

WHITE PAPER

The Proven Professional Certification: Proving Certification Can Profit

Sponsored by: EMC Corporation

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April 2010

IN THIS WHITE PAPER

This IDC white paper analyzes the career impact of IT professionals who are certified EMC Proven Professionals.

METHODOLOGY

EMC, in conjunction with IDC, fielded this survey in November 2009 to a population of individuals who have achieved one or more EMC Proven Professional certifications.

A total of 3,233 respondents were recorded for this worldwide survey. Respondents came from the Americas (39%), EMEA (34%), and Asia/Pacific including Japan (27%), representing EMC business partners (21%), customers (9%), other industry professionals (15%), and college students (1%). The balance was made up of EMC employees. Non-EMC respondents comprise all respondents excluding EMC employees.

Of the respondents, just over one-third (35%) held certifications from other leading technology companies, of which Microsoft (40%) and Cisco (28%) featured most prominently.

93% of non-EMC respondents have three-plus years of IT-related experience, while 77% have three-plus years of storage technology experience.

IDC SITUATION OVERVIEW

EMC is on track to have a strong year compared with the rest of the industry, despite the global economic downturn. The combination of storage infrastructure solutions, cloud offerings, resource management solutions, and security and content management solutions moves EMC away from the historical end-user view of EMC as solely a storage company.

The 'explosion of digital information,' chronicled in the IDC white paper, The Diverse and Exploding Digital Universe, has resulted in an information storage skills gap. To bridge this gap, a highly skilled workforce must be developed to store, protect, and manage the massive amount of data being generated.

These developments have created a technology area that offers high potential for growth and opportunity. For experienced IT professionals and new graduates alike, complementing traditional training and education with an industry-accepted technical certification program plays a significant role in validating and branding one's capabilities. Further, holders of such credentials often play a more strategic role in building an organization's competitive advantage.

EMC Proven Professional certification has distinguished itself in two important ways.

First, it is role-based, such as Technology Architect, Implementation Engineer, etc. While common elements and similarities exist for each job role, there are also clear distinctions between each role in performing specific duties required in an IT organization. EMC Education Services addresses this broad range of learning requirements through its modularized curriculum to suit an individual's learning needs.

Second, Proven Professional not only includes certifications that focus on specific EMC technologies, but also has introduced a layer that focuses on information storage technologies, processes, and practices. The program is requiring all certified individuals to demonstrate an understanding of information storage concepts and principles.

The evolution of this open curriculum has culminated in a book published by Wiley and Sons Publishing Inc., called Information Storage and Management – Storing, Managing, and Protecting Digital Information, and authored by the EMC Education Services team.

EMC has also extended its 'open' curriculum to colleges and universities, forming the EMC Academic Alliance. This program is a collaboration of colleges and universities worldwide that was created to help develop a pipeline of IT professionals to contain and manage the digital deluge. Many leading training providers also offer this curriculum to any industry professional interested in learning the breadth of information storage and management technologies.

