ABSTRACT

Noble Jr., Aaron, Palaski. Determining the Effectiveness of the International Public Management Association for Human Resources Certified Professional Certification Program in Assisting HR Managers in Performing the Responsibilities of Their Job

Public sector human resource (HR) managers arrive to their positions with varying levels of preparation and experience to perform the responsibilities of their job. Some rose through the ranks of their organization to the lead HR position while others may only possess a HR-related degree. Still others come to the position without any HR-related education or experience. Recognizing the need to prepare public sector human resource managers to better perform the responsibilities of their position and prepare them to meet future challenges, the International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR) established the Certified Professional (CP) Certification Program. The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of this program in meeting its stated objectives.

A qualitative research study was conducted using the Delphi methodology. An expert panel consisting of 30 HR professionals randomly selected from a list provided by IPMA-HR responded to a series of questionnaires in which they rated and identified the effectiveness of this program.

The results generated by this panel indicated significant satisfaction with the level of knowledge-based training provided in this program. Identified strengths of the program were its establishment of a professional HR designation for public sector HR professionals, the recertification requirement of this certification, and the creditability and recognition this certification provide them among their coworkers and peers. Identified weakness of the program include its lack of recognition within the public and private sectors, its lack of focus on organizational issues, the need for more training on the strategic aspects of HR, and the desire for more behavioral-based-skills training. Of the 31 job responsibilities that the panel was asked to rate the effectiveness of CP Training in preparing them to perform these tasks, the training program was found to provide adequate support on nine of them.
Determining the Effectiveness of the International Public Management Association for Human Resources Certified Professional Certification Program in Assisting HR Managers in Performing the Responsibilities of Their Job

By

Aaron P. Noble, Jr.

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty of North Carolina State University in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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Approved by

Dr. Paula Berardinelli
Co-Chair of Advisory Committee

Dr. Brad Mehlénbacher
Co-Chair of Advisory Committee

Dr. Gordon Whitaker

Dr. Saundra Williams
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation first to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ from whom all blessings flow. All that I am, and all that I may become, is due to His goodness and mercy for which I am extremely thankful.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Alma Noble and the late Aaron Palaski Noble, Sr. Neither of my parents had an opportunity to pursue a post-secondary education. However, they fully understood its value and would not accept, nor tolerate, anything less for their three children than the attainment of a college education. I will always be indebted to them for the love they gave me, the sacrifices they made for me, and the lessons for living they taught me. I also dedicate this dissertation to my sisters, Jacqueline N. Howell and Alma N. Goodwin, who have challenged and supported me throughout my lifetime. Their academic achievements established a standard within our family that has served as an inspiration to me.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my dear friend, Robert M. Ward, whose encouragement and support have meant so much to me through the years. Words alone cannot adequately express my appreciation for all he has done for me. I have been blessed beyond measure by his friendship, and I will be eternally grateful for everything he has done to facilitate my educational and professional growth.
BIOGRAPHY

Aaron Palaski Noble, Jr. was born March 10, 1954 in Burlington, North Carolina. He received his elementary and secondary education in Burlington, North Carolina, graduating from Hugh M. Cummings High School in 1972.

He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in mass media arts from Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) in Hampton, Virginia in 1977. He also received an Associate in Applied Science degree in computer programming from Alamance Community College in Graham, North Carolina in 1985 and a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in December 1993.

From 1978 to 1980 he worked in numerous capacities in the Washington District Office of Ford Motor Company in Falls Church, Virginia. From 1980 to 1986 he served as a dye chemist for Annedeen Hosiery Mills in Burlington, North Carolina. In July 1986 he was selected as the first public information officer for the City of Burlington and served in this capacity until June 1996, when he was promoted to his present position of human resource director.

He has held several positions of community leadership in the Burlington/Alamance County Area. He is a member of the board of directors of Alamance Regional Medical Center and is a member of the board and past president of Hospice and Palliative Care Center of Alamance-Caswell. He is also the current president of the United Way of Alamance County Board of Directors.

He is an adjunct faculty member at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in the Department of Political Science where he teaches a course in media relations.

He was admitted to the doctoral program in the Department of Adult and Community College Education at North Carolina State University in 1995.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge the support, guidance, and encouragement of Dr. Paula Berardinelli in the development of this dissertation. Her advice and consistent prodding were instrumental in my attainment of this educational goal. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Brad Mehlenbacher, who willingly joined my committee as co-chair with Dr. Berardinelli at the 11th hour in place of Dr. James Burrow, whose previous involvement and contributions are also acknowledged.

I would also like to thank Dr. Saundra Williams and Dr. Gordon Whitaker for their willingness to serve on my committee and for their suggestions which helped to enhance this dissertation.

I would also like to acknowledge the 30 HR professionals who served as expert panelists for this dissertation. I am deeply indebted to them for their interest and participation in this research.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the International Public Management Association for Human Resources for endorsing this study.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Background and Need for the Study

Today’s human resource (HR) problems and opportunities are enormous and appear to be expanding (Costello, Lembrick, Towle and Warner, 1996; Ripley, 1996; Ivancevich and Glueck, 1989; Mondy and Noe, 1996; Pynes, 1997; Tracey, 1994). Individuals dealing with HR matters face a multitude of challenges, ranging from a constantly changing workforce to the ever-present scores of governmental regulations and major technological advancements (Costello et al., 1996; Brown, "Raising the Bar," n.d.; Ivancevich and Glueck, 1989; Ripley, 1996; Tracey, 1994). Survival is the major objective of any organization. HR management activities and acumen play a major role in ensuring organization survival and prosperity (Costello et al., 1996; Ivancevich and Glueck, 1989; Tracey, 1994). In most organizations effectiveness is measured by the balance of such complementary characteristics as reaching goals, employing the skills and abilities of employees efficiently, and ensuring the recruitment and retention of well-trained and motivated employees (Dessler, 1999; “What Does,” n.d.). People are seen to be the key to accomplishing strategic goals. It is people, not technology or equipment alone, who will bring meaning to work, quality to customers, and success to organizations (Holley and Jennings, 1987; Tracey, 1994; Ripley, 1996). The work of HR managers is now viewed as an essential component of an organization’s bottom line (Costello et al., 1996; Mondy, Noe, and Premeaux, 1999; “What Does,” n.d.).

The prediction that human resources would become a driving force for both corporate America and public agencies has come true (Ivancevich, 2001; Pynes, 1997; Tracey, 1994). Over the past 10 years the HR role and its dimensions have changed. Since technology and know-how are available to everyone, the key to exceeding customer expectations and success will be people. Social, political, economic, and labor conditions will force most organizations to change even more in the coming years. HR managers will need
exceptional management and people skills to lead a diverse workforce in the new millennium (Ripley, 1996; Rowland and Ferris, 1986).

The top HR manager is more involved in the development of business strategy than ever before. He not only advises but also implements business objectives (Holley and Jennings, 1987; Leonard, 1999; Swist, 1996). HR management has expanded beyond just directing the HR function. It now extends into such areas as HR forecasting, succession planning, management and executive development, needs analysis, training, program evaluation, budgeting, strategic planning, and return on investment (Hulett and Jennings, 1985; Ivancevich, 2001; Tracey, 1994; “What Does,” n.d.). As HR managers assume a more prominent role in the decision-making process, their possession of the knowledge and skills needed to perform in these areas will be essential.

Recognizing the need to prepare public sector HR managers to better perform the responsibilities of their position and to prepare them to meet the challenges presented by the evolving role of HR management, the International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR) established the IPMA Certified Professional (IPMA-CP) program in October 1999 (“Recognition, Rewards, IPMA-HR’s Public Sector HR Certification Programs Deliver,” 2002).

Anyone familiar with the public sector knows that it is becoming increasingly complex, competitive, and demanding. Often, with monetary resources flat, effective management of human resources is the only way for agencies to fulfill their expended duties.

Certification establishes a sort of shorthand for knowing who is up to the challenges facing the public sector HR profession. Certification identifies qualified practitioners, ensures recognition of their expertise, and assists in professional development and self-improvement by establishing a critical body of knowledge and high standards.

For perspective employers, certification means an efficient and objective measure to determine the qualifications of candidates. For the individual HR practitioner, certification is a portable, reputable and rigorous distinction that helps build your career and your agency. (Advancing Your Career Begins with IPMA Certification, n.d.)
The foundation of the IPMA-CP certification process is the IPMA-HR Competency Model, which addresses 22 specific skill areas. Combined with IPMA certification, the competency model is an important tool used to focus public sector HR managers on the variety of skills they need and the three key roles (change agent, business partner, and leader) in which they need to function in order to succeed in public sector HR management. Since HR managers can enter the profession in a variety of ways, they may or may not possess the knowledge and skills required to successfully perform the responsibilities of their position. (“International Personnel Management Association: About IPMA,” n.d.). Given the commitment of IPMA-HR to meeting the career development needs of its members, it is critical for those who plan, develop and provide training in the IPMA-CP program to know how well their interventions are serving members in the performance of their job.

Statement of the Problem

HR managers arrive to the field in a variety of ways (Berman, Bowman, West and Van Wart, 2001; Riley, 2002). Some have worked their way up the ranks within the HR department of an organization. Others arrive to the profession by virtue of earning a post-secondary degree in HR management or similar discipline. Still others come to the field with minimal experience or academic preparation (Costello et al., 1996).

Given the changing nature of the profession, the various ways HR managers can enter the field, and the tasks they are responsible for performing in their jobs, it is likely that some of them have received little or no professional training as to how they should perform their job responsibilities. Any training they may have possibly received may no longer be adequate, as their job responsibilities may have changed as their role has evolved in the organization. In order to meet the challenges of a changing profession, it is important that
training provided by IPMA-HR addresses as fully as possible the current and future needs of its members.

The author found no evidence of previous research that examined the effectiveness of competency training provided by IPMA-HR in helping public sector HR managers perform the responsibilities of their job. In addition, no evidence was found indicating IPMA-HR had conducted an assessment of its certified professional certification program to determine how adequately it is meeting the needs of its members.

Research Question

Using a list of job responsibilities performed by public sector HR managers obtained from IPMA-HR, a series of questionnaires were completed by members of an expert panel assembled for this study that explored the perceived effectiveness of the IPMA-CP Certification Program in assisting members in performing the responsibilities of their position. It also identified other areas in which these individuals desire additional career development. The author conducted a Delphi study involving 30 members of IPMA-HR who have passed the IPMA-CP Certification Examination based upon the following question:

How adequately does IPMA-HR certified professional program prepare public-sector HR managers to perform the responsibilities of their job?

The effectiveness of the IPMA-HR CP Certification Program will be examined from two perspectives—from a personal perspective in which panelists identified the value of this certification to them personally and professionally as well as from a job performance perspective, in which panelists identified how well this program had prepared them to perform the responsibilities of their job.

After tabulating the results of this survey, the author evaluated how well IPMA, through its certified professional program, prepares public-sector HR managers to perform the
responsibilities of their job and identified additional areas, as suggested by study participants, for further knowledge and skill development. In addition, the author drew conclusions and produced recommendations regarding the study that may be of value to those who design training and establish standards for IPMA-HR.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The goal of this research was to identify the perceived value of attaining the IPMA-CP certification in preparing public sector HR managers in executing the responsibilities of their position. This study was conducted using a list of job responsibilities obtained from IPMA-HR that primarily formed the conceptual framework of this study.

According to IPMA-HR, today’s public sector HR managers are currently performing or administering the following function or responsibilities:

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(Source: IPMA-HR Organizational Structures, 2002)

The IPMA Competency Model was indirectly used to assess the effectiveness of this program, as it is the Competency Model upon which the principle instruction in this program is based. Since majority of training in the IPMA-CP Certification Program is based on the Competency Model, the assessment of the effectiveness of this program by the expert panel may also be viewed as an indirect evaluation of the effectiveness of the Competency Model in preparing them to perform the responsibilities of their job.
The IPMA Competency Model is comprised of 22 skill areas designed to prepare public sector HR managers to meet the current and future needs of their organization. These competencies are

1. **Knows Mission** - Understands the purpose of the organization including its statutory mandate, its customers, its products and/or services, and its measures of mission effectiveness. Is able to articulate the relationship between human resources activities and successful mission accomplishment. Keeps current with factors that may have a future impact on mission.

2. **Understands Business Process and How to Change to Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness** - Approaches assigned HR program responsibilities with a broad perspective of the way business is done within the organization. Able to recognize and implement change to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

3. **Understands Clients and Organizational Culture** - Researches unique characteristics of client organizations to ensure that assistance and consultations are appropriate to the situations. Maintains awareness of differing cultures and provides service that is tailored to the requirements of the culture.

4. **Understands Public Service Environment** - Keeps current on political and legislative activities that may affect the organization and the HR community. Seeks to understand the intent as well as the letter of laws, orders, and regulations that result from the political process so that implementation is consistent with the intended outcomes of legal and policy changes.

5. **Understands Team Behavior** - Applies knowledge of team behavior to help achieve organizational goals and objectives. Maintains currency with new approaches to human motivation and teamwork that may apply to the organization.

6. **Communicates Well** - Expresses ideas and exchanges information clearly and persuasively. Speaks in terms of business results and goals rather than HR technical terms. Communicates effectively with all levels of the organization.

7. **Possesses the Ability to be Innovative and Create a Risk Taking Environment** - Thinks outside of the box. Creates and presents new approaches which are outside the context of current policies when warranted by mission needs. Understands and applies techniques which are designed to encourage creativity and innovations. Creates an environment where risk taking is valued.

8. **Assesses and Balances Competing Values** - Manages competing priorities and work assignments by continuously evaluating the needs of
the organization’s mission against pending work. Maintains contact with senior management to ensure a clear understanding of mission priorities. Explains priorities to key customers to ensure that they understand the rationale for decisions regarding work priorities.

9. **Applies Organizational Development Principles** - Maintains knowledge of social science and human behavior strategies which can be used to improve organizational performance. Establishes strategies to promote greater learning within the organization. Provides advice that supports creating opportunities for employees to grow.

10. **Knows Business System Thinking** - Applies whole systems thinking to HR work processes by ensuring consideration of all external and internal environmental factors in providing advice and solutions to customers.

11. **Applies Information Technology to Human Resource Management (HRM)** - Maintains awareness of current and emerging technologies which have potential to improve the efficiency and/or effectiveness of HRM within the organization. Develops proposals to implement new HR-based technology within the organization when justified.

12. **Possesses Good Analytical Skills Including the Ability to Think Strategically and Creatively** - Analyzes a multiplicity of data and information from several sources and arrives at logical conclusions. Recognizes the gaps in available data and suggests other ways to obtain the needed information.

13. **Designs and Implements Change Process** - Ability to recognize the potential benefits of change and creates an infrastructure that supports change. Is flexible and open to new ideas and encourages others to value change.

14. **Uses Consultation and Negotiation Skills Including Dispute Resolution** - Takes the initiative in solving or helping to resolve problems. Knows a variety of problem-solving techniques and uses them or recommends them to involved parties.

15. **Possesses the Ability to Build Trust Relationships** - Has integrity and demonstrates professional behavior to gain the trust and confidence of the customer. Follows up on commitments made on a timely, accurate and complete basis. Can keep confidences and does not abuse the privilege of accessibility to confidential information.

16. **Possesses Marketing and Representational Skills** - Persuades internal and external customers of the needs and beneficial outcomes of particular programs or actions. Develops the pros and cons of an issue and persuades interested parties of the best course of action. Ensures that customers are aware of the importance of the HR role.
17. **Uses Consensus and Coalition Building Skills** - Enhances collaboration among individuals and groups by using consensus building skills. Objectively summarizes opposing points of view. Incorporates all points of view and assists in arriving at a consensual position or agreement. Reconciles disagreements with officials through reasoning and presentation of the facts. Uses differences of opinion to build alternative solutions to problems or concerns. Understands when and how to elevate issues to higher-level line officials when actions being taken are inconsistent with legal or higher level policy requirements. Has courage to take a stand when an issue is considered important to the well being of the organization’s mission or reputation.

18. **Knows Human Resource Laws and Policies** - Keeps current and understands statutory and regulatory requirements affecting HR programs. Sees and uses intent of requirements as an HR tool to assist in managing resources.

19. **Links Human Resources to the Organization's Mission and Service Outcome** - Understands mission needs and context in terms of people needs. Understands HR role(s) within the organization and adapts behaviors and approaches that are consistent with the role(s).

20. **Demonstrates Customer Service Orientation** - Keeps abreast of organizational climate and mission changes and is keenly sensitive to customer needs and concerns. Responds to client needs, questions and concerns in an accurate timely manner.

21. **Understands, Values and Promotes Diversity** - Understands the potential contributions that a diverse workforce can make to the success of the organization. Is aware of the potential impact of HR processes and assures that diversity needs are considered.

22. **Practices and Promotes Integrity and Ethical Behavior** - Behaves in ways that demonstrate trust and gain confidence. Treats customers fairly and courteously and effectively responds to their needs regardless of organizational location or grade level. Promotes and maintains a high level of integrity.

(Source: Twenty-Two Competencies in the IPMA HR Competency Model, n.d., pp. 1-3)

This model, along with discussion of HR law, comprises the course of study for the IPMA-CP Certification Program.

As a result of having members who have successfully completed the formal IPMA-CP Certification Program evaluate their training and assess its impact on their performance in these areas, IPMA-HR will be able to assess how well this program is meeting the needs of...
its members and identify possible additions or revisions that could be made to the program which would enable it to better meet the needs of members desiring certification.

**Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify how well the IPMA-CP certification process prepares public sector HR managers to perform the responsibilities of their position and to identify additional competencies (knowledge or skill) they desire to further their professional growth.

This study received the endorsement of IPMA-HR who will use the results to evaluate its certified professional program and may incorporate these findings into its programs as deemed necessary.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study should be viewed as a starting point from which to identify the value of the IPMA-CP program in preparing public sector HR managers to perform their job responsibilities. It is, at best, a glimpse of the opinion of 30 IPMA-HR members who have passed the IPMA-CP Certification Examination. The development of the survey instruments, their clarity and completeness, and the involvement of participants in the survey were critical factors in the reliability of the completed study.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Within the past few years there has been a proliferation of voluntary accreditation and skill certification programs (Atkinson, 2003; Damore, 2002; Hutchinson and Fleischman, 2003). Numerous industry and professional associations, training and professional development institutes, and information technology vendors issue certifications and formal designations. They are granted to recognize proficiency in a set of skills, knowledge, and abilities within a specific occupation (Bell, 2001; Berta, 2002; Johnston, 1999). As post-secondary degrees and diplomas become more commonplace, certifications can serve as an additional screening tool in a firm’s recruitment process and overall human capital strategy (Johnston, 1999). The practice began decades ago with trade associations developing programs to set best practices for unregulated industries, as well as professional societies and associations introducing individual certification programs. Not surprisingly, many early designations were in health-related fields. Licensure, the first credentialing mechanism, was first evident in medicine during the early nineteenth century (D. Brown, “Raising The Bar,” 2002; Hofmann, 1984; Johnston, 1999).

Advantages and Benefits of Certification

Several authors have identified the advantages and benefits of certification to individuals and employers. Some have identified certification as a way for individuals to distinguish themselves from others in their chosen field (Boyken, 2003; Craig, 2002; Senno, 2001; Walter, 2003). From an employer’s perspective, certification can provide an easy way to identify qualified candidates and serve as criteria for promotional consideration (Boyken, 2003; Craig, 2002; Dieterle, 1996; Eggert, 2001; Roberts, 2003; Senno, 2001). Craig, in PMP Certification: Is it Really Worth Anything (2002), states “... earning any license or
certification or anything with any creditability would help differentiate you from the rest of the pack. “...At a minimum, it would increase your chances for better positions at better salary and perks along your career path” (p. 1). Becoming certified can also send a message to one’s current or future employer that one is highly qualified and up-to-date on developments in the field (Foden, 1995).

Certification helps one stand out from the crowd, and obtaining certification is a good way to show off one's skills. (“Benefits Of,” 1998; Berta, 2002; Brandel, 2002; Dieterle, 1996; "Foundation Receives,” 2002; Hamm & Early, 1994; Hutchinson & Fleischman, 2003; Odiorne, 1983). It can also be used as a marketing tool to differentiate oneself from others in the profession (Hutchinson & Fleischman, 2003). Furthermore, many employers use certification as an indication of competency and a means to differentiate persons in the hiring and promotion process (Hutchinson & Fleischman, 2003; Roberts & Pepe, 2001).

In applying for employment, applicants who possess a relevant and recognized certification may have an advantage over those who do not.

Of course a lot more has to go into the hiring process: background checks and references are always more important in judging a potential employee’s suitability than any certificate. But certificates provide employers a way to assess a person’s technical ability, and let’s face it, that’s usually the most important qualification when you’re hiring technical staff (Connolly & Yager, 2000, p. 2).

Does being certified really make a difference? The answer of some authors in the field is an affirmative one.

