



Kelly Thompson

# Certifiable Quality

The Water Quality Assn.'s (WQA) Professional Certification program helps identify professionals who have demonstrated a certain expertise level. *Water Quality Products* Associate Editor Nicole Bowling spoke with Kelly Thompson, president of Moti-Vitality LLC, a provider of exam preparation, about why this certification is needed and how it benefits the industry.

**Nicole Bowling:** Why is WQA certification important for dealers?

**Kelly Thompson:** The short answer is that certification adds credibility to the company and its employees. The larger answer is that it helps raise the standards in the water quality industry. The certification exam and requirements are tough, and if someone has reached a level of certification, then they know quite a bit. This exam is like the bar exam for water quality professionals. You are not likely to pass and receive certification unless you have knowledge and familiarity with the industry, both practical and academic.

Most people in our industry have come from within, specializing in plumbing or well drilling and doing water treatment on the side for their grandfathers or fathers. These sons now run the companies, and since they grew up in the business, they never got formal training. All they know is what works. They have not had time to get certified because they are wearing a million different hats and they will bring people in who do not have certification either. So what you have are these owners and employees who are trying to serve their customers with integrity, but cannot do it because they learned the wrong things many years ago. Certification helps correct that.

**Bowling:** How does certification benefit dealers?

**Thompson:** The more dealers are able to serve their customers, the more they are going to prosper. The more involved all of us are in the industry, it is less likely that we will have people that do not always understand how the laws work and how legislation is affecting our industry. It basically comes down to this: If we are going to be the professionals, we are supposed to know more than our customers. That is why certification is important.

**Bowling:** How does certification benefit customers?

**Thompson:** I mentioned earlier that the certification process raises the standards in the water quality industry. Customers are served more effectively when water quality professionals have reached these certification levels.

**Bowling:** How does the certification process work?

**Thompson:** There is no minimum time in the industry required to take the certification exam.

However, someone just starting out is not likely to pass because the exam tests practical and academic knowledge. Essentially, people just order study materials and prepare for the exam. In most cases, it takes about three to six months to prepare thoroughly, although I have seen people order the books and read them a month before the exam.

**Bowling:** What is the most challenging part of the certification process?

**Thompson:** The most challenging part is probably practical knowledge. Some people are not very good test takers and it is a very difficult test, but also, it is hard to transfer knowledge from the books. In Level 1 of the certification process, there are three required books: *The Legal Considerations Handbook*, *Water Processing* and *Water Treatment Fundamentals*. The last two are very tough to get through because they are like textbooks. Many people find it difficult to translate what is in the book to what they are doing in the field every day.

Also, many water quality professionals in administrative positions want certification, and while they may grasp academics, they do not have the practical knowledge required to pass because they are not in the field every day.

**Bowling:** What education opportunities are available to prepare for the certification exams?

**Thompson:** Many people just choose to order the books and study on their own—you can get significant discounts for being a WQA member. Others sign up for my webinars, which I created to help translate the academic knowledge to the practical. *wqp*

Kelly Thompson is president of Moti-Vitality LLC. Thompson can be reached at [kellyt@moti-vitality.com](mailto:kellyt@moti-vitality.com) or 810.560.2788.

Nicole Bowling is associate editor for *Water Quality Products*. Bowling can be reached at [nbowling@sgcmail.com](mailto:nbowling@sgcmail.com) or 847.954.7970.

For more information on this subject write in 1009 on the reader service form on page 32.

## USDA Invests in Water Quality Improvements

As part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Earth Day celebration, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced support for projects that will improve water and wastewater services and benefit the environment nationwide. In all, 54 water and wastewater projects in 33 states will be funded.

## Sunlight Plus Lime Juice Makes Drinking Water Safer

A team of researchers from Johns Hopkins found that adding lime juice to water that is treated with a solar disinfection method removed detectable levels of harmful bacteria such as *E. coli* significantly faster than solar disinfection alone.



## Canadian University to Ban Bottled Water

Queen's University in Ontario, Canada, is on track to enforce a bottled water ban in September 2012. The aim of the ban is to create a greener campus community by reducing plastic water bottle waste as well as address social concerns regarding private corporations' control of drinking water.



## California to Abandon Drinking Water Unit Certification

The California Department of Public Health announced that it will abandon its drinking water unit certification program after Dec. 31, 2012. The decision resulted from discussions with the Water Quality Assn. (WQA) after it introduced legislation to turn over certification responsibilities to ANSI-accredited third-party certifiers.

## More Bottled Water Recycling in Honor of Earth Day

The International Bottled Water Assn. honored Earth Day 2012 by announcing increases in curbside recycling of PET plastic bottled water containers and an effort to improve the environmental footprint of the bottled water industry. A study shows that PET plastic bottled water containers are once again the single most recycled item in nationwide curbside collection programs.



FOR DAILY NEWS UPDATES  
VISIT [WWW.WQPMAG.COM](http://WWW.WQPMAG.COM)