

# Professional Security Certifications

A vibrant tropical beach scene. In the foreground, several tall palm trees with green fronds are scattered across the frame. The water is a clear, bright turquoise color. In the middle ground, a sailboat with a prominent pink sail is sailing on the water. The background features a lush green coastline with a prominent, rounded mountain peak under a clear blue sky. In the bottom right corner, there is text identifying the speaker and the event.

Wesley H. Higaki  
ACSAC - December 2009

# Role of Professional Certifications

## **Individuals:**

- Why do we pursue certifications?
- What do we hope to gain?

## **Companies:**

- Why do they want certified professionals?
- What do they hope to gain?

## **Consumers:**

- Why should they care?

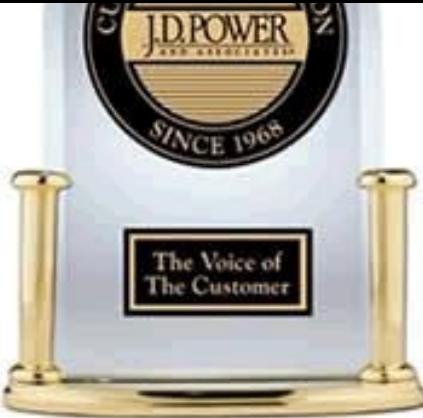
# Who Do You Trust?



Underwriters  
Laboratories

**APPROVED**

Why?



# Confidence Hierarchy



- Evolving standards
- Using open standards
- Independent confirmation
- Secure practices

# Job Listings

Out of over 60,000 jobs listings  
with  
“security” and “engineer”

**10% included “certified”**

**6% CISSP**

**1% CISA**

**1% SANS**

***UNIVERSITY DEGREE***

***VS.***

***PROFESSIONAL  
CERTIFICATION***

# Differences and Similarities

University Degree	Professional Certification
Education	Training
Theoretical	Commercial
Broad	Focused

## Similarities

Non-standard curricula

Variety of options

Constantly updated

# Value of Certifications

***VALUE = RELEVANCE +  
RECOGNITION***

# Relevance and Recognition

- Relevant to current needs
- Differentiator
- Vetting and validation
- Only one criteria of many

# Security Lifecycle Certifications

- Support secure development practices
  - Promoted by SAFECode
- Support internal training activities