Those certified at any level are making a statement to others... that they have proven themselves to be actively involved in the industry, not just within their own company, but outside organizations as well. Such employees give added value to their employers by gaining additional knowledge and industry contacts via their outside activities (Wood, 1993, p. 2).

The benefits of attaining certification can be both real and psychological (Casper, 2000; Eggert, 2001). Real benefits are evident from the acceptance and acknowledgement of
certification by government, for-profit, and not-for-profit organizations. The psychological benefits are realized through the feeling of individual accomplishment and pride that come with passing a creditable examination or assessment process developed by peers based upon a common body of knowledge (“Benefits Of,” 1998; Berta, 2002; Damore, 2002; “Foundation Receives,” 2002; Rowe, 2002; Senno, 2001; Walter, 2000; Widoff, 1995; Wood, 1993). The benefits of certification can also be viewed from a professional and personal perspective. According to Dieterle (1996):

From a professional side, certification makes one more valuable to his employer. Personally, certification can make one more marketable if looking for a new position. Certification can be extremely useful if marketing one’s services as a consultant. (p 2).

Senno (2001) in Certification Equation adds:

Certifications hold greater advantages for certain workers and in certain situations. It’s more important for consulting services and other companies selling IT services to have certified workers because companies hiring them want to see [proof of] expertise in particular areas. . . . Even if you’re not in consulting services, there are still some good reasons to get certified. If you’re an experienced IT worker, certification should lead to a salary increase or a promotion (p. 2).

A certificate provides the holder with evidence he has met the qualifications of a program and attained a specific level of knowledge or competence (Senno, 2001). In The Value of Professional Certification: Now and in the Future, Eggert (2001) outlines the benefits of attaining the Institute for Certification of Computing Professionals (ICCP) certification available for information processing professionals. “An individual who receives the ICCP designation can use it on bid proposals, resumes, business cards, etc. The designation does not confer any additional rights or privileges, unless a company establishes a requirement for certification for hiring, promotions, or performance appraisals” (p. 2).

Debra Cohen, director of research for the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), says certification adds value to one’s credentials and benefits not just the holder
but his organization and the HR profession as well. In *Is Certification in Your Future*, Cohen (2001) lists seven benefits to SHRM members and non-SHRM affiliated HR professionals who obtain the Professional Human Resource and/or Senior Professional Human Resource Certification:

1. It provides an independent assessment of an HR professional's knowledge to do a job
2. It raises the professional stature of the individual who holds the certification
3. It increases the knowledge base of the organization in which the holder resides
4. It increases and broadens the holder’s learning base
5. It may provide an alternative to a graduate degree
6. It may give job applicants an edge over other applicants who are not certified
7. It can act as a knowledge refresher when preparing for an exam. (D. Cohen, 2001, p. 2).

Cohen further states that professional certification sends a clear message to one’s employer, colleagues, and other employees in the organization that he is challenging himself to meet nationally recognized standards. Dieterle (1996) and Petropulos (1996) in their respective works list personal recognition, job advancement, skill development, and professional accomplishment as additional reasons for pursuing certification. Certification also provides an opportunity to learn, grow professionally, and reach a recognized standard of excellence (“Foundation Receives,” 2002).

Certification is also a mechanism by which one can establish his credentials (Hutchinson & Fleischman, 2003; Ordiorne, 1983; Petropulos, 1996). In *Three Keys to Professional Supervision*, Odiorne (1983) states there are many ways a supervisor can establish the proper credentials or a higher level of professionalism in supervision.

The first of these of course, and the one which counts most, is doing a good job as a supervisor. If your results are good, you will probably not have to present any diplomas or certificates testifying to your professionalism. On the contrary, no matter how many diplomas or degrees you have, if you don’t do a good job, they won’t count for much.

At the same time, the process of obtaining a degree or certificate can at the same time widen and enrich your vital skills as a professional. . . .
exam can lead to your being certified as a “Certified Manager” which demonstrates objectively that you have completed a basic course of study, passed a qualifying exam, and have achieved at least the basic level of competence required to offer yourself as a professional supervisor (Ordione, 1983, p.12).

To pass today’s certification programs, one must have practical working knowledge in addition to in-depth knowledge in a given field (Musthaler, 1997). The information technology (IT) field offers an array of certifications programs that help IT professionals maintain the level of knowledge required to keep pace with the growing challenges and rapid changes occurring in the field as the result of advancements in technology (Damore, 2002; Musthaler, 1997). Vendor-specific certification programs, such as those offered by Microsoft, Cisco, and Norvell, offer a number of benefits to IT network managers that include in-depth product training, new product information, debugging tips, exclusive technical support options, and other enhanced services available from the vendor. Combined with solid working knowledge of internetworking, vendor-specific certifications can result in other benefits such as better job opportunities and pay (Musthaler, 1997). Workplace issues faced by HR managers are also becoming more complex. Managing this change requires highly trained human resource professionals—professionalism that is most objectively exhibited by certification (Wiley, n.d.).

Certification can also serve notice that an individual or business has meet exacting standards and others can feel confident in conducting business with them. The National Minority Supplier Development Council and the Women’s Business Enterprise National Council (WEBNC) Certification for the past 25 years have been working to establish a national standard for the certification of women-owned businesses.

As a result of the work of these associations, the Texas Department of Transportation now requires a woman-owned business to be certified by one of these associations in order to bid on state contracts. This certification officially designates a business is 51 percent owned by a woman or women and helps the state in its efforts to do more business with women and minority-owned firms. Though certification does not guarantee these
companies any business, it helps to open doors that have been traditionally closed to them. The WBENC was formed in 1997 in association with four regional organizations. It has over 30 corporate sponsors and has certified 1,500 women-owned businesses through its regional affiliates. Over 200 companies now accept its certification (Fraza, 1998, p. 2).

Some certifications carry more clout than others. For example, the Certified Management Accountant (CMA) certification does not have nearly the legal rights of a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) (Martin, 1997). However, it provides something that is important to any professional designation: recognition one has demonstrated through an independent test a mastery of a body of knowledge. In addition, both the CMA and CPA require holders to maintain their knowledge through a process of continuing education as well as adherence to a prescribed code of ethics.

There are many who believe employees do not have to be certified to be proficient, but there are others who believe certification demonstrates an employee’s commitment to go above and beyond stated requirements for the job (Gilhooly, 2002; Senno, 2001; “You’re Certifiable,” 2001). Earning certification is seen as a badge of honor, not to mention a path to career advancement and increased compensation. Certified individuals may have promotional opportunities that are not open to their uncertified counterparts (Gilhooly, 2001; Hartman, 2002; Petropulos, 1996). Holding a certification may also enhance job qualifications.

During times of economic decline, careers can be threatened through layoffs and reductions in force. The capital in a professional’s career bank that can help carry him through such situations is proof of competence, experience, and demonstrated knowledge (Bell, 2001; Connolly & Yager, 2000). Certification, which can demonstrate a person’s knowledge, competence and experience, can be a form of insurance for one’s career.

“The main reason we’ve seen an increase in applicants for certification is job security,” says Trisha Neff, executive director of the American Society of Transportation and Logistics. You can’t assume anymore that your company is going to keep you around forever, and being certified by a professional
organization is evidence to your employer that you are dedicated to your profession (Connolly & Yager, 2000, p. 4).

Professionals are being forced more and more by market conditions (downsizing, the increased use of outsourcing, and the use of temporary employees) to take personal control over their careers. Certification may also make it possible for one to more easily transition to another position. “Having this designation on one’s business card, e-mail signature, and stationery gives one a positive feeling and more importantly provides instant creditability in the eyes of co-workers, employers, and customers” (Walter, 2003, p. 2).

In Nowicki: Certification Indicates Continued Professional Growth (2002) Michael Nowicki states:

While I’d like to say that certification has helped me get jobs, promotions, and raises in my particular case, I have no evidence of that. However, I do know the 1998 Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA) Certification Value Study supports the benefits of certification. We know that all else being equal, the edge in new hires and promotions goes to those who are certified. To me, certification means that I have studied and mastered a body of knowledge that my peers think is important.

My HFMA certification gives me creditability in a field that requires no license, or degree for that matter. . . . A professional certification means that we’ve mastered and maintained through continuing education a specialized body of knowledge developed by peers. Certification also requires continuing education to maintain the body of knowledge that we’ve mastered.

For those of us with a non-healthcare degree, professional certification gives us instant creditability in the healthcare industry. Physicians tend to be board-certified in their specialty, with certification in HFMA we become board-certified in healthcare financial management. This is something with which the physician can identify. For those of us with healthcare degrees, professional certification gives us a specialized body of knowledge of more depth and, in many cases, of more currency than our healthcare degrees (“Nowicki: Certification,” 2002, p. 2).

Certification provides a method by which employers can document competence. While licensure measures entry-level competence, certification validates specialty knowledge, experience, and clinical judgment (Foden, 1995; Fitzpatrick, 2003; Hartman, 2002). It demonstrates proficiency in an area of quality at a specific point in time. Certification is not
a license or registration. Rather, it is an opportunity for an individual to demonstrate he comprehends the concepts associated with a particular quality body of knowledge (Nowicki, 2002; Hartman, 2002). Since the creation of the first certification exams for nurse-anesthetists in 1945, approximately 400,000 American and Canadian nurses have achieve certification in more than 130 specialties.

Validating the certified nurse’s specialized knowledge and experience promotes continued competency and provides a patient safeguard. Nursing views certification as a mark of excellence, one that requires rigor and competence to attain and maintain. In a time of increased scrutiny by the media and the public, certification provides an important indicator of quality nursing care. With increased competition, hospitals can market certification as a key differentiator between themselves and others hospitals in the community. The sense of achievement, professional validation, and confidence enhances certified nurses’ careers. We should support, recognize, and reward certification for its impact on patient care and for its influence on nurse satisfaction and retention (McBeth, Koerner & Ethridge, (1993) p. 3).

Certification also serves as a form of self-regulation and is a step toward establishing standards for a profession that are typically developed and administered by members of the profession itself (Petropulos, 1996). While taking the certification examination is usually voluntarily, successful passage attests to the level of proficiency one has achieved (A. Cohen, 1995; D. Cohen, 2001; Eggert, 2001).

Certification formally recognizes an individual’s attained skill and reflects competence in a specified area of practice (Berta, 2002; D. Cohen, 2001; Redd & Alexander, 1997). An individual’s existing level of self-esteem stimulates performance to the levels needed to achieve a perceived outcome or reward, the level of self-esteem is recharged or increased, and the individual is stimulated to continue that level of performance. The performance in actuality becomes the vehicle for goal achievement (Hofmann, 1984; Redd & Alexander, 1997). For example, if an RN chooses to become certified in a specialty practice to fulfill a strong need for personal achievement, he places a high value on being certified. Once certification is achieved, the positive feedback from supervisors and co-workers supports
one’s personal achievement need. In addition to meeting a personal need, the praise and rewards increase the level of self-esteem, thus stimulating the individual to continue the current level of performance (Redd & Alexander, 1997).

Successfully completing credentialing and recertification processes is a testament to one’s commitment to lifelong learning (Dolan, 1997). Certification prepares one to do a better job for his clients, coworkers, and organization. The credential itself helps distinguish one as a leader in the field. Some employers have found the certification process to be a means of elevating employees to new heights. “Over and over again, companies tell me that they first look at the candidate’s education. . . . They next looked at their registrations and certifications, which demonstrated that the candidate was someone who continued to learn and excel in their profession” (Boyken, 2003, p. 1).

In some instances an employee may be required to obtain a specific certification before he is eligible for promotion (Connolly & Yager, 2000; Hutchinson & Fleischman, 2003; Walter, 2003).

Certification promotes accountability, identifies to public and professional peers those individuals who have met specific standards, advances cooperation among groups and agencies involved in professional credentialing, and encourages continuing professional growth and development (Weinrach & Thomas, 1993). Certification does not replace experience but it does augment it, and it can help compensate for a lack of it. It certainly shows that the candidate cares enough to keep current and has the initiative to study and pass technical exams (“You’re Certifiable,” 2000). It demonstrates a serious dedication to learning and shows one is willing and able to test himself against standards someone else has defined.

Many certification programs evolve from an interest by association leadership in establishing nationally recognized benchmarks of performance for their profession or industry.
A well-developed certification program is one of the most important services that an association can provide to the public. It establishes an organization as an important standard-setting body that has defined competence in a particular discipline. It also provides an opportunity to members for recognition and professional development (Hamm & Early, 1994, p. 2).

Other forces that lead to the creation of certification programs include threats of competition from related organizations and the natural interest of associations in developing additional membership services and revenue sources.

... I think the certification process is as important, if not more important, to the association. I think HFMA (Healthcare Financial Management Association) is fortunate to be able to identify the specialties in its own field of healthcare financial management, then define and maintain the body of knowledge in that specialty through a participative process and test its membership on the body of knowledge. If NFMA (National Financial Management Association) does not continue to take a lead in certifying it members, then the alternatives will be competing organizations certifying our members or the government licensing them. I believe that either of those two alternatives would not be in our best interest (Norwicki, 2002, p. 5).

Trade associations and professional societies often take the lead in developing certification programs as a means of competency recognition (Hamm & Early, 1994). Establishing a certification program requires painstaking analysis of such issues as member needs and preferences, marketing and publicity strategies, budgeting needs, exam development issues, and test-site considerations.

Many authors support the value of certification in increasing the holder's earning potential (Berry, 2001; Roberts, 2003; Roberts & Pepe, 2001; Senno, 2001; Watt, 1999; "You're Certifiable," n.d.). Roberts, (2003) conducted a survey of 300 business executives who were evenly divided among small, midsize, and large companies to gauge their opinions on how certifications fit into the bidding process for their IT projects. The results of this study, reported in the August 2003 edition of CRN in Customers Weigh in Most Heavily on the Side of Experience, revealed companies of all sizes require certified personnel for some of their technology projects and that many of them are willing to pay a premium for the privilege.
As a group, three-quarters of respondents said they require, as part of the request-for-proposal (RFP) process that certified technicians are assigned to work on their IT projects. Nearly one-third of respondents said they include this requirement in every RFP they write, while another 44 percent said they make the requirement only some of the time, depending on the type of project.

Fifty-nine percent of all respondents who require the use of certified personnel at least some of the time said they would pay a higher price in dollar terms for doing so. The figure climbed as high as 75 percent for small businesses (Roberts, 2003, p. 1).

Roberts (2003) also found being certified can figure prominently in monetary compensation when it comes to specialized networking and internet-related skills that are in particular demand. He found the median level of compensation for a Cisco Certified Internet-Working Expert, for example, was $112,000 in 2001, 75 percent higher than the $64,000 earned by a non-certified technician. Johnson, in Certification Still A Hot Ticket (1999), supports the findings of Robert’s study. Johnson found that Microsoft Certified Systems Engineers or solution developers earn an average of $7,000 a year more than their non-certified counterparts. Those holding Microsoft certification earned an average of $6,000 a year, or nine percent more, than non-Microsoft certified respondents. A study of Norvell certification revealed that a little more than half of companies with Norvell-certified staff pay a premium directly related to the certification, at an average of 14 percent (“You’re Certifiable,” n.d.).

Higher salaries and bonuses paid to certified professionals support the fact that many managers view certification as a powerful asset (Brandel, 2002; Gilhooly, 2001). The certifications with the strongest growth, including project management, security, database and network operating systems, are earning IT professionals bonuses of as much as 13 percent of base pay. Further indicative of the value of certification is the fact that IT managers are willing to hire certified workers who don’t have traditional degrees.
The IT field is not the only one in which certified professionals can earn top dollar. Paralegals holding the Certified Legal Assistant Certification earn an average of $2,300 more in compensation nationwide than non-certified paralegals ("Benefits Of," n.d.; Widoff, 1995).

Certification is common in practically every profession and provides several benefits. It enhances its creditability (A. Cohen, 1995; “Should Your,” 1995; Berry, 2001; J. Brown, n.d.;), provides a blueprint for growth (“You’re Certifiable,” n.d.), and enhances visibility for the administering association (A. Cohen, 2002; D. Brown, 2002; Petropulos, 1996). The Chicago-based National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF) created the Foodservice Management Professional (FMP) certification program in the early 1990s to give managers a standardized, national credential that could attest to their knowledge and skills (Berta, 2002). “The goal was to increase the professionalism of the restaurant industry, but for years the industry paid little attention to the FMP certification. In recent years the NRAEF has seen an increase in applications and certifications as companies such as Buffets, Inc.; Monical’s Pizza; Buffalo World Wings; Walt Disney World, Co.; Palm Management Corp.; and Compass Group put their executives and unit-level managers through the program” (Berta, 2002, p. 1).

Certification can establish higher standards for the profession. For instance, some in the sales and marketing industry have recognized a need to improve the image of salespeople that has traditionally been one of skepticism.

Many in the sales and marketing world have recognized a need to clean up the image of salespeople. One growing means to this end was certification—establishing a program that would require salespeople to have a certain amount of experience, go through some education seminars and courses, pass a sales competency exam, and agree to a code of conduct.

It’s vital to give salespeople an identity that shows they’ve met certain standards and agree to perform their jobs ethically. . . . Sales certification fits in with the culture of quality prevalent today (A. Cohen, 1995, p. 2).
Certification can also provide a blueprint for those interested in professional growth in their chosen profession. “One of the key values of certification is its use to define a learning path. . . When you pursue certification, you will be provided with a blueprint of what you need to know to be competent” (“You’re Certifiable,” n.d., p. 3).

The standards of advanced nursing practice have traditionally been maintained through the establishment and accreditation of specialty practice and educational programs. Multiple nursing specialty associations currently offer certification programs that regulate the qualifications of the practitioner and the competence of advanced skills and capacities (McBeth, Koerner & Ethridge, 1993).

The recognition of certification can benefit employers in several ways. First, it can be used as a tool to identify applicants who have the level of knowledge and experience needed for the job (Gilhooly, 2002). Certification is a way of an organization to specify the category of talent needed. There is a monetary benefit, be it real or perceived, that individuals have come to expect if they possess a certain level or type of certification, especially in the IT field (“Benefits Of,” n.d.; Connolly and Yager, 2000).

Certification can prove beneficial to both the employer and the employee. For the employer certification provides a clear measurement of specific abilities. It improves competence, increases productivity, and adds value to on-the-job training, as well as generating better morale and increased employee loyalty (D. Brown, 2002). Training costs are reduced, cutting longer-term college tuition-reimbursement fees. For their part, employees benefit from training and resulting competence that leads to higher salaries and promotions. Increased creditability, self-confidence, and a sense of empowerment may follow (Brandel, 2002).

Recognition and promotion of certification within an organization can serve as an employee retention strategy. By encouraging certification and providing incentives for employee to pursue it, such as tuition assistance and time off from work to attend classes or
offering classes on-site, can be a good strategy for retaining skilled employees, especially if other options, such as bigger bonuses and longer vacations are not an option (Earls, 1998). “We endorse certification as a retention strategy and offer education reimbursement, says John Madigan, vice-president of IT human resources at the Hartford Financial Services Group in Hartford, Connecticut. IT people like to grow their skills, and one of the things that attracts them is professional development” (Gilhooly, 2001, p. 2).

Certification can serve as a marketing tool for an organization to help it stand above the competition (Fitzpatrick, 2003). For instance, some hospitals and other medical treatment facilities openly display the certificates of certified nurses and other members of their staff as a way of informing patients they will be treated by highly qualified professionals which can be a key differentiator between themselves and similar facilities in the community. In a time of increased scrutiny by the media and the public, certification provides an important indicator of quality nursing care. All organizations—whether they are for profit, not-for-profit, or government oriented want people who can be trusted to make decisions and act in a manner that has as its foundation a deep sense of ethical behavior (Martin, 1997).

Certification may also provide justification for some professions to charge higher fees for their services and generate greater customer confidence (“Benefits Of,” n.d.). Attorneys with advanced specialties and credentials often have higher billable hourly rates and can attract clients desirous of those advanced skills. Even better, clients generally expect to pay a higher billing rate for these specialties. Certification can also give clients greater confidence in the firm (Siegel, 2002). An example of how certification can be used to generate customer confidence may be found in the Heating, Venting and Air Conditioning field, which offers a Certified HVAC Technician Program.

A person with certification shows he has taken the time to be better . . . Contractors should advertise the fact that they have certified technicians in order to put consumers at ease. Some of our customers have recognized the North American Technician Excellence and it gives them a certain level of
comfort. . . And it gives us comfort that our technicians are very experienced (Siegel, 2002, p. 4).

Opposition to Certification

While many authors tout the advantages and value of certification, it is not without its detractors (Connolly & Yager, 2000; Hamm & Early, 1994; Post, 2002). Much of the criticism of certification centers on its relationship to competency, the body of knowledge upon which evaluation is based, and lack of standardization among certificate-granting associations.

