



## NACC Case Study: **LEARNING FROM FAILURE**



*"You can't always assume the best – that people are there to do a good job. Certification creates a culture of doing what's right and trains people to do it."*

*- Robert Chalker, CEO  
NACE International*

### **NACE International**

The Worldwide Corrosion Authority®  
Houston, Texas | San Diego, California  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia | Shanghai, China  
Sao Paulo, Brazil | Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia  
[nace.org](http://nace.org)

#### **Team**

Chief Executive Officer: Robert Chalker  
Director, Education: Pamela Nicoletti

### **About**

NACE International was established in 1943 as the National Association of Corrosion Engineers. Today, NACE serves nearly 37,000 members in over 130 countries and is recognized globally as the premier authority on corrosion control solutions. NACE offers technical training and certification programs to the coatings industry akin to those administered by AMS for the architectural glass and metal industry.

### **About NACC**

The North American Contractor Certification (NACC) Program provides architectural glass and metal contractors with certification recognition through a professionally administered, third-party assessment, as a means of creating a baseline for competency and adherence to industry-accepted guidelines.

### **Introduction**

A conversation during an industry conference found NACE International CEO Robert Chalker congratulating the team from AMS on the early success of its NACC Program. Chalker knows firsthand the benefits of programs such as NACC. His organization offers 20 different certification programs for corrosion professionals and touts the benefits of standards and accreditation.

As the conversation revealed, Chalker also personally experienced the dangers of uncredentialed contractors. Chalker's comment, "I wish we had certified glazing contractors a few years ago. It would have saved me a million bucks," sparked a larger dialogue about lessons learned from failure.

AMS and the NACC Program are grateful that Chalker and NACE Education Director Pam Nicoletti were willing to share their story to demonstrate the value and importance of certified professionals.



*The entire building had to be renovated to the studs (left). The reopened training facility serves 5,000 global professionals annually.*

## New Training Center

In 2007, NACE opened the doors to a new training center designed to serve 5,000 global professionals annually. Phased design-build construction saw the facility's first level – with a lobby, two classrooms, and a work area – finished first. The second-floor interior remained unfinished for future expansion. NACE occupied the building, its programs continued to grow, and in 2011, the organization initiated fit-out of the second level. That's where the problems began.

## Upside-Down and Backward

As Nicoletti explained, moisture between the windows and brick facade caused mold and mildew issues, and it was found that the building structure would not support the upper level's new classrooms.

The original contractor declined to participate in the second phase of work and the glazing subcontractor had gone out of business. "When we brought someone else in to look at the windows, the assessment was that the windows had been installed incorrectly, essentially 'upside-down and backward,'" Improper installation impacted the entire building envelope.

"We literally took the building to the studs," Nicoletti described. The six-month second-floor project turned into an 18-month rehabilitation and reconstruction that encompassed the entire building. In addition to the time and inconvenience – the current training center staff and activities had to be transferred to a rental space during the reconstruction – project costs more than doubled. Chalker added that the building's namesake and major donor also suffered from the embarrassment of the situation.

## Support for Certs

Chalker and Nicoletti want to help others learn from their experience. "We believe in certification and the need to have people who are qualified and can prove it," Chalker said. "A well-designed certification program is the best way to do that." By supporting other programs, such as NACC and AGMT, the NACE team hopes to drive more industries forward. "It comes down to asset protection. While ours wasn't a corrosion-related incident, we want to prevent similar experiences to protect others," Nicoletti adds.

## Lessons Learned

NACE had no involvement with subcontractor selection during initial construction. The organization trusted the general contractor. A glazing certification such as NACC written into the specifications would have ensured the glazing subcontractor was both competent and vetted.

Chalker points to the self-policing that evolves through widespread certification. Certified professionals often sign a code of ethics and are trained to respond appropriately to inevitable tests of those ethics.

"Using our own programs as examples, if a certification holder is found guilty of violating the attestation or acting unethically, they lose their certification. In some industries they can no longer work." Chalker explains that the bad actors are driven out and the whole industry benefits.

Nicoletti recounts the old adage, *you get what you pay for*. "I want someone who knows what they're doing. I want an independent third party to show they are trained or certified and invested in education."