

# The Certified Franchise Executive™ Designation – A Global Standard

Today, many global franchise executives look for the CFE designation before hiring key members of their team.

BY WILLIAM EDWARDS, CFE



INSTITUTE OF CERTIFIED  
FRANCHISE EXECUTIVES

The global franchise industry covers 75 sectors and more than 100 countries where the franchise business model is active. Millions of people around the world are employed in the franchise industry at the franchisee, franchisor and supplier levels. A very high number of consumers around the world shop at franchise businesses.

## Adding Structure, Building Support

By the early 1990s, one of the major challenges to success in the franchise community was a lack of structured, best practices training for people at all levels in the global franchise community. It was difficult for franchise companies to quantify the experience of the people they hired to help grow their businesses. At that time I was in the process of building an international operations and development team as the vice president of international for AlphaGraphics. I had no standard to measure the people I was hiring and their knowledge of franchising.

Then the International Franchise Association began developing certified courses in all aspects of franchise development, operations and management. From this came the professional Certified Franchise Executive™ designation. Today, many global franchise executives look for the CFE designation before hiring key members of their franchise team. We now know their background and education. In the 1990s, it was hard to get franchisors to pay for the CFE courses.

Today, a high percentage of C-level executives in franchising have their CFEs. “The CFE program provides a forum that supports continued professional development and adherence to the highest standards in franchising,” said Rosemarie Hartnett, CFE, Abrakadoodle president. “It is also a wonderful way to form valuable relationships and generate new ideas from different perspectives.”

Barrie Young, CFE, Snap-On-Tools Company, LLC, president, sales and franchising, agrees that the program

helps support the overall franchise. “At Snap-On, we believe in being a great franchisor, as well as a great tool company. Developing the management team that supports our franchisees is key to this endeavor. The CFE program facilitates this learning, and not only ensures our compliance to the principles of franchising, but also the critical nature of our relationship with our franchisees.”

## Continuing Education

The now global CFE program is administered by the Institute of Certified Franchise Executives, whose mission is to enhance the professionalism of franchising by certifying the highest standards of quality training and education. The ICFE offers a wide range of continuing education programs for professional development. Meeting the requirements of the program and completing the course of study leads to the CFE designation. How else can we measure the franchise sector knowledge of the people we work with?

The courses available to CFE candidates cover a broad range of industry topics and are very carefully designed by the ICFE. Courses are vetted by the ICFE Board to ensure value for the CFE candidate and their company. FranGuard™ has become a required course to get and keep the CFE designation. Superb courses on leadership, management, brand building are just a few of the programs designed to help the CFE candidate and their company grow and prosper.

Karen Powell, CFE, chief relationship officer of Franchise Source Brands International, CEO of Decor & You and an IFA board member, explains why the CFE program is a value: “CFE is a commitment to oneself and your company to be the best that you can be and to share that with others within the franchise community. I

have not only learned important information to bring back to my organization, I have also developed important relationships that have assisted me in developing Decor & You. Through this process I have also been able to share what I know with others and add value. It is a great thing to receive, but also to be able to give back.”

At the just completed 54th IFA Annual Convention in New Orleans, the 1,000th Certified Franchise Executive™ received this now cherished industry recognition. Franchise industry members from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Indonesia, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and the United States received their CFE pins last month during the IFA convention. The IFA Educational Foundation has cooperative agreements with franchise associations and educational institutions in Australia, India, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand to offer the CFE program to their members.

Certified Franchise Executives™ are bound by a strong Code of Ethics, have completed a significant number of state-of-the-industry courses and attended many industry meetings. Industry experience is critical to obtaining the CFE award. Each CFE must recertify every three years.

Jim Squire, CFE, executive vice president and chief development officer of Firestorm and recent recipient of the IFA Education Foundation's William Rosenberg Leadership honor, summarizes the program this way: “Education builds value for me, our staff and our system. Education keeps me

on the cutting edge. Education helps develop my staff so they perform at their best. Education demonstrates to our franchisees that we are committed to being a best-in-class franchise organization.” ■



*William Edwards, CFE, is CEO of Edwards Global Services. Find him at [fransocial.franchise.org](http://fransocial.franchise.org).*

## CFE Program, Value and Process

The International Franchise Association website has a special and detailed section available at [franchise.org/CFE/CFEHome.aspx](http://franchise.org/CFE/CFEHome.aspx).

To download a brochure about the Certified Franchise Executive™ program, visit the: [http://www.franchise.org/uploadedFiles/Franchise\\_Industry/Resources/Education\\_Foundation/CFEBrochure2014.pdf](http://www.franchise.org/uploadedFiles/Franchise_Industry/Resources/Education_Foundation/CFEBrochure2014.pdf)

## NEWLY REVISED ICFE STUDY GUIDE NOW AVAILABLE

The newly revised 2nd edition of the ICFE Study Guide is now available.

- A self-paced, self-study knowledge base for franchise executives. The newly revised updated version covers all aspects of franchise management.
- 21 chapters authored by subject matter experts on the core topics of the Certified Franchise Executives™ program.
- Designed for start-up to mature franchise systems to augment the training of your management team. Easy-to-use guides with additional references and resources.
- Available in digital download format or spiral bound printed copy. It can be purchased in two formats -

PDF download (\$45) or spiral bound hard copy (\$160)

Orders can be placed by phone (800-543-1038) or fax (412-741-0609)

The Guide is recommended for candidates preparing to take the ICFE Final Exam at IFA University.