The question often arises as to whether certification equates to competence (Glassie, 2003). In other words, does passing an examination and meeting other criteria for certification demonstrate the certified individual is a competent professional? Glassie (2003) characterizes certified individuals as those “who have been found to meet criteria of competence rather than individuals who are competent” (p. 2). The distinction is an important one. A number of issues lead to the conclusion it is unwise to equate certification with competency

1) **Certification cannot guarantee or assure competence.**
   It can only measure factors that tend to indicate competence, such as whether a candidate for certification is more or less likely to be competent. Further, attaining certification often reflects an individual's determination and diligence in seeking such status, undertaking the proper preparation, spending the time and money to apply, and so forth. Conversely, it is undeniable that many professionals who are universally recognized as competent by peers, clients, customers, or institutions have simply not sought certification in voluntary programs offered by nongovernmental organizations such as organizations or boards affiliated with associations. For a program to represent without qualification that “certified individuals are competent” may often imply that those not certified are not competent. This can be misleading.

2) **It may not be possible in an examination setting to accurately and precisely measure competence.**
   In fact, most individuals under-perform on certificate examinations because an examination is usually taken in such an artificial environment. In real life, individual have time to think, ask colleagues or supervisors for
advice, conduct research, tentatively try reversible approaches and correct them if they don’t work. The added pressures of anxiety, time, and other stresses that do not correlate directly with everyday professional endeavors are also present.

3) **Little definitive guidance of whether certification equates with competence is available.**
   
   In 1990 the U.S. Supreme Court (Peel v. Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission of Illinois, 496 U.S. 91, 101) did address the meaning of certification in an analogous context where the issue was the permissibility of advertising a lawyer’s specialty area of practice. The court said: “A claim of certification is not an unverifiable opinion of the ultimate quality of a lawyer’s work or a promise of success, but is simply a fact, albeit one with multiple predicates, from which a consumer may or may not draw an inference of the likely qualities of an attorney’s work in a given area of practice.” A footnote to the Supreme Court’s decision went on to say that “of course, many lawyers who do not have certification or do not publicize certification may, in fact, be more able than others who do claim such a credential. Thus it is recognized that certification is only one factor in measuring competence, and it is by no means the determining factor.

4) **An examination by itself, or even a list of qualifications and criteria, cannot accurately measure competence.**
   
   Psychometrically sound examinations can be merely predictive of a tendency within a range to show that a person has demonstrated the knowledge or skill considered by consensus as necessary to perform certain professional functions (Glassie, 2003, p. 2).

Certification provides only a tendency toward, not a guarantee of competence. It should not lead anyone to conclude that only certified professionals are competent or that non-certified professionals are incompetent (McBeth et al, 1993; Weinrach & Thomas, 1993). For credentialing associations, the focus on competence adds perceived value to their credentialing programs, but clearly does not give carte blanch to tout in promotional literature or other publications certification as a definitive measure of competence (Connolly & Yager, 2000). “It is impossible to prove that the certification process makes a better worker, vis-à-vis someone who had not been certified. Exams, after all, don’t test intuition, character, work ethic, responsibility, leadership, or even decision-making capacity” (Klane, 1996, p. 3). “Being certified doesn’t mean I am skilled in my field. It only means I can
memorize for tests or that I am a good writer” (Connolly & Yager, 2000, p. 3). John Berry in Certification: Is it Worth the Price, is not sure certification will deliver the improved status or image proponents claim it will.

I was shocked to realize that I know nothing about the level or currency of the certification of my accountant, lawyer, doctor, cardiac specialist, plumber, auto mechanic, or any other professional whose services I use. My perception of them is unaltered by their certification or lack of it and that includes my librarian. If my librarian were certified, I probably would never know (Berry, 2001, p. 2).

Another issue opponents of certification point to is the conflict that can exist between personal and professionals standards. In the The Union Stake in National Teacher Certification, Holland (2002) writes:

You probably have your own standards of what you consider to be good teaching, or you may agree with another set of teaching standards. Although these teaching standards may be helpful to you in developing your teaching practice, they should not be your focus during the National Certification Process. Your sole focus should be the National Board Standards because it is those, and only those standards, on which your work will be evaluated.

That is remarkably cynical advice. It suggests that even a master teacher who assists students in making huge achievement gains should forget everything she knows is true, unless it happens to dovetail with National Board for Professional Teaching Standards favored practice of teachers being facilitators instead of teachers being teachers (Holland, 2002, p. 2).

Another knock against certification is that the body of knowledge upon which it is based can be too narrowly focused. This is especially true in the IT field where vendor-specific certifications are prevalent.

Most IT-related certification programs are just schemes to lock companies into a given vendor’s proprietary technology, says Tom Yeager of the InfoWorld Test Center. Things weren’t always like they are now. There was a time when certificates existed primarily to let workers advertise their proficiency in a narrowly defined skill set, as in WordPerfect proficiency, for example. Later, certificates led to the formation of vendor-endorsed cliques, and there were usually many such cliques within a company. But nowadays, employers are flat-out denying jobs to applicants who won’t pledge themselves to a particular vendor.
That’s not good for anyone except the vendor. This situation is a lot like the authorized reseller and cooperative advertising programs that many manufacturers use. According to the manufacturers, these programs protect the resellers by keeping uninformed, low-margin resellers out of the market. Balderdash. What they really do is give manufacturers the power to set selling prices and freeze out competitors, and that’s exactly what vendor-issued certificates do (Connolly & Yager, 2000, p. 2).

To date there have been no comprehensive, independent studies of the effectiveness and value of certification, although vendors have sponsored several that seem to show certification in a positive light. Despite the lack of empirical data, most managers accept that certification has a role in developing and managing an IT organization (Earls, 1998).

H. Kent Craig, in PMP Certification: Is it Really Worth Anything, closely examines the Project Management Professional Certification, a program based on the Project Management Institute body of knowledge and is not specific to any one industry or trade:

I guarantee you’ll find a whole bunch of statements of principles and facts within it that you’ll disagree. You may even disagree vehemently on some, but guess what, PMI doesn’t care. You’ll have to adjust your thinking to suit what they say the standards are or you won’t be able to pass the exam. (Craig, 2002, p. 2).

Several professional organizations for human resource practitioners offer certification programs. Whether HR practitioners are looking to upgrade their resume or broaden their background, certificate programs in human resources are widely available (D. Brown “Canada Gets,” 2002; D. Brown, “Raising The,” 2002; Wiley, 1992). But do these programs offer the in-depth background needed to demonstrate technology skills required to administer today’s HR function? The answer is no according to Paul Glister. In HR Certification’s Technology Gap, Glister points to this as an acute problem.

Corporations are turning to more sophisticated human resource information systems such as Oracle and PeopleSoft to handle everything from benefits administration to payroll processing. What’s missing in HR certification is a bridge to technology for the non-specialist. In contrast, most HR certifications attest to a non-technological body of knowledge that makes up the core competencies of HR (Glister, 2000, p. 1).
Another problem with certification occurs when there are multiple associations serving the same profession that certify individuals using different criteria (Hamm & Early, 1994). In Should Your Salespeople be Certified, Andy Cohen illustrates this problem:

Two sales associations, Sales and Marketing Executives International and the National Association of Sales Professionals, one manufacturers rep organization, and many industry-specific institutions have their own certification programs for salespeople. The result has been confusion, a lack of knowledge and consensus about the need for certification and some companies such as IBM and Kodak designing their own certification programs (A. Cohen, 1995, p. 2).

Conflict with certification can occur when a program emerges where none existed before:

It is essential to recognize that some forces will resist any kind of change and other forces will facilitate the change. Seasoned professionals with distinguished careers, for example, might claim credentialing serves no true purpose given all that they have accomplished without it. Others might champion a new program because they view it as a way to lend additional credence and prestige to the field (Hartman, 2002, p. 3).

Weinrach and Thomas (1993) have criticized the National Board for Certified Counselors primarily in relation to problems created by the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor credential:

Many philosophers and practical issues were raised regarding the counselor-certification concept, among them (a) whether certified counselors were really more competent than non-certified counselors (b) whether the commissioners on certification boards truly reflect the views of professional associations (c) whether the monies spent on certifications could be put to better use (e.g. lobbying, research, information distribution) (d) whether counselors were opting for certification instead of professional association membership (e) whether the certification bodies had wrestled from the universities and professional association the power of credentialing (f) whether the existence of the certification credential was reinforcing the use of somewhat arbitrary (and probably meaningless) criteria upon which universities and other employers were basing their hires (g) whether the fixed criteria for certification restricted the development of the counseling profession and the menu of courses that professors and students could offer and take (h) whether the creation of certification mechanisms were really motivated by a concern for client welfare and (l) whether certification bodies afforded any protection, legal or otherwise, for clients.

In virtually all of these areas the certification process was found to be suspect (Weinrach and Thomas, 1993, p. 1).
Holland, in *The Union Stake in National Teacher Certification*, makes the point that board certification suffers from weaknesses of evidence and the board’s inability to ensure authenticity. Certification, he notes:

is based on how candidates present themselves to the board, not how well they teach. The board does not assess how much a teacher’s students have learned. It does not visit classrooms or consult with candidate’s supervisors. The board instead attempts to judge from afar, relying on portfolios and assessment center activities. Portfolio entries can be manipulated to show the teacher favorably, while the board has no outside information that would permit it to check their accuracy. As for assessment center activities, the board frequently tips its hand, revealing a great deal about questions and answers it expects in the advance materials mailed to the candidates. Even when it does not, the board does not take the most basic precautions to preserve the integrity of the assessment, but instead administers the same exercise to different candidates on different test dates (Holland, 2002, p. 3).

Another problem area is the growing number of certifications available in some fields. Damore in *Certifiably Insane* writes:

You’ve got Microsoft’s MCSE and MCSA; Cisco’s CCNA and CCIE, and Check Point’s CCSA, CCQE, and CCSE. Let’s not forget about Norvell’s CNE and CDE; Red Hat’s RHCE, and Citrix’s CCA, to name just a few. While individually each of these certifications provides critical knowledge, it is becoming impossible for small business solution providers to obtain the number of certifications required for a multi-vendor project. What’s more, some businesses say the preponderance of certifications is becoming an administrative nightmare, and that they need to hire an extra employee just to keep track of the various certifications and when their employees need to be recertified. Small businesses cannot afford to take on those costs. The small business model simply does not allow a solution provider to hire that many employees, especially given the cost of benefits and salaries for highly skilled technical personnel (Damore, 2002, p. 1).

Determining the validity of a certification can also be problematic (Karr, 2001). One point at issue is the need for employers and employees to verify IT certifications in terms of qualifications and authenticity. At present, no central authority exists to validate certifications, and the validation burden falls on the employer, who needs to check with training providers. Microsoft stands out as the only vendor with a feedback mechanism for employers, who can check certifications at Microsoft’s website.
Penn, in *Records Management Professionals: Suffering from Self-Inflicted Wounds*, believes associations promote certification as a way of generating revenue and justifying their existence.

At a recent gathering of records management professionals, I overheard a conversation in which a certified records manager (CRM) candidate referred to the CRM certification as a “rinky-dink credential.” I was not shocked. I have been a CRM since the Institute of Certified Records Managers (ICRM) was established. I served on the Examination Development Committee for five years and was a member of its Board of Regents for eight years.

The ICRM was established in 1975 to certify persons as proficient in the information and records management profession through the administration of a comprehensive examination. That’s all! That’s all it was created for! Despite the lofty wording of its original mission statement, the ICRM was not supposed to be a professional association as is ARMA International. It was not supposed to hold conferences or seminars. It was not supposed to educate people.

Credentials guarantee nothing! There are credentialed individuals in virtually all professions who cannot make a decent living. A credential is a mark of achievement—nothing else. Granted it is a significant achievement. But an achievement, in an academic or technical context, is but one aspect of overall success (Penn, 1994, p. 5).

Some authors question whether the demand for applicants or current employees to be certified or obtain certification is as widespread as some would have others believe.

There is no clear evidence that employers are demanding that paralegals be “certified.” The current standard in the industry is a college degree and/or certification of paralegal study. Paralegals who are certified by examination currently offer no “added value” to their employers because they cannot, by law, provide expanded service to clients. A credential is not a substitute for anything. If an individual has intelligence, ability, street smarts, a winning smile, and happens to be in the right place at the right time, then a credential will certainly be a nice addition to that list. (Widoff, 1995, p. 2).

Some organizations place more emphasis and value on certification. Muller (1993) quotes several logistics managers that question the value of certification when it comes to promotions:

Management does not yet recognize certification and that there is no correlation between certification and promotability. Charles Jones of Shasta Corporation sees no value in certification, “I see no benefit in it other than it
being a plaque on the wall, Jones believes that companies simply do not place any value on certification. Very few companies require certification, especially in the logistics field. Recognition of certification within an organization is really a function of the corporate culture.

The value of certification in terms of applicability and worth has also been called into question. With certification and one dollar you can get a cup of coffee in this country. The demand for certification, he maintains, is at entry-level and lower mid-management. Beyond that, I can assure you that nobody asks to see certification. How does government, industry, anyone know whether a credential has meaning or value, or whether it’s well founded or poor? There are, however, a number of other cost-related, value-related certifications out there, and some of them are pure garbage (Muller, 1993, p. 4).

Another argument against certification is that it can be a time-consuming and invasive process (Berry, 2001; Hamm and Early, 1994).

The NTWBC and other certifying agencies typically visit each applicants site to review tax returns, financial statements, lease agreements, stick certificates, client references, and payroll records—whatever they need to prove that the business is owned and operated by a woman. It’s pages and pages of forms and costs anywhere from $150 to $300 depending on the agency, in addition to yearly fees for recertification (Fraza, 1998, p. 3).

While making the case for questioning the relationship between certification and competence it is recognized there is value to be found in the certification process. A tendency toward competence is quite valuable to all parties involved in providing, obtaining, or paying for professional services. Along with other indications of professional standing—references, experience, academic qualifications, firm reputation, awards, and the like—voluntary nongovernmental certification can be a crucial factor in identifying qualified individuals.

**Certification as a Substitute for Formal Education or Experience**

Education is a life-long process. It does not stop once one has earned a degree (Dolan, 1997). A formal degree forms the bedrock for a process of life-long learning (Atkinson,
People in all occupations need to continually improve their competency and keep their knowledge and skills up to date to ensure they are performing their jobs at an optimal level. Certification is not meant to replace or overshadow formal education, but it does highlight one's accomplishments and demonstrates one has expertise and knowledge in a core area (Hofmann, 1984; Karr, 2001).

Michael Norwicki, associate professor of health administration at Southwest Texas State University, has identified the role of certification in expanding or building on the formal education process.

An academic degree, in most cases, means that we've been exposed to a general body of knowledge developed by academics. For programs that have exit exams, it may even mean that we've mastered that general body of knowledge before graduation. Degrees also reflect certain character traits of the recipients, such as discipline, perseverance, sacrifice, and hard work, to name a few. Degrees are well recognized by employers. The disadvantage to degrees is that there is no continuing education required, and in a field like healthcare financial management, the knowledge represented by the degree can become outdated very quickly. A professional certification means that we've mastered and maintained through continuing education a specialized body of knowledge developed by peers. Certification also requires continuing education to maintain the body of knowledge that we've mastered. (Nowicki: Certification," 2002, p. 4).

Formal education degrees are just as important now as they always have been; however, they do not represent the ultimate in terms of measuring the capability, competency, and currency of an individual’s capabilities (Hofmann, 1984; Kraus, 1998). Professional certification programs measure job-related competencies on an ongoing basis and provide a measure of an individual's ability to perform his duties. Many practicing accountants have a business education that involved rigorous coursework over four to five years that culminate in a degree in accounting. This education forms the foundation of accounting knowledge that positions an accountant for a process of lifetime learning.

Most modern degree programs provide the opportunity for accounting students to develop oral, written, and interpersonal communication skills as well as exposure to organizational skills and technology. But an accounting degree alone is insufficient for many accountants to achieve their career...
goals. Many accountants desire further recognition of their ongoing professional knowledge and wish to carve out specialization niches by obtaining professional certifications, some of which may be required to engage in public practice. For these persons, formal accounting education represents only the first step in pursuing professional education (Hutchinson & Fleischman, 2003, p. 2).

Certification should not be viewed as a replacement for formal education.

“All the certification that people are trying to get under their belts—that’s fine. But some don’t have a college education and lack the basic foundation for the business world” says Yolanda Garcia, project manager of security at Schlumberger Network Solutions, in Houston, Texas. “I’m talking about basic business writing, communication and organizational skills.” (Roberts and Pepe, 2001, p. 2).

The growing number of certifications in the IT field and the salaries being paid to some individuals with certain certifications are making some professionals favor certification over formal education. In fact, some individuals have sought to receive academic credit for their certifications.

At the American Council of Education (ACE), Jo Ann Robinson, director of corporate programs, says phones are ringing off the hook as certificate holders call to see if the certificates they hold have been evaluated for college credit.

Between March 2000 and February 2001, the ACE Transcript Service reports an increase of more than 100,000 participants. Certifications do not replace degrees or experience, Robinson says. “Both the degree and the certificate are valuable. They’re not mutually exclusive, she says. However, certificates are developing a credible presence on resumes and in the office. “Certifications speak to quality, says Robinson, They are becoming one of the IT industry’s formal benchmarks for competency. Traditionally, IT pros have had varied backgrounds, perhaps derived from on-the-job training or degrees in computer science. Nowadays, there is concern that IT education may be outdated by the time of delivery is a source of concern for employers (Karr, 2001, p. 2).

Another indicator of the value of certification is the fact that IT managers are willing to hire certified workers who don’t have traditional degrees. “As many as 40 to 60 percent of the people taking CompTIA’s entry level technician certification exams don’t have two-year degrees, says Frank Linhart, director of certification for the Chicago-based organization” (Gilhooly, 2001, p. 2).
From another perspective, some professional associations are taking formal education into account and are accepting it in lieu of experience in their eligibility criteria. For example, the American Society of Quality requires candidates to have a minimum amount of experience and formal training (Rowe, 2002). Candidates need at least three years of experience to take the exam, but those with formal technical training (such as that available through the military or technical trade school) or those with technical academic degrees may waive up to two years of work experience.

More and more companies are beginning to place increased emphasis on a candidate’s education as opposed to his experience. This is because the completion of one’s educational pursuits demonstrates one has the determination to finish what he started (Boyken, 2003). They next looked at their registrations and certifications, which demonstrated the candidate is someone who continued to learn and excel in their position.

A study of over 300 business executives who participated in a 2003 CRN Certification Study reported that experience still figures prominently in their decision to hiring contract IT professionals.

Fifty–eight percent of all 300 executives surveyed said experience was definitely more important than certification when it comes to the technicians working on their IT projects. Another 38 percent said experience was equally as important as certification. Only four percent of respondents said certification was more important than experience. The two sets of results showing that a majority of businesses require certified personnel even while citing experience as being at least as important as certification might seem inconsistent at first. The paradox is resolved however by the finding that 73 percent of businesses surveyed agree with the following statement – that the main value of having certified technicians work on projects is to ensure they have a core set of competencies (Roberts, 2003, p. 1).

When it comes to certification versus experience in the hiring process, opinions can be mixed.

Certifications are what I look for when we’re hiring. . . It takes some effort for someone to go through training and take a test to get certified. Cary Waddell of Dean Systems in Denver takes an alternative view and believes that experience is the most important factor when selecting a candidate. “I could
care less if someone is a Microsoft Certified System Engineer or has any other certification. I’ve seen a lot of people who have the credentials but don’t know what they are doing (Roberts & Pepe, 2001, p. 2).

Knowledge, provable employment track record, and personal references in mechanical contracting are still 90 percent of what gets one’s foot in the door to a potential position as a project manager most of the time (Craig, 2002). “You can have all the professional certifications and degrees that you can earn, but if you don’t have a successful track record forget it” (Craig, 2002, p.2). “Possessing the Project Management Professional Certification or any other certification or degree simply becomes pretty wallpaper for the office you do not have” (Glistter, 2000, p. 3).

Those desiring to learn a new skill, especially those who are new to their chosen field, should be wary of trying to use certification to jump-start their careers. Career changers with no experience would be better off putting their efforts in another direction to get started.

If they are willing to spend the money on a certification class, then they are better off going to a company and working for free or at an intern’s salary for six months to get hands-on experience. Hopefully, that will lead to a full-time job, which will probably lead to a better position or career than having a certification with no experience. When certification is listed as a requirement (rarely) or a plus, the job description usually specifies a certain number of years of experience and a number of other skills (Senno, 2001, p. 2).