KEY FINDINGS

Awareness to IT management

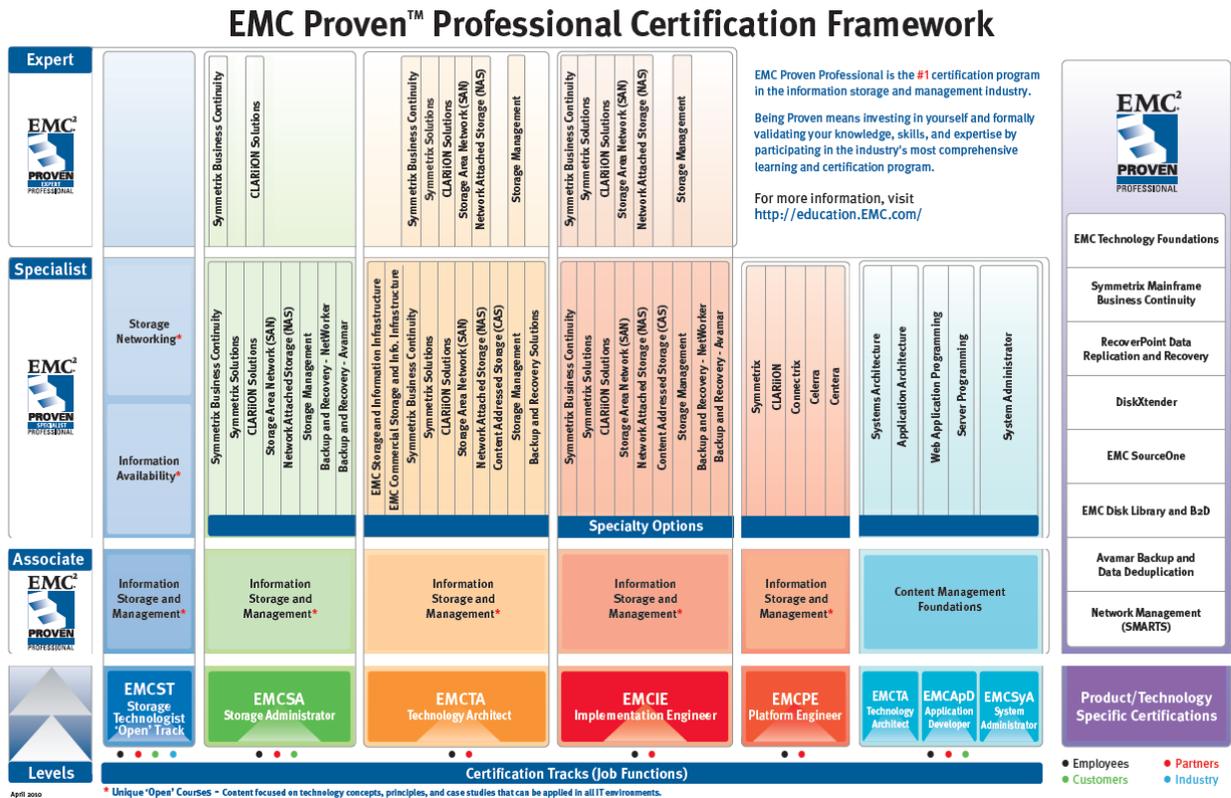
□ 83% of the non-EMC respondents stated that their managers consider EMC Proven Professional the most important storage certification in the industry. This indicates manager recognition of EMC Proven Professional certification as effectively bridging existing storage knowledge gaps. One of the important factors about any certification is its relevancy and effectiveness of the certification as it relates to the industry at large.

□ 63% of the participating Proven Professionals stated that their managers consider EMC Proven Professional the most important IT certification. This also indicates that managers recognize that EMC Proven Professional as not just a storage certification but also an important IT certification. This key finding further highlights that the Proven Professional is a very important certification for not just the storage professionals but also for IT professionals.

□ 83% of the certified customers expressed that their managers understood the value of EMC Proven Professional certification. Furthermore, 65% were encouraged by their managers to pursue training and certification. This key finding highlights the value that managers place on Proven Professional certification. See Figure 1 for more details.

FIGURE 1

EMC Proven Professional Training and Certification Framework



Source: EMC, 2010

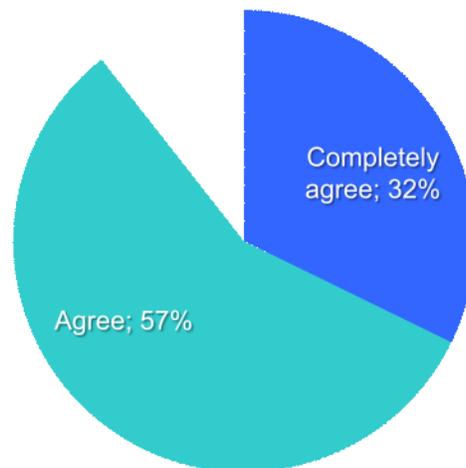
Career Growth

□ 89% of participating EMC Proven Professionals find the training and certification content highly applicable to their jobs and the work they do. Considering the breadth of technologies and various roles the program covers, this is a very strong endorsement of the design and execution of the EMC Proven Professional program. In fact, 88% appreciate the program's emphasis on developing an understanding of the breadth of technologies, which helps them understand broader IT environments. Respondents felt they were able to better work with and recommend EMC branded solutions overall. This particular finding highlights the relevance and applicability of the certification to the respondents' job. See Figure 2 for more details.

FIGURE 2

Certification Relevancy to Day-to-Day Job

Subjects and content I learned in preparing to achieve my most relevant EMC Proven Professional certification are highly applicable to my job/work.



Source: EMC, 2010

□ Among non-EMC respondents, over 75% indicated that sometime during their job application process, employers and/or recruiters asked about a candidate's Proven Professional certification. This reflects an increased awareness, relevance, and importance of Proven Professional certifications to businesses.

