

# Are Your Purchasing Job Descriptions Outdated?

How Changes In The Purchasing Certification Field May Impact Your Talent Management Strategy

Please route to:

VP of Purchasing

Purchasing Directors

Purchasing Managers

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**Next Level Purchasing**

*Helping Purchasers Become Indispensable*



## Changes & Challenges In The Purchasing Profession

**With the many changes that have led to today's global economy, purchasing departments are more challenged than ever.** The widespread use of global markets has created a situation where companies are now competing with more competitors from a wider geographic footprint. Commodity prices have escalated in recent years. Companies have elected to outsource many tasks once done in house.

**All of these changes have made good purchasing performance more critical than ever to a company's success.** However, good purchasing performance is becoming increasingly difficult to deliver for purchasing departments that have not evolved.

**New purchasing skills and practices are required for success in today's complex business environment.** Companies who have met the challenges and overcome the obstacles have made talent management a priority. Specifically, talent management refers to the process of ensuring that a purchasing team's skill levels are increased to keep pace with the new challenges of the profession and the business world. Companies that are able to get "ahead of the curve" or at least keep up with the pace of change generally either recruit new, more highly skilled purchasing team members, develop the skills of their existing purchasing staff, or both.

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## The Importance Of Updated Purchasing Job Descriptions

**Regardless of the talent management option pursued, purchasing job descriptions play a key role.** An outdated purchasing job description can have undesirable effects on a company's talent management strategy.

**There are two severe consequences of using outdated purchasing job descriptions.** First, outdated purchasing job descriptions can result in the recruiting of new team members who may possess the skills necessary for succeeding in purchasing in previous years, but not the skills necessary for success today. Second, outdated purchasing job descriptions can also set too low the standard skill levels to which a company's existing purchasing professionals aspire.

**So, in this challenging business environment of today, having updated purchasing job descriptions is more critical than ever.**

**Purchasing job descriptions have at least two major sections.** Those sections are (a) a description of duties, and (b) qualifications for the position. Qualifications should specify three main criteria: (a) experience, (b) education, and (c) certification.

**The last of those criteria – certification – is where many companies sabotage their own recruiting efforts.** You see, there have been many changes in the purchasing certification field in the past five years.

**Unless you have been actively monitoring changes in the purchasing certification field, you may not be aware of those changes.** And, as a result, your purchasing job descriptions may be suffering because of it.

**This report will now describe the changes you should be aware of.**

## A New Purchasing Certification Introduced In 2004

**In 2004, the SPSM® Certification was introduced.** This certification is earned by completing the Senior Professional in Supply Management® Program offered by Next Level Purchasing. This certification was designed specifically to be (a) the most modern purchasing and supply management certification, and (b) the most globally recognized purchasing and supply management certification.

**Traditional purchasing certifications were based on published books whose material did not change much during the entire life of the certification.** However, printed material becomes obsolete quickly in today's rapidly changing purchasing and supply management world.

**Therefore, the Senior Professional in Supply Management® Program was developed as a 100% online certification program.** This allows for a global proliferation of updates instantaneously, supporting the goal of the SPSM® Certification being the most modern purchasing certification available.

**There is another principle used to ensure that those with the SPSM® Certification maintain modern skills.** Some older purchasing certifications offered "lifetime" certifications. Lifetime certifications exempt some certified individuals from obtaining additional education in order to maintain their certification status. To the contrary, the SPSM® Certification does not allow for lifetime certifications.

**The SPSM® Certification gives you the assurance that your prospective and current purchasing employees are maintaining a high level of skills.** Those who have earned the SPSM® Certification must earn 32 Continuing Education Hours in purchasing and supply management topics every four years from approved sources. This policy gives prospective employers assurance that candidates who have the SPSM® Certification have been educated – and will remain skilled – in the most modern purchasing practices.

## National vs. Global Certifications

## Certifications & Degrees: The Relationship

## 3 Tips For Re-Evaluating Job Descriptions

**Historically, purchasing certifications have been offered by national associations.** One or more national associations have existed in countries such as the USA, Canada, and the United Kingdom, to name a few. In each of those countries, certifications awarded by national associations in other countries have generally been less recognized – or not recognized at all – compared to certifications awarded domestically by national associations.

