective sessions in your Candidate Portfolio.

Quiz Requirements

To earn CEUs, NIU Outreach requires that candidates demonstrate a transfer of knowledge by completing an online quiz (or in some cases an affidavit) after each session. The quiz is designed to be a basic review of the session ELCs. A score of 70% or higher is required to earn CTSM credit and CEUs for each session. Since CEUs are based upon hours in class, it is imperative that you arrive on time for sessions and stay until the end. Room monitor scanners are time-sensitive. Instructions for submitting quizzes are online. **To receive credit for EXHIBITOR sessions, quizzes and affidavits must be submitted online at CTSM.com within two weeks following each conference or online session.**

CEU Transcripts and Session Status Updates

EXHIBITOR maintains a record for each candidate of all sessions applied toward the CTSM program. This record includes session dates and accumulation of session hours and CEUs.

Questions regarding candidate status should be directed to:

CTSM Program

507.424.4881

CTSM@exhibitorgroup.com

Questions regarding the application of CEU credits received through the CTSM program towards other educational degrees at other schools should be directed to:

Non-Credit Registrar

NIU Outreach

Swen Parson 146

DeKalb, IL 60115

Fax: 815-753-6900

OutreachRegistration@niu.edu

Completing the Comprehensive Exam Component

The Comprehensive Exam is a test taken online and could take up to 3 hours. The exam consists of multiple-choice and true/false questions, based upon the current curriculum. Questions are randomly selected from a pool of database questions, based upon the Essential Learning Components (ELCs) of all required sessions.

All session requirements must be completed prior to taking the exam. After attending your last sessions, be sure to complete your online quizzes. Proof of successful completion of all sessions is required before the exam may be taken.

Comprehensive Exam Registration

The Comprehensive Exam will be offered online throughout one week each month. Candidates must reserve an exam time one month prior by registering online at CTSM.com. Log into My CTSM and click on “Comprehensive Exam”, where you will find the link for exam registration. There is a \$245 fee to register for the exam. It is non-refundable if a candidate cancels less than three weeks prior to the exam date. It may be transferred to another exam date if cancellation occurs three or more weeks in advance.

Candidates will receive an e-mail confirming their registration date and time, along with an exam study guide and study tips. The sooner an eligible candidate registers for the exam, the sooner they receive the study material.

Comprehensive Exam Results

Passing the Comprehensive Exam requires that 75% of the questions be answered correctly. You will receive your results online immediately upon completion of your exam.

Candidates who fail the exam are permitted to retest until the exam is successfully completed with 75% accuracy. (NOTE: The entire exam does not need to be retaken, only those sessions with a score lower than 75%).

Comprehensive Exam Preparation

Your handouts are your best study materials. Thoroughly understand and be able to apply the concepts presented in the Essential Learning Components of all required sessions. A CTSM Study Guide is emailed to the examinee by the CTSM faculty as soon as they have registered for the exam. Remember — these are guides, and may or may not be exact questions from the Comprehensive Exam.

The Comprehensive Exam tests for a higher level of integration, testing application of concepts, so its questions are much more detailed than session quizzes.

Candidate Portfolio Registration

The Candidate Portfolio is designed to allow the candidate to demonstrate application of the skills learned. Skills taught are required of the exhibit or event marketing professional. It is to be based on a recent real life trade show or event for which the candidate has been responsible.

After all sessions have been taken, a candidate must register for the portfolio on the CTSM website, CTSM.com. Log into My CTSM using your email address and CTSM PIN number. Click on “Portfolio”; then select the link for Portfolio Registration. Registration includes payment of a \$245 portfolio fee.

Once the portfolio registration form has been submitted, the candidate is assigned a graduate advisor and has ONE YEAR from registration date to complete their portfolio. If the portfolio is not submitted within the required time frame, a new registration form and fee must be submitted.

