

INTERNATIONAL PERSONNEL CERTIFICATION SUMMIT

Dr. Mark W. Hurwitz

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Opening Remarks

Good morning. I am Mark Hurwitz and I have the honor to serve as president and CEO of the American National Standards Institute. It is my pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of the Board of Directors, members and staff of the American National Standards Institute, to today's summit, "*The 21st Century Solution to Workforce Competitiveness.*"

Today we will explore key issues related to the ISO/IEC International Standard 17024, *General Requirements for Bodies Operating Certification of Persons*. ISO/IEC 17024 is a globally-recognized and accepted set of requirements for bodies that certify individual personnel and harmonizes the certification of people worldwide. Accreditation to this standard addresses the pressing need for accountability among consumer, business and industrial

services. Together, we'll examine the language of the standard, its relationship to quality, and its significance to accreditation and certification agencies.

But before we begin this exciting dialogue, I'd like to give you a little background on the Institute, as some of you may or may not be familiar with what we do.

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) is the coordinator of the U.S. voluntary consensus standardization system. We are a private, 501(c)3, not-for-profit membership organization. We are not a government agency or a regulatory body. Nor are we a standards developer. Rather, ANSI provides a forum where subject matter experts from the private and public sectors can work cooperatively toward the development of voluntary standards and conformity assessment systems that ultimately benefit the nation.

The Institute itself is 86 years old. Since our founding in 1918 by five engineering societies and three government agencies that recognized the need for a focal point for standards coordination, harmonization and information. As the country's official member body of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and, via the U.S. National Committee, to the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), ANSI gives interested U.S. parties immediate access to the standards development processes of these two organizations.

ANSI's focus has always been to remain responsive to the evolving needs of its constituents. Our programs are constantly expanding and adapting to meet the changing needs of industry, government and other sectors.

A wide variety of professionals are now required, or at least encouraged, to pursue certification within their industry or

profession as a means of demonstrating that they have the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to perform their work. Accreditation increases public and consumer confidence in certification because a person's capabilities have been verified through a legitimate and independent certification process. This is a benefit to employers and the professionals themselves, both here and abroad.

ANSI was the first to launch an accreditation program under the international standard that will be on everyone's tongues for the next few days. To date, ANSI has accredited six organizations under the ISO/IEC 17024 standard. The Institute and this pioneering group of certification bodies stepped forward to meet the global call for the accountability of personnel, and they represent the range of industries inherent in the scope of certification. Looking at the list of attendees, I can see that

today's gathering is an even better demonstration of the kind of diversity that ANSI brings together in our role as an umbrella organization.

Because the benefits of accreditation are felt by nearly all industries and sectors and the demand for accountability continues to grow, I am confident that many more will seek it out.

We are extremely fortunate to have assembled a distinguished and diverse gathering of experts who represent personnel certification bodies, federal and state government officials, international accreditation officials, non-profit organizations, and America's leading corporations. Their insight will guide our examination of the emerging emphasis on accountability, and the benefits and challenges related to accreditation, the 17024 standard, and personnel certification across countless industries.

I am especially pleased to welcome our speakers, panelists, and all of today's participants, and I thank all of you for being here. I also must extend my thanks and congratulations to the Planning Committee that has worked so diligently to design this event, identify topics of interest, secure speakers, and coordinate all of the many planning challenges.

We hope that the conference discussions will help you, as leaders of industry and government, to understand the critical role that that accountability now serves, and how you can engage more effectively for the good of your organization, your personnel, and the public.

I look forward to a very informative and productive summit.

Thank you.