Perceived Value of HRCI Certification

AN INDEPENDENT ANALYSIS
COMMISSIONED BY THE HR CERTIFICATION INSTITUTE
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SUMMARY

The popularity of professional certification continues to expand in many fields, including Human Resources (HR). While certification programs are voluntary by definition, increasingly certifications are preferred or required for employment, built into employee development plans, and/or rewarded with benefits for the employee (e.g., compensation increase, bonus, promotions).

The HR Certification Institute (HRCI) conducts ongoing research on the satisfaction and value of their certification and recertification programs. In the past, HRCI has used this research to identify process or customer service issues and make improvements. HRCI contracted an independent consulting firm, International Credentialing Associates (ICA), to analyze and report the results of the HRCI post-examination and recertification surveys – focusing on the questions related to the perceived value of HRCI certifications.

Analysis shows a high valuation of HRCI certifications on almost all factors measured:

- A high percentage of respondents on both surveys indicated that HRCI certification provided intrinsic value by providing professional growth, increasing professional confidence, and creating professional challenge.
- A majority stated that HRCI certification provided extrinsic value by raising their professional credibility, increasing marketability, and helping to advance their career.

Specific findings on the post-examination survey included:

- A majority of candidates were satisfied with the certification process and recommend HRCI certification.
- Candidates were also very satisfied with the test format, test delivery approach, and knowledge acquired from the process.

Specific findings on the recertification survey included:

- A high percentage of credential holders were satisfied with the recertification process and were likely to recommend HRCI certification. The importance and satisfaction of the aspects of the recertification process were highly rated.
- The relative ease of understanding and applying for the HRCI recertification program, method for recording recertification activities, and recertification application and payment process were also highly rated.

Based upon an analysis of these results, HRCI candidate and credential holders highly value their certifications and rely on their certifications to help them meet professional development needs, open doors in their career development, and affirm their professional knowledge and competence.
RESULTS – VALUE OF HRCI CERTIFICATION IN ONE WORD

Both surveys asked the respondents to provide a single word to describe how they valued their certification. **Credibility** was the most cited term on both surveys, followed by **knowledge** and **recognition**. **Accomplishment** and **validation** were cited by candidates on the post-examination survey, while **professional** and **prestige** were mentioned on the recertification survey.

While credibility is discussed extensively in this report, several comments illustrated how the certification added **knowledge** as part of the certification value:

- “Studying for the certification exam expanded and deepened my understanding in several key content areas.”
- “Knowledge to perform my job in a more professional and efficient manner.”
- “The wealth of knowledge that you gain in your study preparation and learning how so many different aspects of HR relate to the organization’s strategic bottom line.”
- “It forced me to brush up on my HR knowledge, especially employment law, and being certified is a way to legitimize my skills.”
- “I enjoyed gaining additional knowledge and confidence in my understanding of best practices.”
RESULTS – VALUE OF HRCI CERTIFICATION STATEMENTS

Both surveys asked the respondents to rate their agreement (or disagreement) with 11 statements on the value of their HRCI certification. The value of HRCI certification was rated highly, with both groups agreeing that HRCI certification raises professional credibility, demonstrates commitment to HR, and indicates professional growth. The chart below shows those who selected “agree” or “strongly agree” to these statements.

Comments from survey respondents also reinforced the value found from quantitative analysis. A few of these comments highlighted below demonstrate the high value given to HRCI certifications by HR professionals.

- “I believe the credentials give me credibility. The examination remains rigorous which maintains the value of the credential.”
- “The value of putting ‘PHR’ after my name when applying for jobs.”
- “Studying for the certification exam expanded and deepened my understanding in several key content areas.”
- “The vast information the exam covers is a great foundation for any HR professional.”
Both surveys asked the respondents to select the unique traits or qualities of certified professionals. Respondents could select as many of the traits or qualities as desired. A chart below shows the results, sorted in descending order by post-examination survey rating. The highest selected traits by both groups were HR knowledge, credibility, desire to learn and stay current, desire to grow and develop, and professionalism.

Note: due to space constraints, the percentages for the post-examination survey are displayed first, while the recertification percentages are displayed second.
RESULTS – LIKELIHOOD TO RECOMMEND HRCI CERTIFICATION

Both surveys asked the respondents to rate the likelihood of recommending HR certification to their HR colleagues. **Overwhelmingly, respondents stated that they were definitely to probably likely to recommend HRCI certification to colleagues.** The chart below shows the overall ratings for the post-examination and recertification surveys.

In comparing subgroups, the most notable differences in ratings were found on the post-examination survey between those who passed and failed. ***Passing candidates rated the statement, “the likelihood to recommend” significantly higher than failing candidates, yet 81% of failing candidates still would recommend HRCI.

No other comparisons showed a significant difference.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this analysis demonstrate that HRCI certifications are highly valued by both candidates and credential holders alike.

This is the first time the HR Certification Institute surveyed participants of its certification and recertification programs using an independent, third-party consulting firm. Data collection is currently underway in a larger study exploring the value of HRCI certifications, with results expected in early 2015.
### Methdoology and Respondent Profile

HRCI administers the Post-Examination and Recertification Surveys six times per year. Information regarding the sample and response rates is below. Based upon the sample size received, the data was sufficient for analysis.

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<th>Survey Type</th>
<th>Sample Details</th>
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<td><strong>Post-Examination</strong></td>
<td>• Test takers from December 2013 - January 2014  &lt;br&gt;• Survey administered March - April 2014  &lt;br&gt;• Sent to 11,025 test takers  &lt;br&gt;• Respondents = 2,278  &lt;br&gt;• Response rate = 20.5%  &lt;br&gt;• Respondents represented 29 countries</td>
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<td><strong>Recertification</strong></td>
<td>• PHR®, SPHR®, GPHR®, PHR-CA®, and SPHR-CA® certificants who renewed between July – December 2013  &lt;br&gt;• Survey administered March - April 2014  &lt;br&gt;• Sent to 11,278 certificants  &lt;br&gt;• Respondents = 1,155  &lt;br&gt;• Response rate = 10.2%  &lt;br&gt;• Respondents represented 7 countries</td>
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ICA analyzed the quantitative data using statistical software to conduct descriptive, central tendency, crosstab, and multivariate quantitative analyses (ANOVA with Scheffé post-hoc analyses). ICA also analyzed the qualitative data to identify themes and patterns using content conventional analysis.
ABOUT THE HR
CERTIFICATION INSTITUTE

The HR Certification Institute, established in 1976, is the internationally recognized, independent certifying organization for the Human Resources Profession. The HR Certification Institute is the global leader in developing rigorous exams to demonstrate competence, mastery and real-world application of forward-thinking HR practices, policies and principles.

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