

# Confidentiality of the Accreditation Process

*What Do You Call Four Bullfighters In Quicksand?  
Quatro Cinco.*

I was speaking with the owner of a CRA about accreditation when he told me that he had heard from four non-accredited firms that they were afraid of accreditation because they had direct, fierce competitors on the accreditation committee and were worried about confidentiality. They were worried that their competitors might see clients, proprietary processes, procedures or technology.

I had not heard that objection to accreditation and it made me think of the old “quatro cinco” joke only spelled “qautro sinko.” There’s a few reasons to not get accredited, very few good reasons not to get accredited, but the disclosure of proprietary information is neither.

In creating the NAPBS accreditation process and procedure, our elected board members did think of this and proactively address it.

The first and primary protection is that the auditor is an independent third party. He is not a CRA and auditing is his business. He reviews the material; he performs the on-site inspection and then makes a recommendation to the accreditation committee. And he keeps the all information confidential.

The accreditation committee does not see the submission submitted by the applying CRA. The materials that the committee may see is limited and clearly spelled out in the accreditation procedure.

## Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest

- Access by the Council Members to the information submitted as part of the accreditation process shall be limited to only those specific responses and clauses which are needed to assess an applicant’s accreditation eligibility and/or those responses and clauses under appeal. All of the items of information submitted by an Applicant to the accreditation Auditor shall be kept confidential and accessible only to the Auditor unless released otherwise by the Applicant.
- All Council members and committee members will sign a confidentiality and conflict of interest statement agreeing that they will hold all accreditation application and decision information confidential and that they will recuse themselves from any discussion of applications where there is a personal or professional affiliation that might have an impact on the deliberations of the Board/Committee.
- The Chair will ask if any Board member(s) has a potential conflict of interest to declare prior to any discussion on each application for accreditation.
- In addition, all information obtained during the review of an application is only for use by the staff/Council member(s)/auditor(s) in the conduct of their assessment

activity and shall not be disclosed to any other individuals except when expressly authorized by the Council.

As the pace of companies getting accredited (and in the process of getting accredited accelerates), it is good for our industry and getting accredited will be good for your firm. The federal and state regulatory bodies are becoming more intent on limiting what information can be provided to employers and how employers may use the information they receive. As an industry, we will be more successful in combating misguided “protections” as we are increasingly becoming an independently accredited industry. And as the industry increasingly promotes their accredited status, employers are becoming more sophisticated and discerning when choosing their pre-employment screening partners. The occasional RFP inquiry regarding accreditation status will become more of a standard. If accreditation is not on your radar, you might want to give your radar set a quick tune up.

But in summary, there are a few reasons not to get accredited, there's very few reasons not to get accredited, but a concern over the confidentiality of your clients or proprietary information is neither.

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