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10 things to look for in a certification program for IT employees

1. The program trains your employees on the technologies that you rely on most.

According to IDC, it's important for companies to choose certification programs from "a significant provider of IT infrastructure." Or choose a certification program that is an "industry standard."¹ Microsoft is a significant provider. In fact, companies use more than twice as many technologies and services from Microsoft than from the nearest competitor.²

2. The certifications will amplify your tech intensity.

Training and certification from Microsoft can help organizations innovate and stay competitive by building new capabilities with existing technology. According to a recent study, 91 percent of certified tech professionals believe that the effort employees put into acquiring new skills strongly contributes to their success in digital transformation. The same proportion of tech professionals believes that training and certification strongly contribute to digital transformation success.³

3. The certifications will help close your skills gap.

The IT skills gap has gone up by 155 percent in the past three years. Decision makers are struggling to find qualified job candidates. A big benefit of certified personnel is their ability to close this skills gap. Over half of all IT decision makers said this is an advantage. Sixty percent of IT decision makers believe skills gaps cost their employees between three and eight hours per week.⁴

4. The certifications will help increase profits.

According to the Association for Talent Development, companies that offer comprehensive training programs have a 218 percent higher income per employee than companies without formalized training. But it doesn't stop there; these companies also enjoy a 24 percent higher profit margin than those that spend less on training.⁵

5. The certifications will be able to prove ROI.

The value employers and managers place on certification is undeniable. Ninety-three percent of decision makers around the world agree that certified employees provide added value above and beyond the cost of certification.⁴ In addition, 55 percent reported benefits from certification that were transferable to work situations.⁶

1 IDC white paper, sponsored by Microsoft, "[Business Value of Digital Transformation and the Contribution of a Growth Mindset in IT](#)," May 2020.

2 Microsoft, "[Earnings Release FY19 Q4](#)," Microsoft, 2019.

3 IDC white paper, sponsored by Microsoft, "[Business Value of Digital Transformation and the Contribution of a Growth Mindset in IT](#)," May 2020.

4 Global Knowledge, "[2019 IT Skills and Salary Report](#)," 2019.

5 Business Training Experts, "[Profiting from Learning](#)," September 2000.

6 Pearson VUE, "[2018 Value of IT Certification](#)."

6. You can expect improvements from your employees.

Compared to their peers, Microsoft-certified developers are 93 percent more productive and nearly 60 percent more efficient.⁶ Certified professionals are also better at meeting client requirements, increasing productivity, reducing time to troubleshoot, and completing projects more quickly.⁷ IT professionals who have achieved a relevant, role-based technical certification perform on average 26 percent better than their uncertified colleagues with the same responsibilities.⁸

7. The certifications will have a lasting impact on my team.

Individuals who believe they can develop their capability through effort, time, and training have what is called a “growth mindset.” Tech professionals with a growth mindset put energy into learning and using new skills, and tech professionals who are certified are consistently more likely to believe they can learn difficult skills.⁹ Ninety-one percent believe that effort strongly contributes to their digital transformation success.³ Additionally, certification holders foster a sense of commitment to continued learning and skill development,⁶ which supports a continuous learning culture. They have the confidence and knowledge companies need to innovate and stay ahead of competition.

7 Global Knowledge, “[2019 IT Skills and Salary Report](#),” 2019.

8 IDC white paper, sponsored by Microsoft, “[Benefits of Role-Based Certifications](#),” June 2020.

8. The certifications focus on the big picture.

The field of cloud computing and related technologies is dramatically changing the way business is done across all industry sectors. The cloud is being rapidly adopted and is expected to become a \$300 billion global business by 2021.¹⁰ Demand for Azure skills climbed 1,107 percent between 2014 and 2019.¹¹ Microsoft’s technical role-based certifications, focused on meeting market demand, are the best way to build the skills teams need for the cloud era.

9. The certifications will impact your employees in terms of personal development.

Sixty-seven percent of certified professionals report greater self-confidence in their abilities because of certification. Forty-one percent report increased job satisfaction and 35 percent credit certification with giving them greater excitement and optimism about their career.¹²

9 IDC white paper, sponsored by Microsoft, “[Business Value of Digital Transformation and the Contribution of a Growth Mindset in IT](#),” May 2020.

10 Mark Kaelin, “[Cloud services dominate business strategy](#),” Tech Republic, May 2018.

11 Tekla Perry, “[SQL, Java Top List of Most In-Demand Tech Skills](#),” Spectrum, November 2019.

12 Pearson VUE, “[2018 Value of IT Certification](#).”

10. The certifications will help you retain the employees.

According to a recent LinkedIn study, companies that rank high on employee training have 53 percent lower attrition than companies that are ranked low.¹³ At the same time, studies show that the costs related to replacing an employee can be as high as 50-60 percent of the employee's annual salary. The total cost of turnover can reach as much as 90-200 percent of the employee's annual salary.¹⁴

13 LinkedIn, "[2020 Global Talent Trends Report](#)," 2020.

14 W.F. Cascio, "Managing Human Resources: Productivity, Quality of Work Life, Profits (7th ed.)". Burr Ridge, IL: Irwin/McGraw-Hill. Mitchell, T.R., Holtom, B.C., & Lee, T.W. 2001.

Try Microsoft's role-based approach to training and certification

Microsoft Certifications meet industry and market needs by aligning training with job roles that are relevant for the industry. Microsoft offers three types of certifications to meet the needs of individuals and organizations.

1. **Fundamentals certifications** validate a foundational understand of Microsoft technologies.
2. **Role-based certifications** focus on solutions, not just products, to validate the technical skills required to perform industry job-roles on Microsoft platforms and technology.
3. **Specialty certifications** validate deep technical skills and ability-managing industry solutions, including third-party solutions, on or with Microsoft platforms.

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