**While national purchasing certifications have sufficed in the past, their relevance in today's global economy is debatable.** Purchasing professionals are doing an increasing amount of business with foreign suppliers. Therefore, it is important for those suppliers to know the caliber of their purchasing counterparts. Because business people in one country may have little awareness of national certifications other than the ones recognized in their own countries, there is a problem when certifications are limited (by intent or otherwise) in their recognition to specific regions of the world.

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**By virtue of being independent of a national association, the SPSM® Certification was, from its inception, poised to be a globally recognized purchasing certification.** Indeed, that has come to fruition. Today, employers from more than 70 countries have enrolled their purchasers in the Senior Professional in Supply Management® Program.

**Did you know that your choice of certification specified in your job description could affect up to 30% of qualified applicants?** According to a recent survey of over 2,100 purchasing professionals, approximately 30% of them do not possess a bachelor's degree.

**This fact has to be considered when determining how the changes in the purchasing certification field impact your job descriptions.** You see, yet another new certification in the profession became available in mid-2008. However, a bachelor's degree is a prerequisite to that certification.

**In contrast, earning the SPSM® Certification does not require a bachelor's degree.** Therefore, specifying the SPSM® Certification in your job descriptions protects you from alienating those 30% of candidates without bachelor's degrees. With talent acquisition being the challenge it is, why introduce a new roadblock that could separate you from such a high percentage of candidates who might be able to produce results, especially if they've proven their proficiency in the field by earning the SPSM®?

**If it is essential that all candidates have a college education, you may want to consider an alternative approach in your job descriptions.** Nearly half of those purchasing professionals without bachelor's degrees do possess associate's degrees. An associate's degree plus a certification like the SPSM® that does not require a bachelor's degree may be a more balanced combination of qualifications for your recruiting efforts.



**Tip #1 – Specify Certifications Whose Curricula Match Job Duties.** Ideally, the duties listed in a job description should match the content of the curriculum of a required certification. Not all certification programs cover the same topics. Consider that spend analysis, strategic sourcing, reverse auctions, and eProcurement – four of the most powerful tools of today's purchasing and supply management professional – are not even listed in the index of the most recent version of one certification's study guide, published way back in 2000. In contrast, the Senior Professional in Supply Management® Program covers all of those topics and more.

**Tip #2 – Confirm The Continued Availability Of Specified Certifications.** While the rise of the SPSM® Certification has been due largely to its inherent value, it might also be attributable to changes in older certification programs. There were key deadlines set in 2007 and 2008 for two older certifications where candidates' ability to register for the exams and/or apply for the certification has been curtailed. Whether or not such certifications should remain in your job descriptions is a key decision for you.

**Tip #3 – Consider The Other Factors Mentioned In This Report.** If you want to employ the most modern purchasing practices, buy globally, and would welcome a talented candidate who may have an associate's – but not a bachelor's – degree, your specified certification should reflect those interests.

**Stability in the qualifications included in your job descriptions is essential for recruiting new talent and motivating existing employees.** Considering the growth and continual update of the SPSM® Certification, it will be relevant for years to come.

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# Your Next Steps

**So now that you have learned about these important changes in the purchasing certification field, it is time for action.** Review your purchasing job descriptions. Are you recruiting employees who possess yesterday's qualifications? If so, you may be attracting underqualified candidates for purchasing positions that require higher skill levels than ever. In addition, you may be failing to motivate your existing purchasing team members to increase their skill levels to the standards required for effective performance in today's world.

**Placing a phrase like "SPSM® Certification preferred" or "SPSM® Certification a plus" in your job descriptions will help your talent management strategy.** You will recruit candidates with the most modern skills. You will motivate your existing team to higher levels of capabilities. And you will brand your organization as one that is up to date in the purchasing profession. You can even post your jobs on the "Jobs For SPSM's" Web page for FREE at <http://www.NextLevelPurchasing.com/jobs>.

**If you would like more information about the SPSM® Certification, please copy or scan the following form and submit it to Next Level Purchasing.**

**Yes! Send me some information about the SPSM® Certification.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Check all that apply:**

- I am interested in recruiting highly skilled purchasing professionals.
- I am interested in certification for myself.
- I am interested in certification for my team.

**Copy/scan this page then fax, mail, or email to:**

**Next Level Purchasing**  
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