Certification programs are not regulated, so they represent a free market from various sources (Eggert, 2001). The Information Processing Industry requires a certification program like the Institute for Certification of Computing Professionals (ICCP) that covers 80 percent of industry activities and is totally generic and non-vendor oriented. A certification program should also have an experience requirement prior to issuing a certificate (Eggert, 2001). The ICCP requires an applicant have at least four years of actual experience before a certificate can be issued. The association will waive two years of experience based upon educational achievement or passing the Associate Computing Professional Examination. Most vendor certificates do not require experience, but may require a person to attend their
educational programs. As with other credentials, certification has to be taken in context to be meaningful. Certification does not replace experience, but it does augment it, and it can help compensate for a lack of it (Gilhooly, 2001; “You’re Certifiable,” n.d).

Those desiring the Certified Management Accountant or Certified Financial Management certifications must pass an exam as well as complete two continuous years of professional experience in management accounting and/or financial management before becoming certified (Martin, 1997). This requirement must be met before or within seven years of passing the exam. Brandel, in Standing Out from the Crowd, says

In today’s job market, everyone wants to stand out from the crowd and obtaining a technical certification might seem like a great way to show off your skills, But is it worth the investment of at least several months and hundreds, possibly thousand of dollars? Even in this downturn economy, where differentiation is crucial, education experts, recruiters, and CIOs answer with only a qualified yes. But they are also quick to point out that certain certifications seem more impressive to employers than others. The fact is when it comes to the relative value of certifications, experience still speaks much louder than any letters you can put next to your name. Will it get you the job in and of itself? Absolutely not. Can it help? Yes, says Jeff Markham, a manager at RHI Consulting, a division of Robert Half International, Inc. But in any market you need the hands-on work experience to go along with it, and evidence that you added monetary value or cut monetary costs for your previous employer (Brandel, 2002, p. 1).

Connolly & Yager (2000) believe certification works because it assures the employer that the candidate knows something about the field; however, they warn of becoming too dependent on certification and ignoring experience in the hiring process.

I admit that too many companies use certification as a crutch, ignoring practical experience. I think this is backward. On-the-job training can substitute for certification, but never the other way around. And in my opinion, no one should be able to earn a certificate without practical experience. . . . It’s easy to “overspec” a position by demanding that applicants have certain certificates without defining the equivalent practical experience. That’s not the way to hire.

. . . Not only do employers overestimate the value of certificates, but some certificates are so easily obtained that they’re barely worth valuing at all. (Connolly & Yager, 2000, p. 3)
Distinctions Between Adult Education and Training

While distinctions are often made between adult education, which concentrates on the growth and development of the individual, and training that focuses on individual productivity and organizational profit, arguments are made that they are in many respects similar. According to Brookfield (1986), Nadler considers human resource development “interchangeable” with adult education. Brookfield further states that a “great many trainers, training managers, and educational consultants see themselves as educators, not simply as trainers and draw from adult learning concepts and methods in designing training experiences” (pp. 189; 188).

Newsom and Anderson (1995) identified 226 definitions of adult education, one of which describes adult education as a “process whereby persons whose major social roles are characteristics of adult status undertake systematic and sustained learning activities for the purpose of bringing about changes in knowledge, attitudes, values, or skills” (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 9). The 1985 Yearbook Of The American Vocation Association defines adult education more generically and identifies it as “educational programs and pursuits that are generally available beyond compulsory education, or as opportunities supplemental to the education required for initial entry into a given vocation” (p. 27).

Rothwell and Sredl (1992) describe the broad field of human resource development as the integrated use of training and development, organization development, and career development to improve individual, group, and organizational effectiveness, and they define training and development as focusing on “identifying, assuring, and—through planned learning—helping develop the key competencies that enable individuals to perform current or future jobs” (p. 316). Training can be further defined as a “short-term learning intervention intended to establish—or improve—a match between present job responsibilities and individual knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Rothwell & Sredl, 1992, p. 4). Nadler and Nadler (1994) offer the following functional distinctions: “training involves
learning that relates to the current job of the learner, education relates to a future job of the learner, and development refers to learning that is not job-related” (p. 1). While adult education may arguably be primarily for personal growth of the individual and not necessarily connected with the learner’s current or future job, training and development, recognized as a specialization within the broad field of adult education, should be distinguished in that its primary focus is to help develop “the key competencies that enable individuals to perform current or future jobs” (Rothwell & Sredl, 1992, p. 316).

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) quoting Patten’s definition of training, report that workplace training is the “formal procedure that is used to facilitate employee learning so that the resultant behavior contributes to the organization’s objectives” (p. 65). Zinn (in Galbraith, 1990) citing Roth provides this characterization of a workplace trainer, “the essential function of a trainer in business and industry is one of adult education. i.e., increasing the skills and knowledge of other workers so they can be more productive and efficient on the job” (p. 45).

Sork and Caffarella (in Merriam & Cunningham, 1989) note numerous books and articles have been written about planning adult education programs; however, the literature on program planning largely consists of descriptions of “how planning should be done rather than descriptions of how planning is done” (p. 233). “Program planning is a complex decision-making process that results in learning experiences” (Sork, 1988, p. 34). Most adult educators would probably agree that educational programming is “not a series of independent steps or processes” (Galbraith, 1990, p. 8); it is rather a “complex of interacting elements” (Sork & Caffarella in Merriam & Cunningham, 1989, p. 234). Caffarella (1994) provides the following characterization of the programming process: “planning and evaluating educational programs of adult learners is both an organized and a haphazard endeavor” (p. 1). Similar to other educational programmers, Boone (1992) describes programming as a dynamic, continuous process with the broad objective of developing a
logical and rational framework “for directing and giving meaning to the efforts of adult educators in effecting educational programs designed to alter learner behavior” (p. 41).

What are the purposes of educational programs? Boone (1992) states that an underlying assumption of all programming is that it is “directed toward change in the behavior of the individual adult learner” (p. 4). Adult education and training programs are about learning and the notion of change “underlies most definitions of learning” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 124). Zinn (in Galbraith, 1990) explains:

Education has as a central focus an intent to effect change—whether that change be an increase in knowledge, the acquisition or improvement of a skills, or a change in attitude or behavior. The direction of change is based, to a great extent, on what individuals and the larger society believe should happen through education (p. 41).

This change may be influenced by the philosophy of the programmer or by the goals of the organization that provides the education or training programs. For example, each adult education philosophy has its respective purposes: (a) for the liberal, the purpose is to have an enlightened, knowledgeable citizenry who support a democratic society and transmit civilization; (b) for the humanist, the goal is to enhance the personal growth of the individual and achieve individual autonomy of the learner; (c) for the progressive, the objective is to develop a practical, experiential understanding on the part of the individual and to work for social reforms; (d) for the behaviorist, the purpose is to condition and convey to learners the skills needed for effectiveness to operate within their institution or environment; and (e) for the radical, the goal is to work for revolutionary-political, social, and economic changes of the radical transformation of society (Hagan, 1991; Wislock & Flannery, 1992; Zinn in Galbraith, 1990). Essentially, adult education programs may have as their goals cultivation of the intellect (liberal); individual self-actualization (humanism); personal and social improvement (progressive); social transformation (radical); or organizational effectiveness (behaviorist) (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982).
In addition to broad philosophical goals and viewing adult education from a practical perspective, educational programs may, and often do, serve more than one purpose; Caffarella (1994) identifies five general purposes of educational programs:

1. To encourage continuous growth and development of individuals (i.e., Workshop: “How to Use Your Home Computer to Tap into 101 Data Bases”)

2. To assist people in responding to practical problems and issues of adult life (i.e., Series of pre-retirement seminars offered for all interested employees)

3. To prepare people for current and future work opportunities (i.e. Workshop on applications of new software packages to daily work activities)

4. To assist organizations in achieving desired results and adapting to change (i.e. Two-day seminar for all employees of an organization on total quality management)

5. To provide opportunities to examine community and societal issues (i.e., Action workshop on developing skills for site-based management for teachers, administrators, and parents) (p. 2).

Are the idealistic normative approaches actually used in planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating adult educational programs? “On the surface, the planning process appears to be a fairly logical and orderly process, progressing from identifying ideas to program design and implementation to evaluation and follow-up activities” (Caffarella, 1994, p. 1). However, there exists a gap between theory and practice in program planning; Sork and Caffarella (in Merriam & Cunningham, 1989) explain that (a) “practitioners take shortcuts in planning in order to get the job done; (b) contextual factors largely determine how planning is done; and (c) planning theory is increasingly irrelevant to practice” (p. 243).

Though many programming models approach the process from a normative perspective about what should be done, Cervero and Wilson (1994), describing what actually occurs in this process, claim that “planning programs is a social activity in which people negotiate personal and organizational interests” (p. 4). Cervero and Wilson (1994) identify three
schools of educational planning: classical, naturalistic, and critical. According to the classical viewpoint, the planning process is clustered around six types of activities: “originating the idea from needs assessments and other sources, developing the idea by exploring the extent of interest on the part of people in the field, making a commitment by laying administrative groundwork, developing the program by setting objectives and selecting methods, teaching the course, and evaluating its effect by measuring the results” (p. 15).

The naturalistic viewpoint “places primary emphasis on the planner’s ability to make judgments in a specific context” (p. 18). The critical viewpoint calls attention to the political and ethnical nature of program planning. Cervero and Wilson (1994) assert that the classical viewpoint does not assist educational programmers to “understand everyday practice or action” (p. 25). The naturalistic viewpoint pinpoints the practical aspects of programming, but yet does not take into account the “personal, institutional, and social interests (and the concomitant relationship of power) that shape the context” (Cervero & Wilson, 1994, p. 25). The critical viewpoint, while focusing on “how existing organizational and societal relationships or power shape planners’ everyday judgments and encourage them to plan in ways that foster dialogue, democracy, individual freedom and social justice,” it nonetheless “falls short in exploring the ways these insights might be worked out in the everyday world faced by program planners” (Cervero & Wilson, 1994, p. 24).

As evident by Cervero and Wilson’s recent work and other program planning literature, adult education programming is increasingly taking into account the political and social forces that ultimately shape the planning of programs for adult learners (Cervero & Wilson, 1994; Cunningham in Brockett, 1988). Caffarella (1994) contends:

Many experienced program planners find they do not develop programs in any one way—at least not as defined by any one author. There are too many realities that get in the way, from resource problems to political maneuvering by individual staff, special-interest groups, and organizations as a whole” (p. 12).
Caffarella (1994) argues, “lock-step models—are viewed as neither useful nor practical” (p. 12). She explains that planning models are often not routinely utilized because of “time pressures, inclement organizational climate, lack of knowledge about and the belief that models are not useful” (p. 11). She nonetheless contends that models are useful in that:

1. Resources can be used more effectively. Program planning models can assist people to better use their planning resources of people, time, and money.

2. Daily work is made easier. The daily work of program planners can be made easier with a model, because most models provide a continuing guide of action.

3. Teamwork is fostered. A model can provide a means for clarifying roles and responsibilities for all involved, which can lead to a better spirit of team cooperation and less fighting over who was supposed to do what.

4. Basis for control is provided. Having a detailed and clear planning procedure can provide a basis for control over both the process and the subordinate’s role in that process.

5. Better programs are developed. A better program usually results when planners use a model of program planning as a guide. Most models dictate that a close look be given up front to the problems or ideas presented (Caffarella, 1994, p. 8).

While recognizing that program planning models often describe idealized processes, these models can, nonetheless, assist in this complex decision making process (Sork & Caffarella in Merriam & Cunningham, 1989). Nadler and Nadler (1994) caution that models provide “a starting point, not a final grade” and most importantly they should not be confused with “reality – it is only a representation” (p. 7). Models, however, can aid the program designer in certain respects in that they: “(a) bring together what is known through research and observations; and (b) simplify complex human processes” (Nadler & Nadler, 1994, p. 7).
Certification and Continuing Education

One advantage certification has over formal education is the requirement by many certificate-issuing organizations that certified members pursue continuing education opportunities and/or participate in association-sanctioned activities to keep their certification in effect. Recertification is a way for certified individuals to remain current in their field by acquiring a certain number of continuing education units to ensure their competency remains at a high level (Cohen, 1995; D. Brown, 2002; Klane, 1996). Recertification is a visible expression of one’s personal commitment to continuing professionalism and demonstrates to colleagues and others one’s commitment to remain competent in a rapidly changing world. Today’s business environment requires a commitment to almost continual professional training and development beyond the responsibilities of an individual’s job description. Continuing education programs provide an avenue of continued professional growth (Kraus, 1998). In a world of constant change and rapid advancement, it is more important than ever for professionals to stay current in their field.

According to Professor Michael Brady of the University of Southern Maine, there are 7,000 new articles published every day, certainly a staggering figure. When society is changing so rapidly, how else can we as a society ensure that the physicians, engineers, and health and safety professionals are up to date on the very latest techniques and trends appropriate to their practice. Many sources consider a professional “half-life” (the time required to forget or invalidate half of one’s professional knowledge) to be about five years, a number that coincides with many boards’ required recertification (Klane, 1996, p. 2).

Nurses and other health care professionals are usually required to acquire a certain number of continuing education units. To renew certification a nurse must document continuing education and clinical practice requirements or pass the certification exam again. Such examinations must be legally defensible, psychometrically sound, and based on a comprehensive job analysis of the measured nursing practice (Klane, 1996).
While some certifying organizations require members to attain a minimum number of continuing education credits within a specified timeframe, others require certificate holders to be actively involved in the association by serving on committees and attending workshops and conferences. For instance, individuals who have earned the Canadian Council of Human Resources Certified Human Resource Professional (CHRP) Certification are required to select from several categories of work and activities for which CHRP holders receive points ("Canada Gets," D. Brown, 2002). One hundred points is required over a three-year period to recertify. Professional development activities of almost any kind earn points as well as being involved in a major job initiative—such as putting in a new job evaluation system or installing an HR information system. Volunteering to coordinate or organize an association workshop or conference, giving lectures or writing articles earn points toward recertification. The more involved one is in the association, the more points he will receive.

Organizations want employees who are willing to spend the time to remain current on developments in their field (Martin, 1997). Displaying current effective dates on certificates instills confidence on the part of one’s superiors and colleagues that the person whose name appears on the certificate can be depended upon to deliver the highest level of service possible (Klane, 1996).

**Transfer of Training Concepts to the Job**

With the amount of money spent annually on training in the United States, estimated to be in excess of $200 billion in 1998 (Holton, Ruona, and Leimbach, 1998), it is clear organizations are willing to invest significantly in educational interventions that will improve employee productivity and organizational efficiency. However, there is strong consensus that the acquisition of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes through training is of little value if the new characteristics are not generalized to the job setting and are not maintained...
over time (Kozlowski and Salas, 1997). In other words, training is useless if it cannot be transferred to the job. Therefore, if it is believed training makes a difference in organizational and individual performance, it is important to understand how to support the transfer of training in organizations (Yamill and McLean, 2001).

Traditional approaches to transfer of training tend to consider it as a horizontal link between training and performance (Yamill and McLean, 2001). Baldwin and Ford (1988) identified there factors that affect the transfer of training: 1) Training Inputs, which include trainee characteristics, training design, and work environment; 2) Training Outputs, which consist of learning and retention; and 3) Conditions of Transfer, which deal with the generalization and maintenance of training. Many organizations spend thousands of dollars on training with the hope it will improve employee performance; however, knowledge, skills and attitudes developed during training interventions have little value unless it is transferred in some way to performance (Holton, Bates, Seyler, and Carvalho, 1997).

Holton (1996) provided a conceptual evaluation model of training focused on individual performance. This model proposes identifies three primary outcomes of training intervention: learning, individual performance, and organizational results. These outcomes are further defined as achievement of the learning outcome desired in the training intervention, change in individual performance as the result of learning being applied on the job, and results at the organizational level as a consequence of change in individual performance. According to Holton (1996) there are three critical factors that affect the transfer of training—motivation to transfer, transfer climate, and transfer design.

Motivation to transfer can be described as a trainee’s desire to use the knowledge and skills mastered in the training program on the job (Noe and Schmitt, 1986). Behavioral change will likely occur for trainees who learn the material presented in training and desire to apply that new knowledge or skills to work activities. Yamnill and McLean (2001) identified several theories of human behavior that help to understand and predict behaviors
that contribute to performance at work, as well as clarify the motivation to transfer factor in Holton’s model. These include the theories of expectancy, equity, and goal setting.

Expectancy Theory

Vroom (1964, p. 17) defined expectancy as “a momentary belief concerning the likelihood that a particular act will precede a particular outcome.” Performance results in two kinds of rewards. Intrinsic rewards are intangible—a feeling of accomplishment, a sense of achievement, etc. Extrinsic rewards are tangible outcomes such as pay or promotion (Yamnill and McLean, 2001). The individual judges the value of his performance to the organization and uses social comparison processes to form an impression of the equity of the rewards received. If the rewards are regarded as equitable, the employee feels satisfied. In subsequent cycles, satisfaction with rewards influences the value of the rewards anticipated, and actual performance following effort influences future perceived effort-reward probabilities (Yamnill and McLean, 2001).

Equity Theory

Equity Theory is based on the simple principle that people want to be treated fairly (Adams, 1963). The theory defines equity as the belief that employees are being treated fairly in relation to others and inequity as the belief that employees are being treated unfairly in relation to others. Vroom (1964) recognized that individuals seek equity in their jobs, thus job satisfaction reflects the extent to which rewards received match the rewards the employee believes should be received. Vroom further states that “the greater the difference between these two amounts, the greater the tension or disequilibrium experienced by the person” (p. 168). According to Carrell and Dittrich, cited in Ilgen and Klien, 1998), Equity Theory rests on three main assumptions: “1) people develop beliefs about what constitutes a fair and equitable return for the contributions they make to their jobs, 2) people compare
their own returns and contributions to those of others, and 3) belief about unfair treatment (inequity) create tension that motivates people to reduce that tension" (p. 149). Noe (1986, cited in Kilgore, 1997) explained the relationship between motivation to transfer and Equity Theory: “If an individual feels that by attending training he is likely to gain equity in pay or other sought-after rewards, there is a greater chance that learning will occur, and such learning will transfer to the job” (p. 55). Thus, in studying motivation to transfer of training, it seems logical to focus on what employees feel they should receive from their jobs.

Goal-Setting Theory

Goal-Setting Theory suggests two cognitive determinants of behavior: intentions and values (Yamnill and McLean, 2001). Intentions are viewed as the immediate precursors of human action while values manifests themselves through the choice or acceptance of intentions and subsequent commitment to the goal(s) (Locke, 1968). A goal is that level of performance the individual is trying to accomplish; it is the object or aim of behavior (Locke, 1968). Goals direct attention and action. In addition, they mobilize effort in proportion to perceived requirements of the goal or task (Locke, Shaw, Saari, and Latham, 1981). Therefore, goal-setting, like expectancy theory, may explain how and why behavior is facilitated or restrained in the pre-training, training, and post-training processes. Goal-Setting Theory holds that once a hard task is accepted, the only logical thing to do is to try until the goal is achieved or until a decision is reached to lower or abandon the goal (Locke, 1968). Research further suggests that both goals and feedback are necessary to improve performance and that participation, incentives, and individual differences affect performance primarily through goal setting (Locke, Shaw, et al, 1981).

According to these theories, trainees complete training programs with different levels of motivation to use their learning on the job. According to Holton (1996) influences in transfer
motivation fall into four categories: intervention fulfillment, learning outcomes, job attitudes, and expected utility.

Intervention Fulfillment

Intervention fulfillment refers to the extent to which training meets or fulfills training expectations and desires. Training motivation is similar to motivation to transfer because it is a measure of the trainee's perception of their relationship between training success and future job performance (Holton, 1996). Intervention fulfillment can be explained by Goal-Setting Theory and Expectancy Theory. If individuals perceive that what they learn is relevant to their goal (what they need to know) or an intervention has met their expectation and fulfilled their need for performance-related learning, they will be more motivated to transfer learning into on-the-job performance (Yamnill and McLean, 2001).

Learning Outcomes

Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, and Cannon-Bowers (1991) found that performance during training had an independent relationship with post-training motivation and learning outcomes. Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) suggest that individuals will be more motivated if they believe that their efforts will lead to enhanced performance. More successful learners would be expected to feel better able to perform, and therefore, more motivated to transfer. In contrast, less successful learners would be expected to be less motivated to transfer learning.

Job Attitudes

Expectancy Theory, Goal-Setting Theory, and Equity Theory would lead one to speculate that people with high commitment and job satisfaction would be more likely to exert effort to transfer (Noe and Schmitt, 1986). Noe and Schmitt (1986) investigated the
relationship between training transfer and trainee’s attitudes concerning jobs, careers and participation in training programs. The results of their work suggest that job involvement and career planning are antecedents of learning and behavior. Tannenbaum, Mathieu, et al (1991) found that participants with more positive job attitudes would be expected to be more motivated to transfer learning to performance.

Expected Utility or Payoff

The work of Clark, Dobbins, and Ladd (1993) speaks to the expected utility or payoff that can be associated with the transfer of training. Their work revealed that trainees who perceived training to have more job and career utility were more motivated. These findings are consistent with Expectancy Theory, which states that individuals will be more motivated to transfer if they perceive that their effort will lead to rewards that they value (Porter and Lawler, 1968).

