

CERTIFICANT SUCCESS STORY: SAMANTHA NETZBAND

ESQ., CFCM, CCCM, CCMA



BIO

Samantha A. Netzband is currently a Manager 1 Contracts at BAE Systems. Previously, she served as a Principal Contracts Administrator at BAE Systems and a Contracts Negotiator at Lockheed Martin. Netzband has managed both service and product contracts in a variety of contract types, including Cost-Reimbursement and Fixed-Price. She has also worked international contracts and is now currently serving in contract operations.

A recent Certified Federal Contracts Manager (CFCM) certificant, Netzband has also earned her Certified Commercial Contract Manager (CCCM) certification, as well as her Certified Contract Management Associate (CCMA) certification.

Netzband received her J.D. and M.A. in Political Science from Syracuse University College of Law and the Maxwell School, respectively.

THERE ARE OTHER CONTRACT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS OUT THERE. WHAT MADE YOU CHOOSE NCMA?

For me, the decision to choose NCMA was very clear. The organization does a really good job of covering a range of contract management roles. Whether you're a buyer or seller or if you're from industry or government, NCMA has it all. I feel I've gotten the widest array of training and networking from this association versus some of the others that are available.

COULD YOU TELL US ABOUT THE CERTIFICATIONS YOU'VE EARNED? WHY THESE?

So I've earned the Certified Federal Contract Manager™ (CFCM™), the Certified Commercial Contract Manager™ (CCCM™), and the Certified Contract Management Associate™ (CCMA™) certifications. The CFCM was my first certification; I wanted to earn it to demonstrate my knowledge of federal contracting.

I do have a law degree, but I saw that the CFCM would really set me apart from other contract management professionals. So I successfully passed that and then moved on to the CCCM certification. Through this certification, I was trying to showcase my commercial contracting knowledge. I learned a lot of that subject matter in law school, actually, so it was kind of an extension of my law degree.

And then, finally, for the CCMA, I was actually part of the beta exam for that certification. So I was in the group that helped take the first exam for that test and worked to get it in place. I was excited to be a part of that process; it's an entry-level certification that allows young professionals to demonstrate their contract management knowledge, and also just get them involved in the contract management field.

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HOW HAVE YOUR CERTIFICATIONS AIDED IN YOUR CAREER GROWTH OVERALL?

Certifications from NCMA differentiate you from other contract management professionals. Oftentimes you'll see on job requisitions that companies are looking for the CFCM, CCCM, or even the CCMA as a way for candidates to enhance their applications. For me, it was a very easy choice to take these exams. In the end, I've gotten a lot of offers to apply to jobs through LinkedIn®, and through networking at conferences, just because I have these certifications.

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT IS BOTH A HUGE SPHERE AND, AT THE SAME TIME, A VERY SMALL WORLD. WHAT NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED DURING YOUR CERTIFICATION PROCESS AND ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP?

I'm very lucky that through my association membership, I've gotten to be a part of the Contract Management Leadership Development Program (CMLDP). My certifications helped me become a part of that program because when I applied, I had three certifications at the time. So that helped my application be successful; I was chosen to be a part of the program. It's an intensive program where you go to all the NCMA conferences, do a group project with your peers, and really just kind of delve into the material with other people who are like you and want to be leaders in the profession.

As far as my certifications go, a lot of times, people will come up to me and start a conversation because they see I have the certification—and that can either be on LinkedIn® or at a conference. It's a way to initiate interaction and kind of share knowledge.

People also recognize that I have experience in a certain realm—and they might not have approached me otherwise. So both the association membership and my certification have helped me get to know a lot of people in the contract management profession.



HOW HAVE YOU USED THE NCMA BODY OF KNOWLEDGE TO HELP SHAPE YOUR CONTRACT MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE?

Honestly, I use the Contract Management Basis of Knowledge® (CMBOK®) and the Contract Management Standards® (CMS®) every day because they're a really good way to demonstrate the "big picture" of contract management.

In particular, I'm on my company's Learning and Development Committee, so I help organize training and various other activities for our contract management professionals. Both the CMBOK and CMS do a good job of breaking out what contract management is so that we can develop training based on the NCMA body of knowledge. We've had a lot of success with this in my company. And I know other people do the same thing: The CMBOK helps in their day-to-day training of their people. In the end, training our people is very important, as it helps lower any company's risk

HOW HAS YOUR LAW DEGREE INFORMED YOUR DECISIONS AS A CONTRACT MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL?

Having a law degree: While it's not a requirement, it's helped enhance my contract management career and also my everyday decision-making. What a lot of people don't realize? Going to law school is not only, yes, learning the law, but it also is about changing the way you think.

You learn to approach issues in a way that helps you be efficient with problem-solving and getting to solutions fast. So when people come to you with a problem, say there's some sort of issue on a contract—which is pretty much every day—I'm able to compartmentalize the way I think so that I can get things done a lot more quickly. Having a basis of knowledge in the law is a good thing to have in contract management, because, ultimately, you do have to follow



different laws and regulations. So if there's anyone out there who has a law degree and doesn't want to work at a traditional firm, contracts management is the profession to be in. Plus it's a great way to problem-solve and be part of a team.

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WHAT IS SOME ADVICE YOU'D GIVE TO SOMEONE CONSIDERING CERTIFICATION?

If you're considering a certification, I highly recommend you just apply and go for it. It helps you stand out and set yourself apart from other contract management colleagues. It's a way to show that you are an expert in either federal contracting or commercial contracting. There's a reason why so many job postings say that an NCMA certification will help your application—and it's because it is a true marker of your success in the contract management field. So if you're on the fence about it, go ahead and apply and take the exam.

ANY FINAL THOUGHTS FOR US TODAY?

I wouldn't be where I am today without my certifications, and I've been happy to be part of this Success Story series.

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