



Jack Kazmierski
kaz@cogeco.ca

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CAFM: Through the Eyes of Graduates

CAFM is not for everyone. But for those who want to better themselves, fast track their careers, and improve their comprehension of the entire fleet picture, CAFM is a highly-recommended must.

NAFA describes the CAFM (Certified Automotive Fleet Manager) program as “the oldest, largest and most recognized certification program among fleet managers and employers. Many employers encourage or require fleet managers to obtain the CAFM certification prior to or shortly after employment. The CAFM program continues to meet the high expectations of employers and fleet managers.”

Although that may sound good on paper, what do people who have already completed the program think of CAFM certification? Has it changed their day-to-day lives? Has it allowed them to climb the corporate ladder? To find out,

CANAUTO asked a couple of graduates about their experiences with CAFM.



Monty Perham, the Financial coordinator for the Winnipeg Fleet Management Agency, completed his CAFM certification in May 2007. He explains his reasons for signing up for the program:

“The Special Operating Agency (SOA) for the city of Winnipeg is very new. It

started in 2003 and I came on board at the end of 2003 in a financial role. While working with the SOA I was looking for opportunities to advance my career. In so doing, I spoke with our Chief Operating Officer here at fleet and his first suggestion was the CAFM course. In fact, he’s looking now at getting all his senior managers to go through CAFM certification.”

Although Perham never believed the program to be difficult, he admits that “it is a big time commitment and there’s a lot of information to absorb.”

Benefits

One of the ways Perham benefited from the program is by getting a comprehensive understanding of fleet. “The nice thing about the CAFM course is that it gives you an overall knowledge of all aspects of fleet management,” Perham says. “Prior to signing up for the

course, my main involvement was on the financial end and some involvement on the life cycle cost management end. CAFM gives you an overall understanding of operations, repair facilities, and other aspects. You learn what you need to know in order to be a good fleet manager.”

Perham believes CAFM is a must for anyone in fleet management. “If you want to be a better senior manager, then I think it’s a good program to go through,” he says. “Because of the overall knowledge you obtain, you get to know what the other segments of the operation are doing and how it all ties together. This allows the fleet operation to function the way it should.”

While working on his CAFM certification, Perham learned from the mistakes and successes of his colleagues. “The greatest benefit is

getting together with people from other cities and learning from other NAFA members,” he says. “Seeing how other cities are dealing with life cycle cost management, purchasing and other aspects, and seeing how they can help you or you can help them is of great value. Instead of trying to recreate

the wheel, you’re learning from others.”

His newly acquired CAFM certification, Perham hopes, will help him with future aspirations. “I expect it to help me out in my day-to-day advancements in management in the near future,” he says.

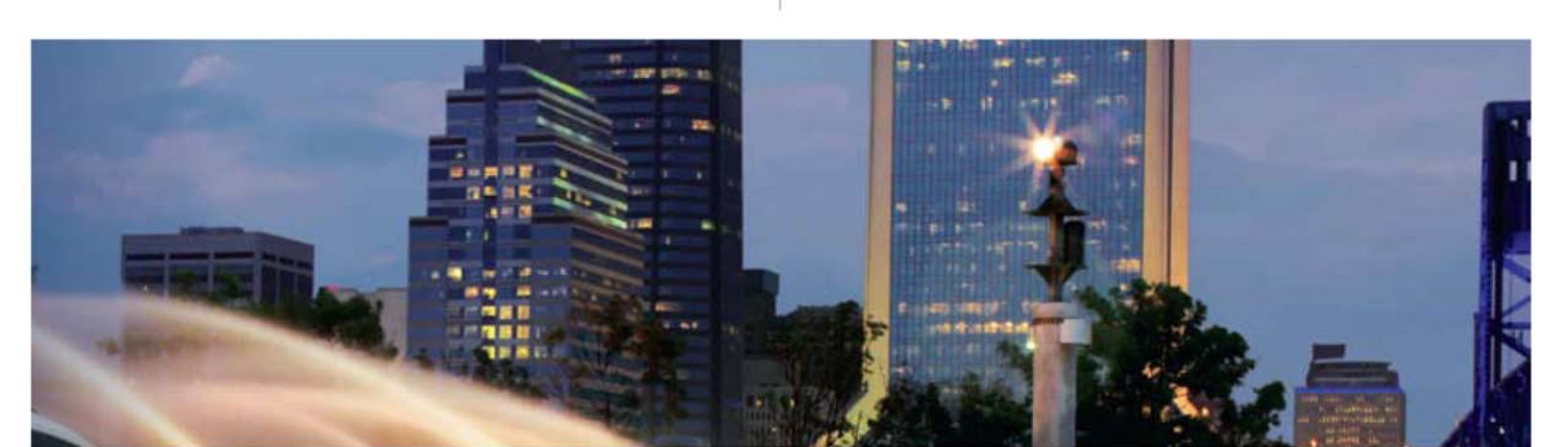
Personal achievement

While some individuals rise to the challenge of CAFM certification with a view to professional advancement, others do so for the same reason adventurers climb Mount Everest—because it’s there.

Scotty Phillips is the Vehicle Fleet Environmental Program manager for the Department of National Defence. He worked on his CAFM certification for purely personal reasons. “I decided to go for it simply because it was available and I hadn’t done it,” he says. “It was something I wanted to do. I saw it as a challenge.”

“IF YOU WANT TO BE A BETTER SENIOR MANAGER, THEN I THINK IT’S A GOOD PROGRAM TO GO THROUGH.” – MONTY PERHAM

Continued on reverse...



Although CAFM certification will be added to Phillips' resume of achievements, he says it won't change his life much. "It doesn't change my job description, doesn't get me any more money and doesn't make me more employable. It was something I decided to do for purely personal reasons."

Phillips enjoys a challenge and admits that the process was time consuming. "It also required a lot of memory work and that's never been my strong suit," he says. "The hardest thing, actually—because I work in the automotive field on a daily basis—was to remember the material and answer the questions, because the material was dated. The nice thing is that my



course was the last one under the old curriculum. Now they have updated it, so that doesn't apply any more."

The whole process took Phillips a year-and-a-half to complete. "I knew it was going to take time, because I talked to a few people who tried it—some successfully, others not. They told me it was going to take time just to get through the course material. Then to transcribe it and put it into a format where you can memorize it—it all takes time," Phillips says.

The time and effort Phillips invested were well worth it, and he says he would definitely recommend CAFM certification to "others in the fleet business. It gives you a sense of a professional standing, which is always very useful from both a personal and professional point of view. You also get a better view of the entire fleet picture. There were a couple of areas I hadn't delved into before. Now, I have a better understanding of the entire picture."

Whether for personal achievement or professional advancement, CAFM certification makes sense. ▶

**For further information please contact Robert St. George, Marketing and Customer Services Administrator at the Winnipeg Fleet Management Agency.
Ph: (204) 986-5907 or Email: rstgeorge@winnipeg.ca**