An organization’s transfer climate also has a significant impact on a trainee’s ability to transfer training to the job. According to Schneider and Rentsch (cited in Holton, Bates, Seyler, and Carvalho, 1997, p. 97) and organization’s transfer climate is defined as a “sense of imperative that arises for a person’s perception of his work environment. It influences the extent to which that person can use learned skills on the job. Transfer climate is seen as a mediating variable in the relationship between the organizational context and an individual’s job attitudes and work behavior.” When learning occurs in training, the transfer climate may either support or inhibit application of learning on the job. Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) offered a conceptual framework for operationalizing transfer climate; they suggest that transfer climate consists of two types of workplace cues, including eight distinct dimensions.

The first set of workplace cues—situation cues—remind trainees of opportunities to use what they have learned when they return to work. There are four types of situation cues:
goal cues, social cues, task cues, and self-control cues. The second set of workplace
cues—consequence cues—address the feedback trainees receive after they apply the
knowledge, skills, and attitudes they gained in the training to their jobs. There are four types
of consequences: positive feedback, negative feedback, punishment, and non-feedback.
Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) also found that a positive organizational transfer climate
appears to be important if transfer of training behavior is to occur.

**Definition and Illustration of Transfer Items**

**Situation Cues:** These cues serve to remind trainees of their training or
provide them with opportunities to use their training when they return to their
jobs.

**Goal Cues:** These cues serve to remind trainees to use their training when
they return to their jobs; for example, existing managers set goals for new
managers that encourage them to apply their training on the job.

**Social Cues:** These cues arise from group membership and include the
behavior and influence process exhibited by supervisors, peers, and
subordinates; for example, new manages who use their training supervise
differently than existing managers.

**Task Cues:** These cues are concerned with the design and nature of the job
itself; for example, equipment is available that allows new managers to use
the skills they gained in training.

**Self-Control Cues:** These cues refer to various self-control processes that
permit trainees to use what they have learned; for example, “I was allowed to
practice handling real job-relevant problems.”

Consequences - As employees return to their job and begin applying their
learned behavior, they encounter consequences that affect their use of what
they have learned.

**Positive Feedback:** Trainees are given positive information about their use
of trained behavior, for example, new managers who successfully use their
training receive a salary increase.

**Negative Feedback:** Trainees are informed of the negative consequences of
not using their learned behavior; for example, area managers are made
aware of new managers who are not following operating procedures.

**Punishment:** Trainees are punished for using trained behaviors; for example,
more-experienced workers ridicule the use of techniques learned in training.
**No Feedback**: No information is given to the trainees about the use or importance of the learned behavior; for example, existing managers are too busy to note whether trainees use learned behavior.

Source: Rouiller and Goldstein, 1993, p. 383

All three sets of theories discussed in this section—motivation to transfer, transfer design, and transfer climate theories—are important to understanding the factors that support the transfer of training. In practice, these theories indicate that system congruence is essential for transfer (Kozlowski and Salas, 1997). To facilitate the transfer of training it is important that key stakeholders, such as training designers, managers, and trainees work together by doing the following:

Collaborating with key stakeholders at each step of the process to provide links to strategic goals, reinforce organizational priorities, and support performance-related factors (Kozlowski and Salas, 1997).

Encouraging managers to provide clear performance objectives so that employees know exactly what they are expected to do. Managers should provide the necessary support (resources) for high performance and establish clear rewards for performance. They should provide prompt feedback to let employees know whether their performance meets the established standards based on Expectancy Theory (Porter and Lawler, 1968) and Equity Theory (Adam, 1963).

Assigning high priority to learners as full stakeholders in the designing and implementation of training (based on research results, their relevance of knowledge, skills, and attitude taught in training is of value in determining transfer (Amell, 1992; Baldwin and Ford, 1988), Garavagila, 1993). Thus groups of learners may be responsible for identifying training objectives, assessing their learning needs, developing action plans, and identifying organization-wide strategies to support full transfer to new concepts.


Additionally, an examination of environmental constraints and barriers trainees may face as they attempt to apply learned concepts in the workplace should also be taken into account.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to answer the question posed by this research in assessing the effectiveness of the IPMA-HR Certified Professional Program in preparing public sector HR professionals to perform their job responsibilities. This study utilized the Delphi technique, which involved a panel of public sector HR experts who through a series of questionnaires rated and helped to identify the effectiveness of the IPMA-HR Certified Professional Certification Program.

A. Selection of the Delphi Technique

Olaf Helmer and Norman Dalkey of the Rand Corporation invented the Delphi technique in 1953 for the purpose of addressing a specific military problem (Dalkey, 1967). The objective of the Delphi technique is to obtain a reliable response to a problem or question from a group of experts. This is done by giving individuals in the group feedback from previous rounds. In a Delphi study the participants do not interact with one another, their responses are anonymous, and group responses from previous rounds are given to participants who are afforded an opportunity to reconsider their response after receiving group feedback.

Central to the Delphi philosophy is the old adage “two heads are better than one.” Generally a group response will come closer to the truth than that of any one individual. The Delphi technique offers the advantage of group response minus the disadvantages sometimes associated with group problem solving or decision-making. Because those participating in a Delphi study do not ever participate in face-to-face discussions, there is no danger of the opinions of one or more individuals being swayed by a more dominant or more experienced individual. Dalkey (1969) points out two other advantages that arise from the
absence of face-to-face discussion: 1) irrelevant or biasing communication based on group interest rather than the problem at hand is eliminated and 2) peer pressure or pressure to conform to the group is not a factor. According to Dalkey and Helmer (1963) an advantage of the Delphi technique is that expert participants are more likely to generate reasoned, independent, and well-considered opinions in the absence of exposure to the persuasively stated opinions of others.

Another advantage of the Delphi technique is its efficiency and flexibility, especially in light of modern communication techniques such as email and the Internet. Experts may be drawn from a wide geographic area, and participants’ commitment in terms of money and time invested is minimal depending on information needs (Delbecq, Van de Ven, and Gustafson, 1975). Delbecq et al. (1975) also note another advantage of the Delphi procedure in obtaining ideas in writing, as the act of writing forces participants to contemplate the subject thoughtfully and tends to produce a high volume of ideas.

Finally, the Delphi technique has been shown to be an effective way to conduct research when the responses being sought are value judgments rather than factual information. Although it is more difficult to assess the correctness of value judgments, it is generally agreed upon that value judgments are not all equal but can in fact be more right than wrong (Linstone and Turoff, 1975).

The Delphi technique is well suited for this research problem for three reasons. First, the question posed is a subjective one and calls for a value judgment which will not permit the results to be analyzed in a strictly statistical manner. Second, since IPMA-HR members who hold the certified professional designation are scattered throughout the world, the Delphi technique, via the use of the World Wide Web, would allow input from highly qualified individuals without the need for travel and with a minimal commitment of time on their part. Third, the participants, as human resource professionals, would be very likely to be able to
communicate their ideas and would be motivated to participate in a process that could potentially enhance future development of the IPMA-HR Certified Professional Program.

B. Formation of Expert Panel

The first step in conducting a Delphi study is the formation of a panel of experts in the area under research (“Public Health Informatics”, n.d.). Linstone and Turoff (1975) suggest a panel size of anywhere from 10 to 50 participants. A Delphi panel consisting of a homogeneous group, such as a group from the same general discipline area, need only involve 10 to 15 people (Delbecq, et al., 1975). Dalkey, Brown and Cochrane (1969) found that error decreased rapidly as the group size increased from one to about 13; further, small increases in error continued to a size of about 25 people, at which point the error rate stabilized. Based on these findings, they continued their experiments using groups of 15 to 20 people. Delbecq, et al. (1975) report that exceeding 30 participants results in few new ideas, regardless of group size. For this study, 30 IPMA-HR members who attained certification via the IPMA-CP examination were selected to serve as the panel of experts. For practical reasons, such as time and expense, and based on the research the author believed a panel of this size would produce reliable and meaningful results.

Data Collection and Analysis

Working from a list provided by IPMA-HR comprised of 206 HR professionals who obtained their CP certification via examination, the author randomly selected 40 members as possible participants in this study. To determine who from this list would be invited to take part in this study, the author recorded the name of every third member listed. These individuals were extended an invitation via email followed up by a telephone call from the author to serve as an expert panelist in this study. Of the 40 members contacted, 30 agreed to participate in this study. Of the 10 members who declined to participate, one
worked in federal government, one in state government, and eight in municipal government. Of this group one had been certified one year, six certified two years, two certified three years, and one certified four years.

Upon assembling the expert panel, the author provided participants additional information about the purpose of the study and answered questions regarding the research methodology to be used. A letter explaining the study along with a letter of endorsement from IPMA-HR was emailed to each panelist.

In Round One, participants were provided a URL that permitted them to access, complete, and submit the questionnaire online. The questionnaire contained a list of 31 job responsibilities identified by IPMA-HR. For each job responsibility listed, panelists were asked if they currently performed this task. If they answered affirmatively, they were then asked if they did so prior to or as the result of obtaining certification. Participants were also given an opportunity to list additional job responsibilities and were asked to respond to several open-ended questions designed to assess their perceived value of the IPMA-CP Certification Program.

Upon receiving completed questionnaires from all 30 panelists (100% of the panel) in Round One, responses to all questions were tabulated and summarized. The author also summarized the responses to all open-ended questions and sent them to the panel for feedback in a second questionnaire (Round Two) that panelists completed and submitted online.

For each comment listed on the Round Two questionnaire, participants were asked to register their agreement or disagreement. In some cases they were also asked if statements were applicable to them. After receiving completed questionnaires from 27 panelists (90% of the panel) in Round Two, the author used a pre-selected percentage of responses to determine if consensus had been reached.
The methods used to determine consensus are the least-developed component of the Delphi technique and varies from study to study (Crisp, Pelletier, Duffield, Adams, and Nagy, 1997). Standard deviation is sometimes used to evaluate agreement (McKenna, 1994). A decrease in the standard deviation between rounds indicates an increase in agreement. Rank scores and interquartile ranges have been used in some Delphi studies to determine strength of consensus. The criterion of at least 51 percent of participants responding to a given response has also been used to determine consensus (McKenna, 1989). Chisp et al. (1997) suggest an 80 percent response rate represents the point at which consensus is reached. In a study using yes-no response categories, the criterion for agreement was set at 67 percent of participants giving the same response (Alexandrov, Pullicion, Meslin, and Norris, 1996). Since the author did not find a universally agreed-upon measure of consensus, the decision was made to establish the level of agreement at 70% of participants registering the same response to all questions.

C. Limitations of Research Design

Delbecq et al. (1975) state that “Delphi should not be used when any of the following three critical conditions are not present: adequate time, participant skill in written communication, and high participant motivation” (p. 84). Participants must be knowledgeable and able to clearly communicate their ideas. A high degree of motivation is needed to offset the tendency for participant dropout as the study progresses. Because there is no direct contact between participants, those who are not highly motivated and interested in the subject at hand may feel isolated or detached from the process. It is crucial that respondents understand not only the goal of the Delphi technique but the process itself and the importance of their continued participation. By ensuring participants understand the Delphi process and the importance of their contributions, it is hoped they will have the
interest and commitment to answer appropriately and they will participate in the study to its completion.

Linstone and Turoff (1975) also note that participant dropout can be a problem in Delphi studies. Attrition of participants as the rounds of questionnaires progress can be a concern. Cyphert and Gant (1971) conclude that an attrition rate of approximately 38 percent of those who initially agreed to participate is acceptable although as the number of participants in the study remains high so too does the reliability of the results. Linstone and Turoff (1975) suggest that failure to allow participants to adequately contribute their own perspectives to the problem or issue at hand or failure to properly recognize or reward participants can negatively impact results.

Other common pitfalls they mention are the use of unclear evaluation scales and poor technique in interpreting results. Patton (1986) discusses the problem of bias in Delphi studies that can occur from poorly worded or leading questions or selective interpretation of results. Care was taken by the author to minimize the occurrence of such errors.

The author acknowledges there was no way to control for any bias participants may possess for or against certification. While certification may be highly desired and valued by individuals new to the HR profession as a way to enhance their career and establish their credibility, practitioners who have worked in the field for several years may view certification as being less important when compared to the years of experience they have amassed. Despite the best efforts of the author to make the merits and value of certification the focus of this study, he readily acknowledges such bias may exist and could be reflected in the responses of participants.
CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS

Introduction

An examination of the literature, as indicated earlier in this study, revealed that limited research had been conducted which attempted to assess the effectiveness of the IPMA-Certified Professional Certification Program in preparing public sector HR professionals to perform the responsibilities of their job. Since awarding of this certification by examination is a recent development (initiated in 1999), an assessment of its content and its perceived value by IPMA-HR members could prove useful to IPMA in evaluating this program to determine how well it is meeting their career and personal development needs.

In this chapter the author provides a profile of the expert panel of HR professionals that includes state of residency, highest level of education completed, size of organization for which they worked, years of public sector HR experience, type of governmental agency for which they worked, and number of years they have been IPMA-CP certified. Also included in this chapter are the results of two questionnaires completed by panelists that gathered their opinions on various aspects of the CP Certification Program which have been categorized and are presented in the following order: Certification and its Impact on Job Performance, Perceived Value and Benefits of CP Certification, Strengths of the IPMA-CP Certification Program, Weaknesses of the IPMA-CP Certification Program, Application of IPMA-CP Certification Training Concepts on the Job, Job Responsibilities Best Supported by IPMA-CP Certification Training, Job Responsibilities Least Supported by IPMA-CP Certification Training, Recommended Additions to the IPMA-CP Certification Program, Behavioral-Skills-Based Certification Training versus Knowledge-Based Certification Training, and Future Career Development Plans of the Panel.
Section 1 – Panel Profile

Thirty IPMA-CP certified HR professionals served as expert panelists in this study. All completed and submitted the Round One questionnaire and 27 completed and submitted the Round Two questionnaire. Participants in this study resided in sixteen states and the District of Columbia as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States Represented by IPMA-CP Certification Evaluation Panelists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N=30

The panelists in this study ranged in age from 30 to 50 plus years of age. Further analysis of the age distribution of the panel revealed 26.75 percent were between the ages of 30 and 49-years old, 46.7 percent were between the ages of 40 and 49-years old, and 26.75 percent were 50-years old or older. The highest level of education completed by each panelist is shown in Table 2.
Table 2

| Highest Level of Education Completed by IPMA-CP Certification Evaluation Panelists |
|---------------------------------|-------------|---|
| Level of Education              | No. Panelist | Percent |
| Human Resource Certificate      | 1            | (3.3%) |
| Bachelor Degree                 | 17           | (56.7%)|
| Master Degree                   | 10           | (33.3%)|
| Doctorate Degree                | 2            | (6.7%) |

Note: N=30, Percent=100

The panelists in this study were employed by public organizations ranging in size from less than 200 employees to over 4,000. Organization size categories and the number of panelists that worked in each are listed in Table 3.

Table 3

| Size of Organization Represented by IPMA-CP Certification Evaluation Panelists |
|---------------------------------|-------------|---|
| Size                            | No. Panelists | Percent |
| Less than 200 Employees         | 3            | (10.0%) |
| 200 – 499 Employees             | 9            | (30.0%) |
| 500 – 999 Employees             | 8            | (26.7%) |
| 1,000 – 1,999 Employees         | 3            | (10.0%) |
| 2,000 – 3,999 Employees         | 1            | (3.3%) |
| 4,000 Employees or More         | 6            | (20.0%) |

Note: N=30, Percent=100

An examination of the years of public service HR experience represented on the panel reveals 3.3 percent had less than five years of experience, nearly half of the panel, 46.7,
percent had six to 10 years of experience, and 50 percent had 11 years of experience or more as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>No. Panelist</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One to Five Years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six to 10 Years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 Years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20 Years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 or More Years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N=30, Percent=100

Six different types of governmental agencies were represented in this study as shown in Table 5. The largest number of participants (53.3 percent) worked in municipal government with county government HR professionals representing the second largest group with 26.7 percent.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type Government Agency</th>
<th>No. Panelist</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Government</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Government</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Government</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Government</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Authority</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Board</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N=30, Percent=100
The number of years panel members have held IPMA-CP Certification ranges from one to four years, with 76.7 percent of the panel being certified two years or less as shown in Table 6. This finding is not surprising since awarding of this certification by examination was initiated in 1999.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years Certified</th>
<th>Number of Panelist</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(36.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(40.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(20.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(3.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N=30, Percent=100

Section 2 - Certification and its Impact on Job Performance

At the initiation of this study, it was the author’s intent to compare the job responsibilities performed among the panelists using a list of 31 job responsibilities identified by IPMA-HR to assess the impact of CP Certification Training in preparing them to perform these tasks. However, it became apparent after analyzing the data this would be difficult to achieve as there was no consistent or uniform basis for comparison as the responsibilities they performed for their organizations were varied. While the desired comparison could not be achieved, this information was deemed valuable to the study and is presented in Table 7.
Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Responsibility</th>
<th>No. Panelists Who Perform This Responsibility</th>
<th>No. Panelists Who Performed This Responsibility Prior to Attaining Certification</th>
<th>No. Panelist Who Now Perform This Responsibility As Result of Attaining Certification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Labor Relations</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) HR Forecasting</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Employee Relations</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Risk Management</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) OSHA Compliance</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Needs Analysis</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Maintain Personnel Records</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2 (9.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Direct Employee Wellness Programs</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1 (5.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Return on Investment Analysis</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Worker’s Compensation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Performance Management Studies</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1 (6.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Succession Planning</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Responsibility</td>
<td>No. Panelists Who Perform This Responsibility</td>
<td>No. Panelists Who Performed This Responsibility Prior to Attaining Certification</td>
<td>No. Panelist Who Now Perform This Responsibility As Result of Attaining Certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Executive Development Programs</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Employee Communications</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Temporary Employment Services</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) Grievance Administration</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5 (35.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) Program Development</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1 (4.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18) Policy Development</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1 (3.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19) Mediation/Conflict Management</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1 (5.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20) Employee Recognition Programs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21) Applicant Testing</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2 (10.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22) Employee Training Programs</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2 (8.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23) Job Classification</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2 (8.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24) Monitor Organization Staffing Levels</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 7 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Responsibility</th>
<th>No. Panelists Who Perform This Responsibility</th>
<th>No. Panelists Who Performed This Responsibility Prior to Attaining Certification</th>
<th>No. Panelist Who Now Perform This Responsibility As Result of Attaining Certification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25) Benefits Administration</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26) EEO/AA</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27) Employee Recruitment</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28) Compensation</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29) Payroll</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30) Strategic Planning</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31) Employee Assistance Program</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2 (11.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other job responsibilities performed and submitted by study panelists were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Responsibility</th>
<th>No. Panelists Who Perform This Responsibility</th>
<th>No. Panelists Who Performed This Responsibility Prior to Attaining Certification</th>
<th>No. Panelist Who Now Perform This Responsibility As Result of Attaining Certification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32) Coordinate Youth Employment Programs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33) Review of Personnel Manual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34) Provide Legal Device to Department</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35) Volunteer Coordination</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36) Employee Coaching</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While the job responsibilities performed by panelists varied greatly, the percentage of them who stated they perform these tasks as the result of training they received while pursuing the CP certification is small. With the exception of succession planning (performed by 40 percent of the panel), grievance administration (performed by 35.7 percent of the panel), payroll (performed by 22 percent of the panel), strategic planning (performed by 20 percent of the panel), employee assistance programs (11.7 percent of the panel) and applicant testing (performed by 10.5 percent of the panel), the value of CP Certification Training in preparing these individuals to perform these job responsibilities as perceived by the panel ranges from less than 10 percent to zero.

Section 3 - Panelists Evaluation of the Certification Examination
Preparatory Process

There are two ways HR professionals can prepare for the CP certification examination: purchasing a self-study module or enrolling in a certification preparatory class. Fourteen panelists (51 percent) stated they used the self-study module to prepare for the certification examination, 11 panelists (40 percent) said they took the preparatory class, and two panelists (7.4 percent) stated they used the self-study module and took the preparatory class. Three panelists (10 percent) did not respond to this question.

Using a three-point Likert Scale which ranged from “no value,” “somewhat valuable,” and “very valuable,” 14 panelists who used the self-study module rated these materials to be “somewhat valuable” while 10 (62.5 percent) rated them “very valuable” in preparing them to take the certification examination. Of the 13 panelists who took the preparatory class, five (38.5 percent) rated this class “somewhat valuable” while eight (61.5 percent) rated the preparatory class “very valuable” in preparing them to take the certification examination. The two panelists who used the self-study module and took the preparatory class rated this method of preparation as being “somewhat valuable.”
Section 4 - Perceived Value and Benefits of the IPMA-CP Certification Program

In Round One panelists were asked to evaluate the value of CP certification in relationship to a list of benefits they have received since becoming certified. Twenty-six of 30 panelists responded to this question. Of the benefits panelists have realized since becoming certified, seven (26.9 percent) said they had received an increase in pay, three panelists (11.5 percent) stated they had received a promotion, 17 (65.4 percent) said they had received greater recognition in their organization, and 22 (84.6 percent) stated they had received greater recognition among their peers upon becoming certified.

