CSIA CERTIFICATION

The mark of excellence for system integrators

Frequently Asked Questions

Why should my company be CSIA Certified?

Attaining Certification is a rigorous process requiring an investment in resources — a worthwhile investment. By implementing CSIA's Best Practices and confirming their adoption via CSIA Certification, you will build a better company.

CSIA Certification is the capstone of implementing the Best Practices. When approaching Certification, everyone in your company should be involved in the process so that the Best Practices become part of your organization's "DNA."

CSIA Certified companies are financially stronger than non-certified companies. One of our partners recently completed an analysis of the data suggesting a strong link between Certification and business performance. Additionally, some suppliers require CSIA Certification to be recognized in the top tier of their system integrator programs.

What is CSIA Certification?

It is proof that the CSIA Best Practices are implemented. CSIA Certified control system integrators meet the highest standards for business and management.

Technical proficiency alone is not enough. To grow and sustain a successful integration company that meets clients' current and future requirements, integrators need to develop good business and management skills, in addition to technical knowledge.

How does CSIA Certification differ from ISO 9000?

CSIA Certification is a quality system focusing on the overall management of a system integration business. The certification audit is based on CSIA Best Practices which are a blueprint specifically for management of a system integration company. Clients and suppliers who retain a CSIA Certified company are reasonably assured that the company is managed well and committed to long-term success. ISO certification focuses on customer satisfaction and the quality of products and services delivered. The two certifications are significantly different and serve different purposes.

How do I demonstrate technical proficiency?

Most automation vendors have system integrator or solution provider programs that indicate the integrator's technical qualifications on their products. Contact your vendors for information on their programs and the CSIA Certified system integrators they work with. Some suppliers require CSIA Certification to be recognized in the top tier of their system integrator programs.

What do the auditors look for?

The criteria in the audit are derived from the CSIA Best Practices and Benchmarks manual. Of the manual's 300 guidelines, the auditors look at 79 criteria that CSIA members and their clients consider necessary for operating a successful control systems integration company. The list includes many criteria that end users might not think of when selecting an integrator, such as disaster recovery plans, computer system backups and internal quality audits.

How does a control system integrator become CSIA Certified?

Prepare for the audit:
- There is substantial preparation documentation in the Best Practices and Certification – Members Only library
- Review and understand the criteria from the CSIA Best Practices and Benchmarks manual
- Verify that their internal processes and procedures are documented and meet the intention of the criteria
- Prepare for the audit by having evidence of the implementation of the best practices criteria readily available
- CSIA offers an optional Best Practices workshop and an online discussion group for members who are preparing for the audit

Schedule the audit: Several months before the intended audit date complete a Certification Application and submit it to CSIA. We will review the information to confirm eligibility to be audited and guide you through the next steps.

Host the auditor: Normally one to two business days are required.

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What is CSIA's role in the certification audit?

CSIA manages the certification audit process. The association's role is to train and authorize auditing firms, provide materials to support members preparing for the audit and to carry out administrative duties related to certification. Upon completion of an audit CSIA will receive the results and will make the final certification decision.

What are the costs associated with CSIA Certification?

CSIA charges a certification fee. CSIA staff will send an invoice after the Certification Application is approved. More information on the fee can be found in the Certification Management System (CMS) Manual.

There are also fees associated with audit-related services. All such fees are handled directly between the CSIA Member and the Auditing Company.

How long is an audit?

An audit usually requires one to two business days.

How do I schedule an audit?

When you are ready to schedule an audit the first step is to complete the Certification Application and return it to the CSIA office. The application will be reviewed to confirm eligibility. Assuming eligibility CSIA staff will advise you as to next steps.

As soon as all CSIA related paperwork is completed, CSIA staff will forward a copy of the completed Certification Application to the auditing company. The auditor will contact you to set up a service agreement and schedule the audit.

We recommend that companies submit the completed Certification Application several months before the desired audit date so that all paperwork can be completed with adequate time allowed for scheduling the audit.

These guidelines apply whether the audit is for a first time certification or a renewal.

What steps are required to maintain CSIA Certification?

Every three years, CSIA Certified companies undertake the audit process to become recertified. This periodic review encourages CSIA Certified integrators to stay up to date with current business practices and to focus on continuously improving their businesses. To avoid any interruption to certified status companies are responsible for having the audit completed by the expiration date.

When you are ready to schedule an audit for CSIA Certification renewal complete the Certification Application and submit it to CSIA.

We're ready to recertify. What changes have been made to the certification management system since our last audit?

CSIA made changes to its certification management system (CMS) in September 2013. Features of the new CMS include:

- More clearly defined eligibility requirements for certification
- Single CSIA staff contact for information and administration throughout the process
- Improved information sharing to help members select or be matched with an auditor
- A process for selecting and training new auditors and evaluating current auditors
- Internal CMS performance audits to ensure adherence to standards
- Analysis of anonymous, compiled data from audits to be used in development of Best Practices
- A participant evaluation of the audit and certification process to provide feedback for continuous improvement

CSIA charges a certification fee for each audit to help cover the cost of managing the CMS. Scheduling an audit and audit payment remains between the auditor and the member. If your company is ready to begin the recertification process, the first step is to complete the Certification Application.

Contact CSIA Certification Manager Kim Siebecker (ksiebecker@controlsys.org).

✔ Steps to Certification

1 Join CSIA

Only integrator members are eligible for CSIA Certification. If you aren't a member of CSIA, become one today! Once your company becomes a member, you will receive additional information, including access to a library of documents that will help your company learn and incorporate the best practices for managing a system integration firm and prepare for the certification audit.

2 Prepare for the audit

Learn about criteria and check out the resources in the Best Practices and Certification - Members Only Library to prepare for your audit.

Consider connecting with a CSIA member mentor as part of your journey toward Certification. Mentors are an ideal brain trust, reality check and confidant for system integrators.

3 Schedule the audit

When you are ready to schedule an audit for certification (or renewal) the first step is to complete the Certification Application which can be downloaded from the Best Practices and Certification – Members Only library . Submit the completed application to CSIA and we will guide you through the next steps. We recommend starting this process several months prior to the planned audit date to allow enough time to complete paperwork and finalize arrangements with the auditor.