Candidate Portfolio Requirements

Determine which of your trade shows or events best demonstrates your skills and abilities in managing with measurable goals and results. Also incorporate a well-developed marketing plan connected to your trade show or event. The best one should become the focus of your portfolio. Start collecting data for your portfolio any time after taking sessions at your first EXHIBITOR conference. One of the tools available to you is the online session 7010, “Preparing, Developing and Submitting a Quality CTSM Portfolio”. Every portfolio must include the following sections:

- ▶ **Section I** – Vital Statistics
- ▶ **Section II** – Overview/Show Schedule
- ▶ **Section III** – Introduction to Show of Focus/Measurable Show Objectives
- ▶ **Section IV** – Management of Exhibit Design/Production
- ▶ **Section V** – Management of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)
- ▶ **Section VI** – Management of Results Reporting
- ▶ **Section VII** – Conclusion
- ▶ **Overall Format** –
 - All key components are present and well-organized, meeting format criteria
 - Session references with applications integrated within the body copy are critical
(Detailed requirements, tips and tools are all located on the CTSM website under the Portfolio link.)

Completing the Candidate Portfolio

Work with your assigned advisor section by section, incorporating advice along the way. Your advisor must see your complete portfolio before you electronically submit it and will notify the CTSM office when your portfolio is ready to be submitted. When submitting, candidates must also email the CTSM faculty a professional, digital photo of themselves. Specifications are on the CTSM website under PORTFOLIO.

Candidates have one year from their registration date to submit their portfolio. Those wanting to partake in certification recognition at the upcoming EXHIBITORLIVE conference must submit their portfolios by the due date posted online at CTSM.com.

Evaluation of the Candidate Portfolio

Once the portfolio has been uploaded, the portfolio review committee is notified that portfolio is ready for review.





“ THE CTSM PROGRAM ENRICHED MY LEARNING TO BECOME AN EXPERT IN THE TRADE SHOW ARENA. AND I CONTINUE TO TAKE COURSES TO STAY ON TOP OF TRENDS TO ADD TO MY TOOLBOX OF SKILLS. THE OTHER BENEFIT OF THE CTSM PROGRAM IS NETWORKING AND SHARING BEST PRACTICES WITH COLLEAGUE IN OTHER INDUSTRIES AND LEARNING HOW TO ADAPT THAT TO MY TEAM’S PROGRAMS. ”

Linda Lee Pang

Associate Director, Congresses

Strategic Meetings & Events, US Commercial Marketing Operations

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who should consider CTSM certification?

CTSM certification will benefit any exhibit or event marketing professional. Professionals new to the industry will shorten the learning curve and avoid many of the pitfalls that might otherwise cost both valuable time and money. Seasoned professionals will also benefit through this opportunity to stay current with the dynamic fast-changing demands of trade show marketing.

What are the benefits of earning the CTSM designation?

- ▶ Training in the disciplines of trade show and event marketing
- ▶ Demonstration of valuable knowledge and skills you've gained
- ▶ Continuing Education Units document training. CEU fees are paid by EXHIBITOR.
- ▶ CTSM recipients are not just "surviving" changes in the industry; they are thriving. Many CTSM candidates experience a career advancement either during or shortly after certification.
- ▶ Enhanced value to your company

Who makes up the EXHIBITOR conference CTSM faculty?

The faculty is comprised of academic professionals and seasoned, recognized experts in the field of trade show and event marketing. Session content is designed and delivered by this group of the industry's most experienced individuals.

What types of courses make up the 23 required sessions CTSM candidates must attend?

To provide well-rounded training in all aspects of trade show and event marketing, the 23 required sessions cover topics in the following category tracks: Measurement & Analytics; Planning & Execution; Marketing & Sales; Management & Leadership; Global Exhibit Marketing; Exhibits, Experiences, Events; and Personal & Career. (Visit our website CTSM.com for a complete listing of required sessions).

How often are the sessions held?

A comprehensive offering of CTSM sessions occurs annually at EXHIBITORLIVE. Portions of the CTSM curriculum are offered throughout the year at EXHIBITOR*FastTrak* regional conferences and online through monthly EXHIBITOR eTrak sessions.



How long will it take me to finish the program and earn the CTSM designation?

Candidates can work at their own pace. It is possible to complete the program in one year's time; however, that involves being able to attend one annual EXHIBITOR conference and a combination of EXHIBITOR*FastTrak* and EXHIBITOR eTrak learning opportunities. It also involves strategically planning which sessions can be best taken at each venue in order to get all sessions in.

Most candidates are busy professionals with many other business and personal obligations and take more time to finish (usually an average of two to three years).

How much does the program cost?

