



International Lighthouse Group, Inc.
"Enlightened Risk Management"

Dr. Paul Lang
Associate Dean, College of Professional Services
Northern Michigan University
Gries Hall
Marquette, MI 49855

Dear Dr. Lang,

On behalf of the Retail Loss Prevention Industry, I want to thank you for your efforts in creating a degree program for Retail Loss Prevention Management.

Most of the people working in this career field today began doing so "by accident". Even those students who attended college and majored in Criminal Justice had very little exposure to the world of Retail Loss Prevention must less considered it as a possible career path.

I was a Political Science major at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte when I answered a newspaper ad for a major discount department store chain. They had an opening for a "store detective" which I applied for even though I did not have a clue as to what the job entailed. I got the position, which is as entry level as one can get in our field, and worked until graduation. I attempted to get a job related to my Political Science major (Urban Administration) but was unsuccessful so I returned to my "part time" college job in retail loss prevention until I could find something more permanent in my chosen field of study. Twenty-seven years later, I am the president of a very successful Loss Prevention consulting firm and nationally recognized "expert" in the field.

This path to success was similar to that taken by many of my loss prevention peers with one exception: they either were not financially able to attend college or circumstances were such that they could not commit the time to attend four years of school. Many of these people are executives in our field and direct Loss Prevention Programs for major retail chains across the country. And there are mid-level managers who are following the same career path.

However, more and more companies today are requiring that candidates for management positions in our field have a "four year degree" (with usually no restriction on the field of study). Most people working in the field today have jobs and families and cannot take the time to attend a traditional four-year degree program. That is why I am so excited about the program being developed at Northern Michigan University for a distance learning degree in Retail Loss Prevention Management.

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Thank you for your vision in developing this program, which is one of the first of its kind in the nation and long overdue.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance.

Regards,

William A. Alford, CFE
President

WAA/gdc