

# Why Every Young Lawyer Should Strive For Board Certification

Distinguish yourself in the industry by becoming a board-certified attorney.

By Kirk B. Burkley

In today's legal market, it is important to stand out from the crowd.

Everywhere you turn, young lawyers are looking for skills that make them more marketable to clients and employers. It seems that there are more and more specializations within specializations.

Think about it: Even though you might be a bankruptcy attorney, are you a business or consumer bankruptcy attorney? If you are business bankruptcy attorney, do you represent debtors, banks or unsecured creditor committees?

I'm sure you can see where this is going! Becoming board certified by the American Board of Certification may be just the thing that motivated young lawyers are looking for. The ABC has certified nearly 1,000 lawyers nationwide in business bankruptcy, consumer bankruptcy and creditors' rights.

Every young lawyer should strive to be one of the elite board-certified attorneys in his/her given sub-specialty. Going through the process of becoming board-certified is an excellent way to separate yourself from the rest of the field. The process involves rigorous testing and continuing legal education requirements, recommendations from fellow practitioners and at least a five-year focus on a particular area of certification.

For young lawyers, going through the process helps you to mature into a confident and competent bankruptcy or creditors' rights lawyer.

Along the way, you will be required to learn about the bankruptcy code and process and interact with other practitioners. There is simply no better way to develop into the kind of lawyer that firms want to employ and clients want to hire.

All three board certification programs are accredited by the American Bar Association and many individual states. Congress

recognized the importance of board certification by listing it as one of the factors in determining the amount of reasonable compensation to be awarded to Chapter 11 professions under Section 330(a)(3) of the Bankruptcy Code.

Especially when it comes to young lawyers, being able to claim board certification is a good way to let the bankruptcy court, clients and opposing counsel know that they are dealing with a well-trained individual.

The benefits don't end at certification. Once you become board-certified, you will join a fraternity of other competent and like-minded men and women who value continuing education, professionalism and dedication to personal improvement in the bankruptcy and creditors' rights field.

Once certified, there are many ways to get involved and network with other lawyers. The American Board of Certification has many interesting committees, including a new task force exploring best practices regarding social media use in marketing and continuing education.

Please consider this a call to arms for all young lawyers to get involved and become board certified! ●



*Kirk B. Burkley is a member of the American Board of Certification Board of Directors. He also serves on the American Board of Certification Standards Committee and has been board-certified in business bankruptcy since 2009. Burkley also recently took the Creditors' Rights exam to become dual certified in creditors' rights.*

The American Board of Certification is the nation's premier legal specialty certification organization — certifying attorneys as specialists in business bankruptcy, consumer bankruptcy and creditors' rights law. For more information on the American Board of Certification, visit [www.abcworld.org/](http://www.abcworld.org/).