

**January 17, 2014**

### **What Exactly Is Personal Chef Certification?**

Certification. A big word that means the world to some people, and squat to others. In almost any industry, certification simply means that you've demonstrated a skill set that meets or exceeds that industry standard, or can perform a specialty task above the norm. Certification also means you're likely to be the mentor for others who are coming up the ranks. Consumers have grown accustomed to seeing certifications hanging on a business wall. The business type doesn't matter - could be an automotive brake repair shop, or a college - the fact is that the business staff or owner wants you to know that they've met some type of criteria to be recognized as solid, or above the rest within that specialty or industry. For a personal chef, this same theory holds true, sort of. First you need to find someone capable of issuing a certification in the personal chef industry, and second, what will that certification do for you and your business. On the first note, there is only one federally recognized and approved certification for personal chefs - issued through the United States Personal Chef Association (USPCA). Disclaimer: Bright Valley Enterprises is not aligned with the USPCA, and makes these statements based on fact and not with any other motive involved. The American Culinary Federation (ACF) also provides a certification for personal chefs. In either case, you'll need to spend money to belong or associate with that particular organization before even talking about getting certified. Then you need to find out what direct benefit you'll receive for your efforts and money spent. In most cases, a certification credential is valuable as a marketing tool for your own business. Use this as the auto brake place does - to educate your client that you've got demonstrated abilities above and beyond the standard. This may, or may not separate you from the others, but any time you can present yourself and business as having been recognized by an authority in the industry, you are building upon your professional image, which is very positive. Is certification needed, or right for every personal chef? Probably not. Only you can make that call. The majority of active working personal chefs today are not certified by the USPCA or ACF. This is as much a personal call as it is for business reasons. Do be aware and ask about how to remain certified if you elect that path. Certification is not a lifetime situation, and you'll need to recertify at some point, which usually involves spending more money.