Considerations as you plan completion:

- ▶ Study the schedules for all upcoming EXHIBITOR*FastTraks*, EXHIBITOR eTraks, and EXHIBITOR*LIVE* to know which ones fit in with your schedule and budget. Note which sessions are offered at each.
- ▶ Generally speaking, the more CTSM coursework you complete per event, the lower the overall costs.
- ▶ The cost of travel and lodging is an additional variable to consider. Also, there are Comprehensive Exam and Candidate Portfolio registration fees of \$245 each.
- ▶ Register early to take advantage of Early Bird rates, and register for the largest package available to maximize your savings. Also, watch for scholarship opportunities!

I understand that required course numbers and names change periodically. How do I know which ones I have left to meet program requirements?

Candidates may access their personal transcripts at any time by going to CTSM.com. Log into My CTSM, using your email address and CTSM PIN number. Once logged in, click on "Transcript" to view your personal session record.

Can I get credit for work experience?

Work experience is a requirement for certification, not something for which you get credit. Prior to receiving certification you will need a minimum of two years of experience if you possess a bachelor's degree or three years if you do not hold a degree. Job experience may be completed concurrently with the program. Session requirements cannot be fulfilled by work experience.

Do I have to take even the most basic CTSM-required sessions if I have been managing trade shows and/or events for many years?

Candidates with five or more years of experience may request substitutions for specified basic sessions and select from CTSM program approved electives. Substitution requests must be made online at CTSM.com.

Can I receive credit for sessions taken at previous EXHIBITOR conferences?

Yes, this process is called an Archive Request. Complete a Candidate Records Archive Request form online under MY CTSM at CTSM.com. After our faculty verifies your attendance, you will need to take quizzes or complete affidavits for any sessions for which you wish to receive credit. Credit will be given upon successful completion of the online quizzes. There is a \$125 fee for each conference from which sessions are applied retroactively.

Can I receive credit for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) earned through other programs?

When EXHIBITOR certifies a candidate, we document a pre-defined level of training with the support of Northern Illinois University (NIU) Outreach. There is no way to determine whether CEUs earned elsewhere meet the requirements we have set for the program, and promise to candidates and their employers. Therefore we cannot accept CEUs earned through other programs.

Is it possible to receive college credit for the EXHIBITOR sessions I complete?

CTSM candidates will be awarded Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from NIU Outreach for all EXHIBITOR sessions completed. EXHIBITOR pays all CEU fees. CEUs are a designation of continued learning and are not the same as standard college and university credits. Because each college and university has its own requirements, if you are enrolling in another educational institution, it is necessary to check with that registrar's office to determine if any of your CTSM CEUs are transferable.

When do I begin working on my Candidate Portfolio?

We recommend that you start gathering information (evidence, materials, files, photos, documents) after you attend your first conference. When you have completed the session component of the program, you may register online under MY CTSM at CTSM.com and pay the \$245 registration fee.

How do I get a CTSM graduate advisor to help me?

Candidates are required to work with an advisor. One will be assigned to you automatically when your Candidate Portfolio registration form is received online.

Will my certification be renewed periodically?

Due to the dynamic nature of the industry, we recommend certification upgrades every five years. The CTSM program has Bronze, Silver, and Gold upgrades based upon graduates earning one, two or three additional Continuing Education Units. The fourth upgrade (Diamond Level) is based 80% upon professional contributions and 20% on continuing education.

How is my progress tracked?

Candidate records are maintained at the CTSM office. This record includes session dates, hours and total CEUs earned.



IN SUMMARY...

EXHIBITOR's Certified Trade Show Marketer (CTSM) program is a demanding and challenging undertaking for each candidate. Because it is designed to demonstrate the candidate's excellence in all of the diverse components of trade show and event marketing, it is extensive in scope. Therefore it requires a significant commitment on the part of both the candidates and their sponsoring organizations.

Approval of the core curriculum by Northern Illinois University Outreach and awarding of CEUs by the university guarantee candidates a program set in accordance with high academic standards. The CTSM program is carefully designed to walk every candidate through each step of certification successfully.

Congratulations on selecting this program as a vital component in your career development.

Contacting the CTSM Program

CTSM Program

507.424.4881

CTSM@exhibitorgroup.com

Visit us online at CTSM.com





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