

NACM Membership Driving Trade Credit Education

The National Association of Credit Management is only weeks away from celebrating its 122nd year in existence to coincide with its 122nd annual Credit Congress and Expo in Phoenix, Arizona, in June 2018. Over the nearly one-and-one-quarter centuries, there have been changes throughout, but there have always been constants.

Abraham Lincoln referred to a government “of the people, by the people, for the people” in his Gettysburg Address only 33 years before NACM was born. NACM membership can be viewed in a similar light. It is an organization of trade credit professionals built by its members and for its members with several key benefits and many other advantages.

Roughly 100 years after Lincoln’s remarks, Malcolm X called education the passport to the future, “for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.” NACM is built on its belief in educating business-to-business credit professionals.

“The most important benefit of being a member of NACM locally and nationally is education,” said Sheryl Rasmusson, CCE, chairman-elect of the NACM-National Board of Directors. “The opportunities provided through local and national education are unparalleled and have elevated me professionally,” she added.

However, education is an enormous umbrella with multiple aspects underneath. The backbone of NACM’s education platform can be linked to its Business Credit Principles course, which covers business credit from A to Z. The course is offered through the online Credit Learning Center and in person at NACM’s headquarters in Maryland, local NACM affiliates and at Credit Congress. Business Credit Principles, along with Financial Statement Analysis 1, is the most widely available course to prepare members in the designation process.

This professional certification program was one of the reasons why past National Chairman Gary Gaudette, CCE, ICCE, joined NACM in the first place. “The designations show training, expertise and credibility in the field of business credit.” The CBA, CCRA, CBF and CCE are offered through NACM’s education, while NACM’s international association, FCIB, offers the CICP and ICCE. The CBA, CBF and CCE exams are given four times per year, including at Credit Congress. The CCE exam is also offered to those attending NACM’s Graduate School of Credit and Financial Management at American University in Washington, DC. The advanced-level program is a two-year, two-week education experience like no other.

Former NACM-National Board Member Wendy Mode, CCE, CICP is taking advantage of her education opportunities. She is a second-year student at NACM’s Grad School and is using her company’s support and activity to continue her credit education. If that is not enough, she will also be in Phoenix the week before. “I saw the importance of learning credit—something you can’t learn in college,” she said. The education opportunities have given her awareness and the ability to build her own personal network.

Fellow Grad School second-year student, Kyle King called his relationships invaluable. Most of which were built during his education opportunities. However, many were established while at industry credit groups. King is the chairman of the NACM Southwest metals group, which meets every other month, so it does not take up too much time to contribute. “Trade groups have saved me hundreds of thousands if not millions of dollars,” said Credit Manager Kevin Stinner, CCE, CCRA.

“I originally joined NACM for the trade groups; however, since then, I have learned so much more about my profession through NACM,” said Kenny Wine, CCE, NACM-National chairman of the board. “Whether it be through webinars, Credit Congress or Grad School, I’m always looking for ways to improve my credit skills.” These skills and the education offered by NACM will help members’ companies grow and assist them in managing their risk.

Membership also includes the Credit Managers’ Index insight, NACM’s monthly forecasting survey, as well as the weekly e-newsletter with the latest credit information, webinars, *Business Credit* magazine and much more. NACM membership is a cycle. Credit professionals will join, learn, earn designations and mentor the new members when they join. In between that, members can attend trade groups to learn about potential customers and expand their network, join their industry group board and elevate themselves to the national board. The trade credit and NACM membership cycle will continue every year, driving individuals toward their professional goals and into the future.

-Michael Miller, managing editor