Also in Round One panelists were asked to write their responses to the questions shown in Table 8 to obtain their opinions of the CP certification process. The number of responses received to each question is shown in parentheses.

Table 8

Open-Ended Questions Contained in Round One Questionnaire

1) What do you consider to be the strengths of the IPMA-CP Certification Program? (20)

2) What do you consider to be the weaknesses of the IPMA-CP Certification Program? (21)

3) How have you applied what you learned in preparing to take the IPMA-CP Certification Exam on the job? (18)

4) Of the job responsibilities you currently perform, which five do you feel IPMA-CP Certification Training best supported and why? (19)

5) Of the job responsibilities you currently perform, which five do you feel IPMA-CP Certification Training least supported and why? (19)

6) What aspects of the IPMA-CP Certification Program would you suggest be omitted? (0)

7) What additions to the IPMA-CP Certification Program would you recommend, please explain your answer? (10)

8) What problems, if any, did you encounter in completing the IPMA-CP Certification Program? (4)
9) What benefits have you realized as the result of obtaining IPMA-CP Certification? (2)

The response of the panel to question six in Table 8 was revealing as the panel unanimously agreed no changes should be made program in its current form. Each panelist stated he would omit either “nothing” or “nothing specific”—indicating they perceived this training program to be of value and relevance to them.

Another question posed to the panel in Round One tends to support this finding. When asked if they would recommend CP certification to a colleague, 26 panelists (86.7 percent) said “yes” while only one (3.3 percent) said “no.” Three participants (10 percent) did not respond to this question.

The author summarized the responses to the questions in Table 8, with the exception of question number six on which the panel had reached total consensus, and placed them along with three additional questions in a second questionnaire that was distributed to panelists in Round Two of the Delphi process.

Twenty-seven panelists (90 percent) completed and returned the Round Two questionnaire. The attrition rate of 10 percent of participants between Round One and Round Two was well within the acceptable attrition rate of 38 percent cited by Cyphert and Gant (1971) for Delphi studies. As noted earlier, consensus was considered reached when 70 percent or higher of the panel registered the same response to any question.

Section 5 - Strengths of the IPMA-CP Certification Program

When the panel was asked to list the strengths of the IPMA-CP program in Round One, 20 attributes were generated. This list was sent to panelist in Round Two to determine the amount of agreement and/or disagreement existed among the panel to each attribute listed. The percentage of responses received for each attribute listed is shown in Table 9.
Table 9

Strengths of the IPMA-CP Certification Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Provides a professional designation for public sector HR professionals</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Discussion of the changing focus and role of HR</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Provides opportunity to learn more about the IPMA-CP Competency Model and HR's role in this model</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Provides exposure to new concepts</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Emphasizes need for HR professionals to become business partners</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Discussion of change management and building business partnerships</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Emphasis on continuing education to maintain certification</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Provides credibility</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Access to valuable and current information in the public sector field of HR</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) The program focuses on practical application of human resource administration, strategic planning, and decision-making</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Recognition by my coworkers and HR peers</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Focus on behavior/consultant competencies</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Provides an opportunity to acquire and maintain a wealth of knowledge in an ever-changing profession</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) The IPMA-CP Certification Program certifies knowledge, skills, and abilities gained in public sector HR management</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Introduction of leadership, change, and customer-service concepts normally taught in graduate schools</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) Networking opportunities with other HR professionals</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) Provides a well-rounded foundation in HR management</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18) Provides standardized testing of one’s ability</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19) The self-evaluation process to assess understanding of training materials</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20) The training process one must go through prior to taking the certification exam</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ≥70% represents attainment of group consensus

Attributes one, eight, and eleven in Table 8 assess the value of CP certification held by the panel. Of the 27 panelists who responded to these questions, 96.3 percent believed providing a professional designation for public sector HR professionals was a strength of the program while 84.6 percent felt providing credibility to themselves and their position was a strength. The emphasis on continuing education to maintain certification was identified as strength of the program by 85.2 percent of the panel. Recognition by coworkers and HR peers as the result of obtaining certification was agreed upon by 81.5 percent of the panel. When the panel was asked who they considered to be their peers, 45.8 percent said statewide HR practitioners, 20.9 percent said coworkers certified in other specialties within their organization, 8.3 percent selected national HR practitioners, and another 8.3 percent considered other HR practitioners in their local area as their peers.

When the panel was asked where their IPMA-CP Certification Certificate was located, 88 percent said it was mounted in their office at work, indicating their pride in this achievement and their desire to signal to others they were working with a certified professional who had mastered a prescribed body of knowledge. Only 12 percent of panel did not have their certification certificate on display.

The panel also appeared to value the concepts discussed during the examination preparatory process as well as the continuing learning opportunities provided through CP
Certification Training and recertification processes. Discussion of the changing focus and role of HR (96.3 percent of the panel in agreement), the IPMA-HR Competency Model (96.2 percent of the panel in agreement), managing change and establishing business partnerships (92.6 percent of the panel in agreement), exposure to new HR concepts (92.6 percent of the panel in agreement), accessibility to current information relative to public sector HR management (81.5 percent of the panel in agreement), and the emphasis on continuing education (85.2 percent of the panel in agreement) were attributes valued by the panel. The panel also agreed that networking opportunities (74.1 percent of the panel in agreement), certification of their knowledge, skills, and abilities (80.8 percent of the panel in agreement) and the provision of a well-rounded foundation in HR management (70.4 of the panel in agreement) were also valuable to them.

Section 6 - Weaknesses of the IPMA-CP Certification Program

While the panel was able to reach consensus on 17 of 20 attributes addressing the strengths of the IPMA-CP Certification Program, of the 21 attributes listed as weaknesses only six obtained group consensus as shown in Table 10.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Certification program is not well known or recognized</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Lack of HR professionals who possess this certification</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Lack of recognition by other professionals in both the public and private sectors</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Competency model is great, but on a day-to-day basis HR professionals have to deal with various laws and regulations that are not the focus of the program</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>% Agree</td>
<td>% Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Not enough specific training programs on the strategic aspects of HR</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) More focus on organizational issues is needed</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Not enough professional development programs offered</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Lack of local chapters in some parts of the country</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Lack of impact of certification on future job performance</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Number of points required to recertify is problematic given budget restraints to attend seminars and conferences</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) More sites needed where members can take certification exam</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Not enough emphasis in the certification study materials on technical competencies</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Could use more real-life examples in certification preparatory course. Perhaps a project to work on using different collaborative styles and the pros and cons of each</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) More emphasis is needed on HR/Risk Management subjects</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Subject matter very subjective and can be confusing</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) No oversight for online testing</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) Some of the models used in preparing for the exam are outdated and need updating</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18) Training is too theoretical and is not applicable to small and medium sized agencies</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19) Maintaining certification requires too much time from the job to attend conferences and seminars</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20) My employer does not recognize my certification</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21) The certification application process is too lengthy and the number of years experience needed to qualify for certification is too strict. Young people in the field can't qualify for certification due to lack of experience and more experienced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
professionals don’t want to take the exam  32.0  68.0

Note:  >70% represents attainment of group consensus

As shown in Table 10, 83.3 percent of the panel agreed the major weakness was the IPMA-CP “certification program is not well known or recognized.” Another weakness, with 80 percent of the panel on agreement, was the “lack of HR professionals who possess this certification.” Another 80 percent of the panel identified the “lack of recognition by other professionals in both the public and private sectors” as a program weakness.

While there was strong agreement (76 percent of the panel) that the ”competency model is great,” the panel agreed there is not enough emphasis on the laws and regulation that HR professional have to deal with on a day-to-day basis. Seventy-two percent felt “more focus on organizational issues is needed.” Another 72 percent believed there were not enough specific training programs on the strategic aspects of HR.

Further analysis of Table 10 revealed another interesting point. The fact that 72 percent of the panel (no. 20 in Table 10) disagreed that their employer did not recognize their certification indicates, at least to some degree, that the lack of recognition to which they refer in items one and three in Table 20 is not primarily directed at their employer but could instead be directed at their peers, coworkers, or other unidentified individuals from which recognition may be desired.

Section 7 - Application of IPMA-CP Certification Training Concepts on the Job

In Round One the panel listed 18 ways knowledge learned during the certification training process was being applied on the job. This list was given to the panel in Round Two for reaction and generated the results shown in Table 11.
Table 11

Application of IPMA-CP Certification Training Concepts on the Job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application of Concepts</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) I continue to keep as current as possible on strategic human resource management issues through various professional journals, training opportunities, and professional organizations</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) The most important lesson I took away from certification is the importance of identifying the value of HR to the mission and vision of my organization, consistently communicating this value to leadership, and to step into the role of a true business partner</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) The topics helped me to think about our HR program and how to make it more effective</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) I used my experience to take the test</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) It reinforced my willingness to think out of the box on HR even though we are a regulation-based profession</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Training assisted me in being able to recognize phases of change</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Studying for the exam reiterated the need to evaluate and measure the efforts of my organization in employee recruitment, selection, succession planning, and strategic planning</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) I think it has given me more confidence</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) I’m trying to focus less on policy and more on becoming a change agent, I use the competency model when polices must be changed for successful implementation</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) I apply my knowledge in every aspect of my job on a daily basis</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application of Concepts</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11) Some of this information served as a good refresher while some of it was too subjective</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) I have incorporated elements from all the models into my current assignments and found them very useful</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Before starting a project I consciously think about the three nontraditional roles of HR (change agent, business partner, and leader) and identify how best to apply each role in a given situation. This allows me to develop more creative options</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) This knowledge has assisted me in partnering efforts with other agencies</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Certification has served to confirm the effectiveness and value of many of the current practices in my organization</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) I have used this information to conduct training sessions with HR staff</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) I have used this information to conduct training sessions with HR staff</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18) I have not had a chance to apply this knowledge on the job</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: >70% represents attainment of group consensus

The interest of the panel in strategic HR management is very evident not only by the percentage of the panel that stated they “keep current on strategic human resource management issues through various professional journals, training opportunities, and professional organizations” (96 percent in Table 10) but in their responses to other questions throughout this study. Ninety-two percent of the panel said applying concepts they learned in certification training helped them understand the “importance of identifying the value of HR to the mission and vision of the organization, constantly communicating this value to leadership, and to step in the role of a true business partner.” Another 92 percent of the panel stated the topics that were discussed during certification training helped them
think about their HR program and ways to make it more effective. Eighty percent of the panel stated this training assisted them in being able to recognize phases of change while another 80 percent stated the exam reiterated the need to evaluate and measure organizational efforts in recruiting, selection, succession planning, and strategic planning. Eighty-eight percent of the panel found the concepts they learned during certification training reinforced their willingness to think out of the box about HR even though this is a regulation-based profession.

The ability to manage change was important to this panel. Eighty-percent of the panel credited CP Certification Training with assisting them in recognizing the phases of change while 72 percent of the panel stated they are focusing less on policy and more on becoming a change agent. Seventy-two percent of the panel stated they apply this knowledge in every aspect of their job on a daily basis, while 80 percent stated they apply this knowledge in some form on the job. Additionally, 76 percent of the panel stated the program gave them more confidence to do their job.

The panel was 91.7 percent in agreement that the CP Certification Training Program was designed in a way that permitted them to use their experience to take the certification examination. Item 18 in Table 11 supports the agreement reached by the panel in item 10 in Table 11 as 80 percent of the panel disagreed that they had not had an opportunity to apply this knowledge on the job.

**Section 8 - Job Responsibilities Best Supported By IPMA-CP Certification Training**

The panel was asked, based on the responsibilities they performed within their perspective organization, which job responsibilities IPMA-CP Certification Training best supported. In Round One each panelist was asked to list five job responsibilities he believed CP Certification Training best supported. This information was categorized and
submitted to the panel in Round Two for response, the results of which are shown in Table 12.

Table 12

**Job Responsibilities Best Supported by IPMA-CP Certification Training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Responsibility</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Organizational Development</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Performance Management</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Strategic Planning</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Employee Communications</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) General HR Responsibilities</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Employee Development</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Management Development</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Training on Stages of Change</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Developing Relevant Programs for Training and Development</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Workforce Development</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Employee Relations</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Strategic HR Regulatory Issues</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Human Relations</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Policy Administration</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Policy Development</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) Workforce Planning</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) Recruitment and Selection</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18) Succession Planning</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19) Employee Recognition</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 12, the panel reached consensus on nine of the 32 job responsibilities that it felt the IPMA-CP Certification Program supported. Organization development attained the highest level of agreement from the panel with 88 percent in agreement. Consensus was also obtained on six job responsibilities associated with the organizational development process: Performance management (84 percent of panel in agreement), strategic planning, (80 percent of the panel in agreement), employee development (75 percent of the panel in agreement), management development (72 percent of the panel in agreement), training on the stages of change (72 percent of the panel in agreement), and developing relevant programs for training and development (72 percent of the panel in agreement).
the panel in agreement). The performance of general HR-related duties (76 percent of panel) and employee communications (80 percent of panel) were other job responsibilities the panel identified as being well supported by the CP Training Program.

When the panel was asked how certification training met their needs in the above areas, there was 100 percent agreement, as shown in Table 13, that it made them aware of their own abilities and the need to develop skills needed to fulfill the three roles—leader, change agent, and business partner—in which HR professionals need to function in their organizations to be effective (refer to no. 1 in Table 13). Other areas in which the panel agreed CP Certification Training met their needs were providing them with greater understanding of their role as consultant to managers and employees (96 percent of the panel in agreement), developing training scenarios in a way that made them relevant to the work they performed and allowed them to draw upon their work experience (96 percent of the panel in agreement), and understanding the need to work with employees at all levels in the organization as a business partner (92 percent of the panel in agreement).

The certification training program was also credited by the panel in stressing the importance of teamwork in dealing with employees and helping them to resolve issues (88 percent of the panel in agreement), reiterating the importance of the employer/employee relationship and discussing ways to promote and maintain this relationship to achieve organizational success (83.3 percent of the panel in agreement), using a theoretical and organizational approach rather than one that was task-based (80 percent of the panel in agreement), and providing HR professionals with greater understanding of the roles in which they function and encouraging them to look at issues from different perspectives to develop solutions to problems and stimulate creativity (80 percent of the panel in agreement). These responses may be found in Table 13.
### Table 13

Which Responses Best Describe How IPMA-CP Certification Training Met Your Needs in These Areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) It made me aware of my own qualities and strengths to incorporate the leadership, change agent, and business partner characteristics into my job as well as the knowledge of management styles that I learned</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) It provided me with a greater understanding of my role in HR as a consultant to managers and employees</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) The scenarios and questions were relevant to the work I do and I was able to draw from my work experience</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Teaming with employees at all levels as a business partner facilitates the development of all the areas listed</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) I use the concept of teamwork to deal with employees that may have some issues by helping them understand and recognize their contributions to the organization</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) There was significant importance placed on the employer/employee relationship and how maintaining and fostering that relationship would ultimately result in success to the organization</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) It was not so much task based but more theory and organization based</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Understanding the three roles and looking at things from four different perspectives makes for lot more options and helps stimulate creativity on the job</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Training for this certification expanded my public sector knowledge/content base</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) IPMA-CP training provides training for a practical approach that fits the everyday problems I encounter on the job</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Because I work in a small municipality IPMA training has given me a broader picture of the “how” and “why”</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) It was helpful to me because most chapter conferences do not address these areas</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) These are the areas that caused me to update my</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
knowledge prior to taking the certification examination 48.0 52.0

Note: >70% represents attainment of group consensus

Section 9 - Job Responsibilities Least Supported by IPMA-CP Certification Training

The panel was able to obtain consensus on only three of eighteen job responsibilities identified in Round One as being least supported by CP Certification Training as shown in Table 14.

Table 14
Job Responsibilities Least Supported by IPMA-CP Certification Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Responsibility</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
<th>% N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) IPMA-CP training does not emphasize technical skill development like SHRM does</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Worker’s Compensation</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Financial HR Metrics</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Classification</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Compensation</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Risk Management</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Maintaining Personnel Files</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) HR Information and Management Systems</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Recordkeeping</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Payroll</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Wellness and Benefit Programs</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Safety</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Use of Temporary Employees</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Union Payroll</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Benefits Training</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Responsibility</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
<th>% N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16) EEO/Diversity</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) Applicant Testing</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18) Employee Relations</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ≥70% represents attainment of group consensus

Of the three items upon which the panel reached consensus in Table 14, two were job responsibilities and one was treated as an observation. Eighty percent of the panel agreed IPMA-CP Certification Training does not place the same level of emphasis on technical skill development as SHRM. This is worth noting as it attained the highest level of consensus in this list. Worker’s Compensation (72 percent of the panel in agreement) and Financial HR Metrics (72 percent of the panel in agreement) were the two job responsibilities on which the panel agreed that were least supported by the CP Certification Program.

The panel was unable to reach consensus on any of the items listed in Table 15 as to why IPMA-HR Training failed to meet their needs in these areas.

Table 15

Which Responses Best Describe Why IPMA-CP Certification Did Not Meet Your Training Needs in These Areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)  Probably because these are the typical areas performed by HR and the time allotted</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2) Business partner, change agent, and HR leader were not discussed in the context of benefits and training</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Lack of direct use of these responsibilities in job applications</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) These are very technical responsibilities that require specialized classroom training</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) There wasn’t any real content in the course</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) There is not a section on recertification</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ≥70% represents attainment of group consensus

Section 10 - Recommended Additions to the IPMA-CP Certification Program

Of the ten recommendations for improving the CP Certification Program that were received in Round One, seven achieved panel consensus as shown in Table 16.

Table 16
What Additions to the IPMA-CP Certification Program Would You Recommend?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Discuss the role of HR in training</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Provide more technical skill building—in essence provide a public sector of the SHRM certification</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Provide more opportunities to network with other CPs and share successes, challenges, and experiences. This was the most helpful portion of the “competencies” training and it’s too bad the group doesn’t ever get back together again via some form of reunion every 3-5 years.</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Provide coverage of the basics of risk management and benefits</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Provide a study guide on CD</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Provide more skills-based knowledge in the areas of HR information and management systems</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 16 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7) Discuss methods used to evaluate personal performance pre-certification and post-certification and introducing factors to increase actual performance</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) The program should take into account participants come from different organizations with different rules, etc. that affect our decision making</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Provide more legal and compliance examples</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Provide time management training</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: >70% represents attainment of group consensus

The desire for more information on HR’s role in training was expressed by 87.5 percent of the panel. Here another reference was made to SHRM as 84 percent of the panel agreed the CP Certification Program should provide more skills-development training. More skills-based knowledge in the areas of HR information and management systems was requested by 72 percent of the panel while more networking opportunities were requested by 83.3 percent of the panel. Finally, development of a method that would evaluate personal performance pre- and post-certification and introduce factors that could increase performance was requested by 70.8 percent of the panel.

Section 11 - Behavioral-Skills-Based Certification Training Versus Knowledge-Based Certification Training

Ninety-two percent of panel felt CP Certification Training should consist of a blend of what panelists identified as “skills based” and “behavioral based” training.

The author, for purposes of understanding and to avoid confusion of the panelists’ responses with adult education literature, provides the following note of explanation. “Skills-based training,” as referred to by the panel in this study, is comparable in the adult education literature to behavioral-skills-based training. The goal of behavioral-skills-based
training is to provide learners with the skills needed to effectively perform the required job responsibilities in their institution or environment (Hagan, 1991; Wislock & Flannery, 1992). This form of training is sometimes called “how to” or “hands on” training as each step associated with a particular activity is explained or demonstrated and is practiced by the trainee. “Behavioral-based training” as referred to by the panel is comparable in the adult education literature to “knowledge-based training.” Knowledge-based training can be compared to traditional classroom instruction in which a concept, such as the IPMA Competency Model, is discussed after which an examination is given to test student comprehension and recall (“ADEC Guiding Principles,” n.d.). With this distinction made, the author will use the same terms as the panel in referencing these concepts.

Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) If CP certification is too skill based it may become too academic. On the other hand, we need to keep some academics. There may be some technical skills that an individual will not get in a particular HR job</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) I believe a component of skills-based competency should exist in the certification process; however, the behavioral-based model is more adequate in creating a professional certification due to the lack of formalized technical requirements for HR positions, particularly at higher levels</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) IPMA-CP training should have a combination of skills and behavioral training</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) By the time you get to this level in your career—to be interested in certification—I feel one is interested in the behavioral reasons an employee reacts. Training in that area will always interest me. The current structure of the certification program is good, but perhaps additional focus on behavioral-based skills could be added</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5) One can go anywhere (college/university, training sessions, etc.) to obtain the skills necessary for HR operations. Changes in our society are what trigger managers to change behaviors toward how we react and structure HR in our organizations. The certification is now structured toward leadership in HR. Skills can be quickly reviewed; however, the focus should be on changing behaviors that will assist HR professionals to lead organizations into the future</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Focused training sharpens my skills to help my organization grow. I can get general information from any seminar. The program should be tailored to correlate learned information to application. The initial certification lessons/testing is good, but the recertification process lacks focus</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Skills determine behavior. If skills are there they are easier to apply</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) I believe IPMA-CP training should be more behavioral based as we use the competency model for HR specialist at higher grades and in the development of our individual development plans in my organization. We use a competency-based approach to determine training needed for the coming year to perform the technical skills our clients need</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) I believe IPMA-CP training should be behavioral based because skills-based training is available everywhere</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) I believe IPMA-CP training should be behavioral based as the competencies discussed cover all areas of HR</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) It all depends on what the purpose of IPMA certification is and what certification is designed to evaluate. Right now is behavioral based</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) The current structure of the program is well suited for HR practitioners</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) The training should be skills-based to ensure HR professionals develop the skills and knowledge to perform their jobs well</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) I believe this training should be more skills based as technical competency provides the foundation for making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ninety-Two percent of the panel were concerned if the program focused too much on skill training it would become too academic; however, they feel the need to include skill-based training in the program since some HR professionals may work in organizations where they cannot use or develop these skills. Eighty-eight percent of the panel felt CP training should have a combination of skills and behavioral training, although none of the panelists stated what percentage of the training program each type of training should occupy. Ninety-two percent of the panel felt the behavioral-based model is more appropriate for creating a professional certification; however, they also felt a skills-based component should be part of the certification process.

There was also strong opinion, with 80 percent of the panel in agreement, that skills-based training is widely available from other sources and that the focus of the CP Certification Program should be behavioral based and should prepare HR professionals for positions of leadership in their organizations.

Section 12 - Future Career Development Plans of the Panelists

Thirty-two percent of the panel stated they would most likely pursue another HR-related certification. While it is unknown which certification they will pursue, the numerous references to SHRM make the professional in human resource (PHR) or senior professional in human resource (SPHR) certifications likely choices. Twenty-percent expressed interest in obtaining a terminal degree while eight percent said they would likely pursue an HR-related masters degree while 16 percent of the panel said they would likely pursue a non-HR-related masters degree. Twenty-four percent of the panel said they had no future career development plans.
CHAPTER FIVE
STUDY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the IPMA-CP Certification Program in preparing public sector HR professionals to perform the responsibilities of their job. While the panel’s overall perception of the value of this program is high, an analysis of the data indicated their desire to incorporate more behavioral-skills-based training into the program as they found the current level of “how-to” training to be inadequate to meet their needs. The level of knowledge-based training provided in this program appears to be adequate, especially in the area of managing change. Several other strengths and weaknesses of this program were also identified.

Strengths of the IPMA-CP Certification Program included its establishment of a professional HR designation for public sector HR professionals. The program, through its recertification requirement, provides opportunities for IPMA-HR members to learn and stay current on the changing focus and role of HR and to be exposed to new concepts in the field. The IPMA-CP Certification Program was also found by the panel to provide them credibility and recognition among their coworkers and peers.

Weaknesses of the program included a lack of recognition in both the public and private sectors, the low number of public-sector HR professionals who possess this certification, the lack of focus on organizational issues, the need for more specific training on strategic aspects of HR, and the need to provide more behavioral-based-skills training.
Identified Strengths of the IPMA-CP Certification Program

One of the strengths of the IPMA-CP program was its course content. When panelists were asked what aspects of the program they would omit, they unanimously responded “nothing,” a very strong indication this training was valued by the panel and was perceived, at least in part, to meet their needs. The perceived value of this program was further amplified by the fact that 97 percent of the panelists stated they would recommend IPMA-CP Certification to a colleague.

The establishment of a HR certification specifically for public sector HR professionals was another identified program strength, with 96.3 percent of the panel in agreement. While several members of the panel are certified by both IPMA and SHRM, the SHRM certification has a predominately private sector focus. The public sector focus provided by the IPMA-CP Certification allows its members to learn concepts and discuss HR-related issues unique to public sector HR management.

The IPMA-CP Certification Program also affords public sector HR professionals an opportunity to learn and stay abreast of developments in HR management and administration through continuing education. The recertification component of the IPMA-CP Certification Program was also identified as a strength of the program by 85.2 percent of the panel.

Nowicki (2002) identified the benefit of recertification and continuing education when compared to formal education. He states a significant disadvantage of traditional degrees is they usually have no continuing education requirement associated with them. This can result in the information gained in their pursuit becoming outdated very quickly. However, attainment of a professional certification means one has mastered and maintained, through recertification activities, a specialized body of knowledge developed by peers that is continuous and builds on the foundation established by the formal education process.
The IPMA Competency Model, which serves as the educational foundation of the IPMA-CP Certification Program, was valued by 96.2 percent of the panel. Administration of HR in both the private and public sectors is changing. Where HR was once primarily responsible for policy enforcement and ensuring the organization’s compliance with applicable state and federal employment laws, the profession has evolved to take on a more strategic position in many organizations (The SHRM Learning System, 2004). The IPMA-CP program’s practical application of HR administration, strategic planning focus, and emphasis on change management was considered favorable by 81.5 percent of the panel. The panel was in unanimous agreement that the IPMA-CP Certification Program made them aware of their own qualities and strengths and the need to be able to function in three key roles: leader, change agent, and business partner that are key to effective HR management in today’s organizations.

From a personal perspective, the psychological benefits that can be derived from obtaining certification can be very gratifying. Several authors cited in this study: Berta, (2002), Damore, (2002); Rowe, (2002); and Widoff, (1995) identified the psychological benefits that can be realized by achieving certification, one of which is the feeling of accomplishment that comes with passing an examination or assessment process based on a defined body of knowledge developed by one’s peers. Eighty-eight percent of the panelist in this study stated their IPMA-CP Certification Certificate was mounted in their office, indicating their pride in this accomplishment and serving notice to others the holder of this certification is a recognized and qualified professional in the HR field. Recognition by one’s peers was identified by 81.5 percent of the percent of the panel. In addition, 84.6 percent of the panel agreed certification had resulted in them receiving greater recognition from their peers inside and outside their organization.

The networking opportunities provided by the IPMA-CP Certification Program was identified as another strength. While classroom lectures, discussion, and tests are proven
methods by which adults learn, the opportunity to meet one’s peers from different geographical regions to discuss and share problems and solutions and to exchange knowledge and ideas was valued by 74.1 percent of the panel.

The program’s content in the areas of leadership, change, and customer service was rated important by 77.8 percent of the panel, who favorably compared the training provided through the program in these areas to a graduate-level course. The panel reached consensus on numerous attributes submitted in Round One relative to how they applied the knowledge obtained through certification training on the job.

Ninety-two percent of the panel credited this training with helping them look at their operations from a more strategic standpoint and to understand HR’s role in meeting the mission and vision of their organization. Ninety-six percent of the panel placed a high value on strategic HR management while 80 percent of the panel stated IPMA-CP Certification Training increased their awareness of the need to evaluate and measure the performance of their organizations in key areas such as recruitment, selection, and succession planning.

While it was not possible to compare job responsibilities across organizations, panelists reached consensus on nine job responsibilities they felt the IPMA-CP Certification Program supported. Six of these responsibilities: organizational development, performance management, strategic planning, employee development, management development, and change management, are knowledge-based concepts and are supported by the IPMA Competency Model. The remaining job responsibilities, employee communications, developing relevant training and development programs, and general HR responsibilities are behavioral-skills-based tasks.
Identified Weaknesses of the IPMA-CP Certification Program

Lack of recognition among one’s peers, lack of awareness of the IPMA-CP Certification Program, the low number of IPMA-HR members who hold the CP certification and the need for more behavioral-based-skills training were identified as the primary weaknesses of the CP Certification Program.

Eighty-percent of the panel agreed that one weakness of the program was the lack of public-sector HR professionals who possessed it. Eighty-percent of the panel stated other professionals in both the public and private sectors did not recognize the CP certification while 83.3 percent agreed the program was not well known. As of September 30, 2004 there were 5,849 members of IPMA-HR. Of this number, only 797 (13.6 percent) held the certified professional certification. Of the 797 certified CP professionals, 206 (25.8 percent) earned their certification via examination.

Prior to 1999 the only requirement for certification was 10 or more years of senior HR level experience. In 1999 the eligibility requirements were changed to a minimum of five years senior-level HR experience and passage of the IPMA-CP certification examination. The low percentage (13.6 percent) of members being IPMA-CP certified indicates additional work needs to be done by IPMA-HR to publicize and promote certification among its membership. Since the IPMA-CP Certification is designed for public sector HR professionals, it is not necessary, in the author’s opinion, to market the program outside the public sector; however, consideration should be given implementing measures that will increase member awareness of this certification as well as the awareness of their supervisors and those in executive leadership positions in their organizations.

Problems with certification can occur when there are multiple associations serving the same profession using different criteria (Hamm & Early, 1995). Many members of IPMA-HR also belong to and are certified by SHRM, the Society for Human Resource Management— the largest professional association for HR professionals in the world with over 190,000
members (Society for Human Resource Management, n.d.). Currently SHRM enjoys greater recognition than IPMA-HR and its certification programs are more widely known. In addition the structure of its certification programs, according to the panel in this study, is quite different. SHRM’s PHR (professional human resource certification) and SPHR (senior human resource certification) provide a mix of behavioral-skills-based and knowledge-based training while the IPMA-CP Certification Program is more knowledge-based. The panel in this study identified this difference as a major deficiency in the IPMA-CP Certification Program as 80 percent of the panel agreed “IPMA-CP training does not emphasize technical skill development like SHRM does.” While the IPMA Competency Model functions well as the foundation of the CP Certification Program and was perceived to be valued by 96.2 percent of the panel, 92 percent of the panel would like to see more behavioral-skills-based training incorporated into the program. This needs to occur if IPMA-HR desires to meet the needs of members and their desire for training that will prepare them to meet the responsibilities of their jobs.

The panel in this study clearly identified a need for more “how-to” training. When asked to choose from a list of 32 job responsibilities those that were best supported by IPMA-CP Training, the panel could only reach consensus nine of them. While it is not necessary for a HR professional to be proficient in all these areas, the opportunity for them to obtain training that will allow them to develop new job skills that will be critical to their continuing career and professional success. In what areas was behavioral training desired? The panel in this study identified three job-related areas. Seventy-six percent of the panel indicated they would like to receive more training on HR-related laws and regulations. Risk management and benefits training was identified by 75 percent of the panel while training in HR information and management systems was identified by 72 percent of the panel. If it is the mission of IPMA-HR to meet the needs of its members, serious consideration should be
given to identifying and providing more behavioral-based-skills training in the IPMA-CP Certification Program.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

This qualitative descriptive study represents an initial attempt to assess the perceptions of the effectiveness of the IPMA-CP Certification Program in preparing public-sector HR professionals to perform the responsibilities of their job. During the process of analyzing the data obtained for this study, and upon further reflection, several areas have been identified for further research.

Additional study should be conducted to determine the level of impact IPMA-CP Certified HR professionals have had on their organizations. What programs have they implemented? How have they established or positioned themselves as leaders, change agents, and business partners in their organizations? If they have successfully established themselves in these roles, what barriers did they encounter and how did they overcome them? Is there anything they would do differently? Additional study in this area could provide a wealth of information which could be beneficial to future certification seekers.

The panel in this study indicated three areas where they felt IPMA-CP Training should place more emphasis. They identified a lack of training programs addressing the strategic aspects of HR, the need for increased emphasis on organizational issues in certification training, and more discussion of the laws and regulations that HR professionals work with every day as training weaknesses of the CP Certification Program. Additional research should be done to specifically identify the areas where more strategic planning is needed, identify the organizational issues that may need more emphasis, and to identify the HR-related laws and regulations that members would like discussed in more detail.

What is an acceptable percentage of association members that should be certified? Currently just over 13 percent of IPMA-HR members are CP certified. The association may
want to poll non-certified members to determine their level of awareness of this certification and to identify their lack of interest in it. IPMA-HR may also want to consider establishing a percentage of its membership it would like to be CP Certified and challenge its certification and marketing personnel to meet and/or exceed this standard.

Finally, several references were made to SHRM certification and level of behavioral-based-skills training provided in their certification programs. It could be revealing to conduct a study of IPMA-HR members who hold both SHRM and IPMA-CP certifications to identify the similarities, differences, strengths and weaknesses between these certifications. While IPMA-HR may feel comparison of their certification program to one offered by another association is unwarranted, the results could prove useful, especially in identifying the areas in which behavioral-based-skills training available in SHRM’s certification programs that was clearly identified as a weakness of the IPMA-CP Certification Program in this study.

**Recommendations for Practice**

Several recommendations for practice were identified in this study. First, the panel in this study strongly believes more behavioral-based skills training should be incorporated into the CP Certification Program. While the Competency Model was determined to be appropriate in the preparing HR professionals to become leaders, change agents, and business partners within their organizations, IPMA-HR should place greater emphasis on skill development and preparing those in this program to develop and/or enhance their abilities to increase their effectiveness on the job.

Second, IPMA-HR should consider initiating a marketing campaign among its membership to increase awareness and interest in the CP Certification Program. Increasing awareness of this program and its benefits could stimulate greater interest and would help to address the lack of awareness that the panel identified as being a weakness of the program. Increased marketing would improve the perceived value of the program. As more public-
sector HR professionals obtain this certification their supervisors in general, and their organizations in particular, will become more aware of the IPMA-CP Certification Program which may increase its value and respectability and may encourage more members to pursue it.

Third, panelists in this study clearly identified Worker’s Compensation and Finance-HR Metrics as areas least supported by the CP Certification Program. In determining the areas in which more behavioral-based skills training is desired, additional information should be gathered to determine the level of training CP certified members would prefer in these areas.

Fourth, IPMA-HR should consider conducting a comparative study to determine the level of satisfaction with the program in relationship to the manner in which participants prepared to take the certification examination. How do those who have taken the certification preparatory class feel about the program as opposed to those who used the self-study module? Is traditional classroom instruction better suited to provide the level of behavioral-based skills training members desire as opposed to the self-study module alone? How does the way one prepares for the examination affect their performance on the examination and their perception of the program? Such a study could prove insightful as to what preparation method works best and could reveal additional areas for improvement in each.

**Impact of This Study on Professional Certification Programs**

While this study exclusively examined the IPMA-CP Certification Program, it does have implications that could be applicable to professional certifications in other fields.

First, if the intended purpose of IPMA-CP Certification is to increase the proficiency of members to perform certain aspects of their jobs, it is important that the program be evaluated on a regular basis to determine how well it is meeting this goal. Is it providing the appropriate level of instruction to help someone who has never performed a particular job
function to go back to the workplace after receiving this training and satisfactorily perform this task? If the program is knowledge-based, are those receiving this training mastering this information at a level that will markedly increase their knowledge base and allow them to apply their newly acquired knowledge on the job?

Second, certifying organizations should regularly evaluate the value members who attain certification place on it. While those who develop or sponsor these programs may have one perception of its value to members, those who participate in this training may have a different perspective of its worth. Certifying organizations should regularly assess member perceptions of their programs to identify what they are doing well, what needs to be revised, what should be added, and what should be deleted from the program.

Third, certifying organizations should consider assessing how well participants are transferring the knowledge and skills training obtained in their certification training programs to the job. If they are not applying these principles in the workplace, why? What barriers are participants encountering in trying to use this knowledge and skill at work? How can these barriers be overcome? How can this information be obtained and shared with those who participate in future certification programs? The more knowledge and skills participants can use in the workplace the more value the program will be perceived to have. Knowing how well a program has prepared participants to apply what they have learned on the job is directly related to the level of value one believes he has received from it. If a training intervention provides participants with knowledge and skills they find useful, the intervention will be perceived to have value by those who complete it and may become desired by others.
REFERENCES


From: Debra A. Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator
North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board

Date: June 10, 2003

Project Title: Determining the Effectiveness of the International Public Management Association for Human Resources Certified Professional Certification Program in Assisting Human Resource Managers in Performing the Responsibilities of Their Job

IRB#: 146-03-6

Dear Mr. Noble:

The research proposal named above has received administrative review and has been approved as exempt from the policy as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Exemption: 46.101 b.2). Provided that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative, this project is exempt from further review.

NOTE:

1. This committee complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations
   For NCSU projects, the Assurance Number is: FWA00003429; the IRB Number is: IRB00000330

2. Review de novo of this proposal is necessary if any significant alterations/additions are made.

Please provide your faculty sponsor with a copy of this letter. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Debra Paxton
NCSU IRB
August 2003

Dear IPMA-CP and IPMA-CS,

I am writing to encourage you to participate in the survey that is being conducted by Aaron Noble, HR Director, City of Burlington, North Carolina. Aaron is undertaking this survey as part of his dissertation research.

This survey is designed to assess the effectiveness of the Association's certification program in assisting human resource managers in the performance of their job responsibilities. Aaron has advised that he will share his survey results with all those who complete the survey.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Neil Reichenberg
Executive Director
8 February 2005

Dear IPMA-HR Certified Professional:

You are invited to serve on an expert panel of IPMA-CP certified HR practitioners in participating in a research study in which your expertise is requested to provide feedback regarding the effectiveness of the IPMA-CP Certification Program in preparing HR professional to perform the responsibilities of their job. This research is part of my doctoral study in the Department of Adult and Community College Education at North Carolina State University. This study has the endorsement of IPMA-HR (letter attached). The results will be submitted to the association for its use in assessing the IPMA-CP Certification Program.

This study will be conducted in part using the Delphi Research Methodology, which is used to produce convergence of opinion from a group of experts in situations where the responses sought are value judgments. This is achieved by providing each panelist a series (round) of questionnaires that reiterate the same questions while providing group feedback from previous rounds.

In Round One of this study, 31 HR job responsibilities are listed on the survey instrument. You are asked to use the check boxes and text boxes provided to record your responses as to how well the IPMA-CP Certification Program has prepared you to perform each job responsibility. Space is provided to list any job responsibilities you perform that are not included in the initial list. Section Five of the survey instrument contains several open-ended questions where you are asked to evaluate and/or describe the effectiveness of the IPMA-CP training program in several areas. The Delphi methodology will be applied to these questions. Completion of the Round One survey instrument should take between 30 and 45 minutes. Please be mindful your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. No penalties will be assessed or benefits lost should you elect not to participate. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. Your responses will be held in the strictest of confidence. Data will be securely stored and all survey results reported in aggregate terms. At the conclusion of the study, all survey forms will be destroyed.

The survey forms and data gathering process used in this study should not present any foreseeable risks or discomforts to participants. If at any time during this process you feel you have not been treated according to the conditions outlined in this letter, or you believe your rights as a participant have been violated, contact the Institutional Review Board for the Use of Human Subjects in Research, North Carolina State University, Campus Box 7514, Raleigh, NC 27695-7514, Phone 919.515.4514. Your completion and submission of the Round One survey instrument will be considered as your agreement to participate in this study.

Should you have questions about any aspect of this study, you may email me at anoble@ci.burlington.nc.us or call me at 336.222.5106 between the hours of 8 am and 5 pm EST Monday through Friday.

I hope you will elect to participate in this study. Upon conclusion of my research I will provide each participant a summary of the study results. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to working with you and sharing the results of our work with IPMA-HR.

Sincerely,

Aaron P. Noble, Jr.
Design Survey

To change the look of your survey, select a choice below. Click 'Add' to create your own custom theme.

Theme: Blue Ice

Round One - IPMA-CP Certification Evaluation Study

1. Introduction

Using the check and text entry boxes below, please provide the information requested. Should you have questions call Aaron Noble at 336.222.5106 between the hours of 8 am and 5 pm EST or email Aaron Noble at anoble@ci.burlington.nc.us. Please complete and return this questionnaire by Wednesday, 16 February 2005. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Click "Next" to get started with the survey. If you would like to leave the survey at any time, just click "Exit This Survey." Your answers will be saved.

2. Participant Profile

1. Age
   - 20 - 29 years old
   - 30 - 39 years old
   - 40 - 49 years old
   - 50 years old or older

2. Level of Education
   - High School
   - Human Resource Certificate
   - Associate Degree
   - Bachelor Degree
   - Masters Degree
   - Doctorate Degree

http://www.surveymonkey.com/SurveySummary.asp?SID=857151&Rnd=8.524507E-02

3/2/2005
3. Size of Organization
- Less than 200 employees
- 200 - 499 employees
- 500 - 999 employees
- 1,000 - 1,999 employees
- 2,000 - 3,999 employees
- 4,000 employees or more

4. Years of Public Sector HR Experience
- 1 - 5 years
- 6 - 10 years
- 11 - 15 years
- 16 - 20 years
- 20 or more years

5. Type of Organization
- Federal
- State
- County
- Municipal
- Authority
- Other (please specify)

6. Number of Years IPMA-CP Certified
- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five or more years

3. Job Responsibilities

For each job responsibility listed, please check if you currently perform this responsibility. If you are presently performing this responsibility, please indicate.
whether you performed it prior to obtaining IPMA-CP Certification or after obtaining certification.