□ More than half of non-EMC respondents found that Proven Professional certification enabled them to gain (61%), retain (68%), and progress (50%) in their existing job; 65% of the non-EMC respondents indicated that the certification contributed to increased earnings.

Relevancy to the Industry at Large

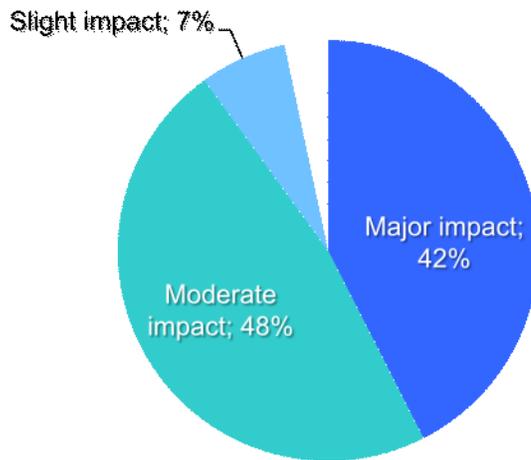
□ When non-EMC respondents were asked whether they would recommend the EMC Proven Professional program to peers and colleagues, 99% of respondents replied "yes they would."

□ 97% of IT professional respondents indicated that they gained a higher appreciation of storage technology in its entirety. See Figure 3 for more details.

FIGURE 3

Appreciation of Total Storage Solutions

Please rate the impact of the learning required to pass an EMC Proven Professional exam on...your appreciation of storage technology in its entirety.



Source: EMC, 2010

□ 93% of certified customers are now using more functionality of EMC products and technologies. 86% of certified customers indicate that EMC Proven Professional training and certification has equipped them to better evaluate competing vendor solutions. This is a reflection of a broader understanding of information storage and management technologies, a core part of the EMC Proven Professional design.

□ 86% of all Proven Professionals feel confident in their technical capabilities and interactions with other technical professionals. Also, they gained increased credibility and respect from customers (internal or external), peers, and managers. The finding highlights the value of the Proven Professional with respect to the respondent's motivation.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

The most prominent results from this survey of EMC Proven Professionals are:

- EMC's certification-aligned training is viewed highly applicable to certified professionals' specific jobs and in achieving better understanding of EMC, the company, its products, software, and solutions.

- Respondents indicate the value of broad technology coverage and their ability to better work with and recommend EMC technology solutions overall.

- Respondents also directly attributed that the certification provided them with opportunities in career advancement, job security, and increased earnings.

What is less obvious and arguably more compelling is the role certifications, and in particular, the EMC Proven Professional certification plays in providing professionals with a deeper and broader understanding of information storage technologies.

IDC's assessment of the EMC Proven Professional program is such that we believe, although designed to be self-serving to EMC, the certification includes a curriculum that provides sufficient industry-encompassing knowledge and relevancy that certified professionals can actually translate and apply to the storage industry at large.

As information storage and IT infrastructure technologies evolve and become more complex and robust, there will be greater need for professionals with information storage knowledge and skills. The future seems to be bright for the growing community of EMC Proven Professionals and their managers as they consider the return on investment from certifications and courses that will have the greatest and widest impact on staff training and development.

As the exponential growth of digital information continues over the next several years and beyond, other IT resources such as compute, virtualization, and network create an increasingly complex environment. Proven Professional certification bridges the gap between the ever-changing environments in which these professionals operate.

CHALLENGES/CONCLUSION

IDC recognizes that the population for this survey is limited to certified professionals for one company (EMC). However, based on the fact that close to 50% of the surveyed population holds other major IT certifications, along with IDC's assessment of EMC's external disk storage systems market leadership, we feel that there is at

least relevance - if not some correlation - between the results of this survey and the market at large.

EMC is making progress in bridging the information storage skills gap. The efforts of certified EMC Proven Professionals are valued and being recognized. We believe that, as data growth and IT complexity escalate, the value that Proven Professional certifications bring to IT organizations will become more widely recognized, causing more managers to encourage more employees to become EMC Proven Professionals.

EMC's efforts are showing signs of progress. The future is promising for certified information storage professionals as IT infrastructure complexity evolves in response to increasing demands. Trained and certified professionals are essential for the success of IT infrastructure management organizations.

RELATED RESEARCH

- ☒ *Worldwide Disk Storage Systems 2008 Vendor Shares: Year in Review*, IDC #220229, December 2009
- ☒ *The Diverse and Exploding Digital Universe*, IDC White Paper, March 2008

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