YOU'VE EARNED AN EAC CERTIFICATION. NOW WHAT?

by ANNE BRENNAN

You've studied, worked hard, and passed one or more Editors' Association of Canada (EAC) certification tests. Congratulations! You've received formal proof that your skills aren't simply good—they're excellent.

Now, what do you do with that proof?

Two things: market your new credential and raise your rates.

MARKET YOUR CREDENTIAL

To leverage your credential and benefit your job or business, you need to know how to use it properly. Here's a quick rundown of what you can and can't do.

For each test you've passed, you hold one certification. There are six EAC certifications:

- certified proofreader;
- certified copy editor;
- certified stylistic editor;
- certified structural editor;
- certified structural and stylistic editor (offered only in 2008 and 2009); and
- certified professional editor (automatically granted to candidates who pass the tests in all five areas).

You can list your certification on your business card, website, and email signature. You can also use it in all of your marketing materials. Point out that it's a certification of excellence, held by a select few editors. And mention the fact that the EAC certification program is world-renowned. No other organization certifies English-speaking editors for excellence.

You must word each of your certifications exactly as you see them in

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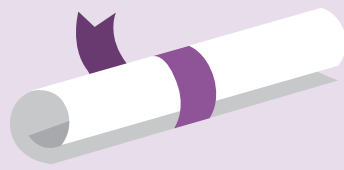
the bulleted list. If you've passed the proofreading and copy editing tests, you're both a certified proofreader and a certified copy editor.

If you've passed *all* of the tests, you're a certified professional editor (CPE), and you're entitled to put the acronym after your name.

Only CPEs can put these letters after their names. And only they can use the word *professional* to describe their certifications. If you're a certified stylistic editor, for example, you can't call yourself a "certified professional stylistic editor," and you can't include CSE with your name.

What if you're a certified structural and stylistic editor, having passed the combined test in 2008 or 2009? Can you call yourself a certified structural editor and a certified stylistic editor?

No. But you can say you've been certified by the EAC in both structural and stylistic editing. You're certified in both areas, although your actual credential is a combined certification.

RAISE YOUR RATES

When you hold an EAC certification, you have a real competitive advantage. Whether you're applying for an in-house position or bidding on a freelance contract, you have something most other candidates don't—a certificate that says you're a master of your craft. Some organizations even accept EAC certification in lieu of a work portfolio, saving you time, effort, and expense.

EAC certification increases your worth, so set your rates accordingly. You're no longer a junior editor. You're at least a mid-career professional, and you've proven that you have top-drawer skills.

Whatever you've been charging, try doubling it. Not every client will go for this, especially those you've been working with for a while, but many new clients will.

You may have to negotiate, but have a bottom-line rate in mind—and stick to it. Some certified editors won't work for less than $50 or $60 an hour. Others charge at least $80 or $100.

Consider the sector you work in and think about what other professionals charge within that sector. If you're asked to edit an annual report for a corporation that pays lawyers $350 an hour, it may be reasonable for you to set your rate at $120 an hour.

To some degree, salary and rates are a state of mind: if you believe that's what you're worth, you're more likely to get it.

EAC certification is the gold standard of editing, and you represent that gold standard. Take pride in this fact and price your work accordingly. *a*

Anne Brennan *is a freelance editor since 2008 and Chair of the Certification Steering Committee. Anne has seen the EAC Certification program evolve to become the authority on formal recognition of editors.*