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<td>7. Labor Relations</td>
<td>Do you currently perform this responsibility? (if not check “No” and proceed to #9)</td>
<td>Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification? (if not check “No” and proceed to #9)</td>
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| 8. Comments: | |
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| 9. HR Forecasting | Do you currently perform this responsibility? (if not check “No” and proceed to #11) | Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification? | Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification? | Add Question | Add Page |
| Yes | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] |
| No | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] |

| 10. Comments: |
| [ ] |
11. Employee Relations

Do you currently perform this responsibility? (If not check "No" and proceed to #13)

- Yes
- No

Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

- Yes
- No

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

- Yes
- No

12. Comments:

[Blank field for comments]

13. Risk Management

Do you currently perform this responsibility? (If not check "No" and proceed to #15)

- Yes
- No

Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

- Yes
- No

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

- Yes
- No
### OSHA Compliance

Do you currently perform this responsibility? (If not check "No" and proceed to #17)

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### Needs Analysis

Do you currently perform this responsibility? (If not check "No" and proceed to #19)

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Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

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Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

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18. Comments:

19. Maintain Personnel Records
Do you currently perform this responsibility? (if not check "No" and proceed to #21)
Yes
No

Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

20. Comments:

21. Direct Employee Wellness Programs
Do you currently perform this responsibility? (if not check "No" and proceed to #23)
Yes
No

Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?
23. Return on Investment Analysis
Do you currently perform this responsibility? (if not check "No" and proceed to #25)
Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?
Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

Yes
No

24. Comments:

25. Worker's Compensation
Do you currently perform this responsibility? (if not check "No" and proceed to #27)
Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?
Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

http://www.surveymonkey.com/SurveySummary.asp?SID=857151&Rnd=8.524507E-02
3/2/2005
26. Comments:

27. Performance Management Studies
Do you currently perform this responsibility?
(if not check "No" and proceed to #29)

Do you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

28. Comments:

29. Succession Planning
Do you currently perform this responsibility?
(if not check "No" and obtaining)

Do you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining

Proceed to certification? certification?
Yes
No

30. Comments:

31. Executive Development Program
Do you currently perform this responsibility? (if not check “No” and proceed to #33)
Yes
No

32. Comments:

33. Employee Communications
Do you currently perform this responsibility?
Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?
Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

http://www.surveymonkey.com/SurveySummary.asp?SID=857151&Rnd=8.524507E-02
3/2/2005
(if not check "No" and proceed to #35) prior to obtaining certification? as the result of obtaining certification?

Yes

No

34. Comments:

35. Temporary Employment Services

Do you currently perform this responsibility? Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification? as the result of obtaining certification?

Yes

No

36. Comments:

37. Grievance Administration

Do you currently Did you Do you now

Do you currently perform this responsibility? (If not check "No" and proceed to #43)

Yes
No

Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

42. Comments:

43. Mediation/Conflict Resolution

Do you currently perform this responsibility? (If not check "No" and proceed to #45)

Yes
No

Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

44. Comments:
45. Employee Recognition Programs
Do you currently perform this responsibility? Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification? Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?
Yes | | |
No | | |

46. Comments:

47. Applicant Testing
Do you currently perform this responsibility? Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification? Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?
Yes | | |
No | | |

48. Comments:

49. Employee Training Programs

Do you currently perform this responsibility?
(if not check "No" and proceed to #51)

Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

Yes [ ] [ ] [ ]

No [ ] [ ] [ ]

50. Comments:

---

51. Job Classification

Do you currently perform this responsibility?
(if not check 'No' and proceed to #53)

Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

Yes [ ] [ ] [ ]

No [ ] [ ] [ ]

52. Comments:

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53. Monitor Organization Staffing Levels

Do you currently perform this responsibility? (if not check "No" and proceed to #55)

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]

Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]

54. Comments:


55. Benefits Administration

Do you currently perform this responsibility? (if not check "No" and proceed to #57)

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]

Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]
56. Comments:

57. EEO/AA

Do you currently perform this responsibility? (if not check ‘No’ and proceed to #59)

| Yes | | |
| No | | |

Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

| | Yes | No |

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

| | | Yes | No |

58. Comments:

59. Employee Recruitment

Do you currently perform this responsibility? (if not check ‘No’ and proceed to #61)

| Yes | | |
| No | | |

Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

| | Yes | No |

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

| | | Yes | No |
60. Comments:

61. Compensation
- Do you currently perform this responsibility? (if not check "No" and proceed to #63)
- Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?
- Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

Yes
No

62. Comments:

63. Payroll
- Do you currently perform this responsibility? (if not check "No" and proceed to #65)
- Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?
- Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

Yes
64. Comments:

65. Strategic Planning
Do you currently perform this responsibility? (if not check 'No' and proceed to #67)

Yes

No

66. Comments:

67. Employee Assistance Program
Do you currently perform this responsibility? (if not check 'No' and proceed to Section 4 - Additional Job)

Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

http://www.surveymonkey.com/SurveySummary.asp?SID=857151&Rnd=8.524507E-02

3/2/2005
4. Additional Job Responsibilities

If there are job responsibilities you perform that are not on the preceding list, please list them below. If there are none, please go to "Section 5 - Additional Information Section."

70. For the job responsibility you listed above, please answer the following questions:

Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

Yes ☐ No ☐
72. Job Responsibility Performed:

| Add Question | Add Page |

73. For the job responsibility you listed above, please answer the following questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?</th>
<th>Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

74. Comments:

| Add Question | Add Page |

75. Job Responsibility Performed:

| Add Question | Add Page |

76. For the job responsibility you listed above, please answer the following questions:

| Did you | Do you now |

http://www.surveymonkey.com/SurveySummary.asp?SID=857151&Rnd=8.524507E-02

3/2/2005
77. Comments:

78. Job Responsibility Performed:

79. For the job responsibility you listed above, please answer the following questions:

Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification?

Yes
No

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification?

Yes
No

80. Comments:
81. Job Responsibility Performed:

82. For the job responsibility you listed above, please answer the following questions:

Did you perform this responsibility prior to obtaining certification? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you now perform this responsibility as the result of obtaining certification? Yes [ ] No [ ]

83. Comments:

84. What do you consider to be the strengths of the IPMA-CP Certification Program?

85. What do you consider to be the weaknesses of the IPMA-CP Certification Program?
Program?

86. How have you applied what you learned in preparing to take the IPMA-CP Certification Exam on the job?

87. Of the job responsibilities you currently perform, which five do you feel IPMA-CP Certification Training best supported?

88. Why?

89. Of the job responsibilities you currently perform, which five do you feel IPMA-CP Certification Training least supported?
90. Why?

91. What aspects of the IPMA-CP Certification Program would you suggest be omitted?

92. What additions to the IPMA-CP Certification Program would you recommend?

93. Should the IPMA-CP Certification Program be more skills focused (should its primarily focus be to provide HR practitioners with the technical skills needed on the job) or more behavioral focused as based on the IPMA-HR Competency Model?
   - Skills Based
   - Behavioral Based
Current Structure of IPMA-CP Certification Program is Just Right

94. Briefly explain your answer:

95. What problems, if any, did you encounter in completing the IPMA-CP Certification Program?

96. How did you prepare for the IPMA-CP Certification Exam?
   - Self-Study Module
   - Certification Preparatory Class
   - Both

97. If you used the self-study module to prepare for the IPMA-CP Certification Exam, how valuable was it to you?
   - No Value
   - Somewhat Valuable
   - Very Valuable

98. Comments:

89. If you took the certification preparatory class to prepare for the IPMA-CP Certification Exam, how valuable was this class to you?
   - No Value
   - Somewhat Valuable
   - Very Valuable

100. Comments:

101. If you took used the self study module AND the certification preparatory class to prepare for the IPMA-CP Certification Exam, how valuable was this process to you?
   - No Value
   - Somewhat Valuable
   - Very Valuable

102. Comments:

103. What benefits have you realized as the result of obtaining IPMA-CP Certification (check all that apply)?
- Increased Pay
- Promotion
- Greater recognition within my organization
- Greater recognition among my peers
- Other (please list)

104. Would you recommend IPMA-CP Certification to a colleague?
- Yes
- No

105. If you answered no above, why would you not recommend IPMA-CP Certification to a someone else?

6. You've Finished Round One!

Thank you very much for participating in Round One of this study. The responses in "Section 5 - Additional Information" will be summarized, categorized, and provided to you in Round Two in an effort to arrive at group consensus within a few days. Your continued participation in this study would be greatly appreciated!
Design Survey  [Show All Pages and Questions]

To change the look of your survey, select a choice below. Click 'Add' to create your own custom theme.

Theme: [Orange Zest]  [Add]

Round Two - IPMA-CP Certification Evaluation Survey  [Edit Title]  [Edit Numbering]

1. Instructions  [Add Page]  [Delete Page]  [Copy/Move]  [Add Logic]

Following are individual responses recorded by expert panel members in Round One this study.

For most of these questions, a list of individual comments has been assembled. Please record your response using the pull-down menus to record whether you agree or disagree with statement shown or use the check boxes to record your response if provided.

Please complete and return this questionnaire by Wednesday, 2 March 2005.

Should you have questions regarding this survey, please call me at 336.222.5106 between the hours of 8 am and 5 pm EST Monday through Friday or email me at anoble@ci.burlington.nc.us.

Click "Next" to get started with the survey. If you would like to leave the survey at any time, just click "Exit This Survey." Your answers will be saved.

Thank you very much for your participation and prompt response.

Question #1
What do you consider to be the strengths of the IPMA-CP Certification Program?

Please use the pull-down menu to register whether you agree or disagree with the following responses to the above question:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/SurveySummary.asp?SID=881721&Rnd=0.6650659  3/16/2005
1. The introduction of leadership, change, and customer-service concepts that are normally taught in graduate school

2. The discussion of change management and building business partnerships

3. Access to valuable and current information in the public sector HR field

4. Networking opportunities with other HR professionals

5. Emphasis on continuing education to maintain certification

6. The IPMA-CP Certification Program certifies KSAs gained in public sector HR management

7. Provides a professional designation for public sector HR professionals

8. The training process one must go through prior to taking the test

9. The self-evaluation process

http://www.surveymonkey.com/SurveySummary.asp?SID=881721&Rnd=0.6650659

3/16/2005
10. The program focuses on practical application of human resource administration, strategic planning, and decision-making

11. Discussion on the changing focus and role of HR

12. Recognition by my coworkers and HR peers

13. Focus on behavior/consultant competencies

14. Provides a well-rounded foundation in HR management

15. Provides credibility

16. Provides exposure to new concepts

17. Emphasizes need for HR professionals to become business partners

18. Provides opportunity to learn more about the IPMA-CP Competency Model and HR's role in this model
Question #2
What do you consider to be the weaknesses of the IPMA-CP Certification Program?

Please use the pull-down menu to register whether you agree or disagree with the following responses to the above question:

21. Lack of local chapters in some parts of the country

22. Number of points required to recertify is problematic given budget restraints to attend seminars and conferences

23. Not enough professional development programs offered

24. Certification program is not well known or recognized

25. Lack of impact of certification on future job performance
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<tr>
<td>26. Could use more real-life examples in certification preparatory course. Perhaps a project to work on using different collaborative styles and the pros and cons of each</td>
<td>[Add Question] [Add Page]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Subject matter very subjective and can be confusing</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. No oversight for online testing</td>
<td>[Add Question] [Add Page]</td>
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<td>29. Lack of HR professionals who possess this certification--there is strength in numbers</td>
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<tr>
<td>30. More sites are needed where members can take the certification exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>31. Some of the models used in preparing for the exam are outdated and need updating</td>
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<tr>
<td>32. Not enough specific training programs on the strategic aspects of HR</td>
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<td>33. My employer does not recognize my certification</td>
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<tr>
<td>34. Not enough emphasis in the certification study materials on technical competencies</td>
<td>[Add Question] [Add Page]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
35. More emphasis is needed on HR/Risk Management subjects

36. More focus on organizational issues is needed

37. Training is too theoretical and is not applicable to small and medium sized agencies

38. Maintaining certification requires too much time from the job to attend conferences and seminars

39. Competency model is great, but on a day-to-day basis HR professionals have to deal with various laws and regulations that are not the focus of the program

40. The certification application process is too lengthy and the number of years experience needed to qualify for certification is too strict. Young people in the field can’t qualify for certification due to lack of experience and more experienced professionals don’t want to take the exam

41. Lack of recognition by other professionals in both the public and private sector

Question #3
How have you applied what you learned in preparing to take the IPMA-CP Certification Exam on the job?

http://www.surveymonkey.com/SurveySummary.asp?SID=881721&Rnd=0.6650659

3/16/2005
Please use the pull-down menu to register whether you agree or disagree with the following responses to the above question:

42. I have incorporated elements from all the modules into my current assignments and found them very useful

43. I have not had a chance to apply it on the job

44. Studying for the exam reiterated the need to evaluate and measure the efforts of my organization in employee recruitment, selection, succession planning, and strategic planning

45. This knowledge has assisted me in partnering efforts with other agencies

46. I have used this information to conduct training sessions with HR staff

47. Some of this information served as a good refresher while some of it was too subjective

48. Certification has served to confirm the effectiveness and value of many of the current practices in my organization

49. The most important lesson I took away from certification is the importance of identifying the value of HR to the mission and vision of my organization,
50. The topics helped me think about our HR program and how to make it more effective.

51. I continue to keep as current as possible on strategic human resource management issues through various professional journals, training opportunities, and professional organizations.

52. It reinforced my willingness to think out of the box on HR issues even though we are a regulation-based profession.

53. I used my experience to take the test.

54. Training assisted me in being able to recognize phases of change.

55. I think it has given me more confidence.

56. I’m trying to focus less on policy and more on becoming a change agent. I use the competency model when polices must be changed for successful implementation.

57. I apply my knowledge in every aspect of my job on a daily basis.
Question #4
Of the job responsibilities you currently perform, which do you feel IPMA-CP Certification Training best supported?

Please use the pull-down menu to register whether you agree or disagree with the following responses to the above question:

60. Workforce Development

61. Youth Employment

62. Management of a job center

63. Developing relevant programs for training and development
You're Nearly Halfway Finished!

64. Strategic planning

65. Performance Management

66. Employee Relations

67. Workforce planning

68. Recruitment and selection

69. Compensation training

70. Succession planning

71. Strategic HR regulatory issues

72. Training on the stages of change

http://www.surveymonkey.com/SurveySummary.asp?SID=881721&Rnd=0.6650659  3/16/2005
Question #5
Which comments best describe why you feel IPMA-CP Certification Training met your needs in these areas?

Please use the pull-down menu to register whether you agree or disagree with the following responses to the above question

93. It made me aware of my own qualities and strengths to incorporate the leadership, change agent, and business partner characteristics into my job as well as the knowledge of management styles that I learned
94. It provide me with a greater understanding of my role in HR as a consultant to managers and employees
95. It was helpful to me because most chapter conferences do not address these areas
96. Training for this certification expanded my public sector knowledge/content base
97. The scenarios and questions were relevant to the work I do and I was able to draw from my work experience
98. There was significant importance placed on the employer/employee relationship and how maintaining and fostering that relationship would ultimately result in success to the organization.

99. Because I work in a small municipality IPMA training has given me a broader picture of the "how" and "why"

100. These are the areas that caused me to update my knowledge prior to taking the certification exam

101. It was not so much task based but more theory and organization based

102. Teaming with employees at all levels as a business partner facilitates the development of all the areas listed

103. I use the concept of teamwork to deal with employees that may have some issues by helping them understand and recognize their contributions to the organization.

104. IPMA-CP training provides training from a practical approach that fits the everyday problems I encounter on the job.

105. Understanding the four roles and looking at things from four different
perspectives makes for lot more options and helps stimulate creativity on the job

Of the job responsibilities you currently perform, which do you feel IPMA-CP Certification Training least supported?

Please use the pull-down menu to register whether you agree or disagree with the following responses to the above question

106. Classification

107. EEO/Diversity

108. HR Information and Management Systems

109. Financial HR Metrics

110. Compensation

111. Risk Management

112. Wellness and benefit programs
113. Worker's Compensation

114. Use of temporary employees

115. Applicant testing

116. Maintaining files

117. Benefits training

118. IPMA-CP training does not emphasize technical skill development like SHRM does

119. Union payroll

120. Recordkeeping

121. Employee relations
Question #8
Which responses best describe why you feel IPMA-CP Certification Training did not meet your needs in these areas?

Please use the pull-down menu to register whether you agree or disagree with the following responses to the above question.

124. There wasn't any real content in the course

125. There is not a section on recertification

126. Lack of direct use of these responsibilities in job applications

127. These are very technical responsibilities that require specialized classroom training

128. Probably because these are the typical areas performed by HR and the time allotted would not permit more detailed information or discussion. Furthermore, the training sessions discussed the future progression of HR and how its leaders will respond to changes in our work environment which ultimately responds to specific areas of HR that were not discussed or at least supported.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/SurveySummary.asp?SID=881721&Rnd=0.6650659

3/16/2005
Question #9
What additions to the IPMA-CP Certification Program would you recommend?

Please use the pull-down menu to register whether you agree or disagree with the following responses to the above question

130. Time management

131. Provide a study guide on CD

132. Provide more skill-based knowledge in the area of HR information and management systems

133. Discuss methods used to evaluate personal performance precertification and post-certification and introducing factors to increase actual performance

134. The program should take into account participants come from different organizations with different rules, etc. that affect our decision making
Question #10
Some practitioners feel IPMA-CP Certification Training should be more skills based while others feel it should be more behavioral based.

Using the pull-down menu, please register if you agree or disagree with the following comments:
Individual development plans in my organization. We use a competency-based approach to determine training needed for the coming year to perform the technical skills our clients need.

142. I believe IPMA-CP training should be behavioral based as the competencies discussed cover all areas of HR.

143. IPMA-CP training should have a combination of skills and behavioral training.

144. I believe a component of skills-based competency should exist in the certification process; however, the behavioral-based model is more adequate in creating a professional certification due to the lack of formalized technical requirements for HR positions, particularly at higher levels.

145. I believe this training should be more skills based as technical competency provides the foundation for making effective decisions.

146. One can go anywhere (college/university, training sessions, etc.) to obtain the skills necessary for HR operations. The changes in our society are what trigger managers to change behaviors toward how we react and structure HR in organizations. The certification is now structured toward leadership in HR. Skills can be quickly reviewed; however, the focus should be on changing behaviors that will assist HR professionals to lead organizations into the future.

147. It all depends on what the purpose of IPMA certification is and what certification is designed to evaluate. Right now it is behavioral based.

148. This training should be skills-based to ensure HR professionals develop the skills and knowledge to perform their jobs well.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/SurveySummary.asp?SID=881721&Rnd=0.6650659
3/16/2005
149. By the time you get to this level in your career—to be interested in certification—I feel one is interested in the behavioral reasons an employee reacts. Training in that area will always interest me. The current structure of the certification program is good, but perhaps additional focus on behavioral-based skills could be added.

150. Skills determine behavior. If the skills are there they are easier to apply.

151. Focused training sharpens my skills to help my organization grow. I can get general information from any seminar. The program should be tailored to correlate learned information to application. The initial certification lessons/testing is good, but the recertification process lacks focus.

152. The current structure of the program is well suited for HR practitioners.

153. If CP certification is too skill based it may become too academic. On the other hand, we need to keep some academics. There may be some technical skills that an individual will not get in a particular HR job.

12. You're Almost Finished!

Just three more questions to go!

154. Question #11
Several HR professionals participating in this study stated more respect among their peers as being one of the reasons they pursued certification. From a certification/recognition standpoint, who do you consider most to be your peers? (check one)

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3/16/2005
155. Question #12
Now that you have obtained IPMA-CP Certification, what professional development activity will you pursue next? (check one)
- Another HR-Related Certification
- A Non-HR Related Certification
- Masters Degree
- Doctorate Degree
- None in the Foreseeable Future
- Other (please specify)

156. Where is your IPMA-CP Certification Certificate Now? (check one)
- Mounted in my office at work
- Mounted at my home
- In a drawer or otherwise not on display
- Other (please specify)

13. Thank You!

Thank you very much for participating in this study. I will send you a summary by the end of May as well as share the results of our work with IPMA-HR.

I greatly appreciate your patience and cooperation and hope I will have an opportunity to personally meet and thank you in the future. If I can ever be of assistance to you, I'm just an email or phone call away. Thanks Again!

Sincerely,

Aaron P. Noble, Jr.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/SurveySummary.asp?SID=881721&Rnd=0.6650659 3/16/2005