

What's in a Logo?

BY TODD ALWOOD, LEED AP

Here is why using the new certification logos is a win-win proposition.

OFTEN WE USE WORDS without really thinking about their meaning or what their intended use actually is—and the same can be said for logos. There are multiple definitions and ideas for what a logo represents. The online “common wisdom” reference Wikipedia describes a logo as “a graphic mark or emblem commonly used by commercial enterprises, organizations and even individuals to aid and promote instant public recognition.” Dictionary.com defines it as “a graphic representation or symbol of a company name, trademark, abbreviation, etc., often uniquely designed for ready recognition.” Note that both say it needs to be easily recognizable to your viewing public and representative of your organization. And for multi-faceted entities, a logo also should be unambiguous.

To help in that regard, AISC Certification at the end of 2009 released new logos for use by its fabricator and erector participants. Details are available in the news section of the AISC website, www.aisc.org, and in the March 2010 installment of Quality Corner, which can be found at www.modernsteel.com/backissues.

In developing these new logos, AISC built on its traditional brand, which has been in existence since 1921 and is a fixture in the steel industry. Marrying the new certification logos to the AISC logo both demonstrates the relationship between AISC membership and AISC certification as well as emphasizing that there is a difference between the two.

In the past, there has been some confusion about AISC membership and AISC Certification. AISC members do not have to be certified, and certified companies are not required to become members of AISC. It is extremely



important to remember that it is only AISC certified companies that have undergone a third-party independent audit to certify that their quality management systems meet a minimum level of acceptable quality.

The Pitch

Rolling out a new set of logos is only the first step in promoting the value of certification. The next step is up to you. By using the new logos, certified companies represent themselves to the construction industry in four significant ways:

Commitment to quality: Using the AISC Certified logo shows your company's dedication to quality. It shows the industry that you have gone through the rigorous steps and invested the time to achieve certification in your specific category. It demonstrates that you have developed your quality management system and are actively using it in all your fabrication or erection procedures.

Differentiation: Using the appropriate logo represents the fact that you stand out on the crowded playing field of the construction industry. Specifiers and owners are able to simplify the qualification process by being able to short-list qualified (i.e., AISC certified) companies for their specific projects.

Reputability: Your company may not yet have reached its second century, but displaying an AISC Certified logo shows that you are continually trying to improve your quality management system.



Todd Alwood, LEED AP, is the manager for certification business development with AISC. He can be reached at alwood@aisc.org.

Quality Corner is a monthly feature that covers topics ranging from how to specify a certified company to how long it takes to become a certified company. If you are interested in browsing our electronic archive, please visit www.aisc.org/QualityCorner.

Tell Us About Your Audit

After each QMC on-site audit, participants have the opportunity to complete a survey about the process. While the average return rate for similar independent surveys is usually 3% to 5%, we have an extremely high completion rate of 40% or more. Those responses provide AISC and QMC with valuable feedback on the program, auditors and initiatives. They also bring to our attention any misconceptions that participants are experiencing with regard to certification.

Client expectations: Certification is strong evidence that you actually do what you say you do. Using the AISC Certified logo reminds others that you have procedures in place to try and eliminate problems before they occur which could affect the end product and the happiness of your client or end-user.

Now, the Incentive

To encourage use of the new certification logos, AISC Certification has initiated two different competitions for certified participants where each winner will receive a new iPad. To enter the basic competition, simply send your company name and the website address for the page where the new logo is being used to certinfo@aisc.org. Staff will check the site and logo, then email a confirmation that you have been entered into the official drawing. A winner will be randomly selected from confirmed entries on December 1, so you have plenty of time to update those websites—as well as your business cards, stationary, email signatures and so on.

Besides offering feedback, completing the Certification Survey also provides the respondent a chance to win a free audit for the following year, with one winner randomly selected every six months. The winners for the last half of 2009 and beginning half of 2010, respectively, are:

- **T & M Decking, Inc., Oxford, N.C.**
- **Covenant Steel Warehouse, Inc., Dothan, Ala.**

Congratulations to the winners, and thanks to all who completed surveys. The information you provide is invaluable to our program.

The advanced competition is a bit more challenging and will require a tad more creativity. How are you using the logo besides the traditional ways mentioned above? Are you adding it to your company shirts? Signage in your company yard? Novelty items that you hand out to customers? Send us either a photo or the actual item including your name, company name, to AISC Certification, 1 E. Wacker Drive, Suite 700, Chicago, IL 60601, or by email to certinfo@aisc.org. AISC staff will choose a winner on December 1. Both winners will be featured in the February 2011 installment of this column.

Now that you're poised to update and be creative, do you have the new logos? If not, please contact us at certinfo@aisc.org and we will send the appropriate, high-resolution logos and logo usage guidelines to you right away. As always, we look forward to hearing from you.

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