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ABC Update

BY JIMMY D. PARRISH

How ABC Board Certification Has Benefited My Career

Six years ago, I applied for board certification in business bankruptcy law with the American Board of Certification (ABC). At the time, I am not sure that I fully appreciated the benefits of board certification, but I recognized that it was a way to distinguish myself from other bankruptcy attorneys. At the time, it was a way to show clients and referral sources that despite my young age, I had a high level of knowledge in business bankruptcy law and was committed to the practice. While practicing in Florida, I also noticed that the board certification listing of attorneys in the state read like a “who’s who” of the bankruptcy bar. Certification was one step along the way to becoming the lawyer that I always wanted to be.

Today, I have the honor and pleasure of not only being a board-certified attorney, but also serving on the ABC’s Board of Directors. As I enter my sixth year as a board-certified attorney, I realize that becoming board certified has benefited my career even more than I imagined.

One of the most significant benefits of board certification is credibility with new clients and other attorneys. Board certification gives prospective clients peace of mind that you possess the knowledge and skills to assist them with their cases. For young attorneys, it minimizes questions about youth and turns age into a positive attribute. Instead of being thought of as inexperienced, they are viewed as ambitious and “up-and-comers.”

Board certification also enhances your reputation in the bankruptcy community. It signals to potential referring attorneys that you not only have significant bankruptcy law experience, you have also been subjected to extensive peer review, which provides reassurance that they can trust you with their clients and referrals. Simply put, board certification gives you credibility, which is one of the most valuable assets that a bankruptcy attorney can possess.

There is no question that I have benefited from the credibility that I have gained as a board-certified attorney. New clients often indicate that my board-certification status had an impact on their decision to retain me. Likewise, many referring attorneys point to my certification as a determinative factor in choosing me to assist their clients. There is no question that the credibility that I have gained as a board-certified attorney has given me an advantage over other bankruptcy lawyers and has allowed me to grow my practice and referral base.

In addition to helping distinguish myself from other attorneys, board certification has benefited me in at least one unexpected way. Over the past six years, I have come to appreciate that the ABC is more than just an additional referral source. I have learned that it is a group of attorneys who share a passion for service, professionalism and bankruptcy law. Members of this fraternity go out of their way to assist others. Whether it is discussing an interesting bankruptcy topic or assisting in finding an appropriate referral, all of the board-certified attorneys I know is always eager to help one another.

Over these last six years, I have made many friendships and have developed a sense of pride in being part of this group of talented professionals. I realize today that my decision to seek board certification was an important one and has had a profound impact on my career. I encourage other attorneys to join this distinguished group and apply for board certification with the ABC. Learn more at www.abcworld.org. **abi**

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The American Bankruptcy Institute is a multi-disciplinary, nonpartisan organization devoted to bankruptcy issues. ABI has more than 13,000 members, representing all facets of the insolvency field. For more information, visit abi.org.



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