Top 10 Benefits to Earning a Certification

~ By John Reiling

Is it worth putting in all of the work? Consider these benefits of earning a certification, and if you see the benefits for your situation, go for it!

1. A differentiator against the competition. When employers are interviewing, the competition is often stiff. If you have the certification, and the other person does not, you are at a definite advantage.

2. Plugs you into two new communities: one that is earning the certification, and one that has the certification. For example, if you are going for your PMP certification, you will immediately have something in common with other hopefuls, and this can provide networking opportunities through classes, the web, and meetings. The same holds true when you have earn the certification; you are a member of the "club." While these are benefits of PMP certification, the same would hold true of most certifications.

3. Gives you confidence that you have "passed through the chairs." When you have set your sights on a goal, put together a plan, work hard, and you reach it, you gain confidence, which spills over into all aspects of your life.

4. Gives you tools to draw upon when needed. Having gone through all of the study and hard work, you have mastered a new body of knowledge. Put it to use as soon as you can!

5. While it is said that "experience is the greatest teacher," a certification "rounds you out." Often, experience is strong in some areas, but not in others. Like education, experience rounds you out, giving exposure to ideas and approaches outside your comfort zone. In addition, being able to think outside your experience is an ingredient of leadership.

6. You can be a better mentor. The ability to mentor is based greatly on experience, but the best mentors can reach beyond their experience. They are able to extrapolate from their experience, and relate it to someone else's entirely different experience.

7. Establishes you as a continuous learner. Employers are always looking for people who never want to stop learning. Learning is a value unto itself, and those around you will respect and admire you for it, and sometimes even be a little jealous!

8. Will enable you to make more money. Often, earning a certification, such as the PMP, can quickly lead to compensation increases of 20% and more.

9. Enables you to better evaluate the talents and skills of others. With the discipline to master the material for the certification, you are in a better position to evaluate the skills of others. You have had the opportunity to evaluate your own strengths and weaknesses in the process of earning the certification, and have a broader understanding of the skills and toolsets that can be effective.
10. Gets your foot in the door in the new area. Many career changers turn to certifications to get themselves into a new area. For example, many technical people who want to advance will earn the PMP certification in order to move into a position of greater responsibility.

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