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Show Your Versatility – It's The MCP Way

By James Croydon

So what is the big deal with being a Microsoft Certified Professional also known as MCP? Is it the cachet of having some extra letters behind your name on your resume? Well, if you are into that sort of thing, sure. However, letting potential employers know about that Microsoft certification could open some doors for you in your quest for a new job.

Taking MCP courses and passing MCP exams for your certification is perhaps the best and only way to let prospective bosses know that you grasp and thoroughly understand the most up to date technology and products to come from Microsoft. Without going through formal MCP training, you would have a pretty tough time relaying your knowledge to your current manager or future employers. They like to see those formal little letters like MCP on your resume. These employers seem to trust that a Microsoft certification.

So who typically goes through the MCP courses? The answer: Individuals who are most likely to need a broad range of technological knowledge. This could be salesman pushing software or other technical products. Consultants, product designers and even trainers can benefit as an MCP. Even people with other certifications like the MCSE benefit. They are usually network administrators and engineers or technicians providing support to end-users. Your MCP training in the MCP courses will show proficiency with one Microsoft operating system like Windows 2000 or Window XP.

The cool thing about the MCP is that you have to pass just one certification test from current Microsoft material. That means you cannot test on anything outdated. And one caveat is that the test cannot be on networking basics. This still leaves the field wide open on any number of MCP exams to choose from. Does your company have SQL database servers? Perhaps you might consider one of several exams on designing or administering SQL servers.

Maybe your dream job entails e-commerce or web site design. Take a look into MCP training in the topic of site servers or commerce servers. If you are customer service minded, take MCP exams in troubleshooting desktop systems for users or supporting mail servers. Keep in mind that experts in the technology sector help develop these exams, so you will be tested on the latest and greatest in technology.

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When you get an MCP, you are showing your technological versatility. There are also advantages that come with passing those MCP exams. You are updated with the latest information through newsletters and you will also get invitations to special round table groups, training classes and conferences. This is also a perfect networking tool!

Just considering a Microsoft certification is the step in the right direction for your career. With an MCP, view it as the liberal arts degree in certifications. You can specialize with a major in MCSE or MCSD. But to take that first step, the MCP is the way to go.

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Turn About On Certification

By Richard Lowe

Turn About On Certification by Richard Lowe

On October 11th I was reading my email as usual when I opened one which stated something so unbelievable that I had to read it three times. I will admit the news was nothing compared to the events going on in the rest of the world (the September 11th terrorist attack and aftermath). However, it was very welcome nonetheless.

Microsoft has changed their policy on retiring certifications.

If you will remember, over a year ago Microsoft had announced that the Windows NT 4.0 certifications were being retired on December 31st, 2001. This meant that everyone who had slaved for months or even years to pass their exams had to rush to take the new exams for the newest operating system (Windows 2000).

Needless to say, this announcement caused quite a stir in much of the computer industry. There were hundreds of thousands of MCSE's, and all of them were effected by this decision. What made it even worse was the fact

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that most of us were not even upgrading to Windows 2000 anytime in the near future. Thus, we had to get certified yet we didn't really need to get certified to do our jobs.

There were quite a few announcements. The two regarding MCSE's state exactly what I had suggested in a previous article "Microsoft's ^@&^#&@ W2K MCSE Policy", so I was very happy indeed.

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Microsoft/W2KMCSEcertification.htm>

...on Windows NT 4.0, which designates the related certification as based on Windows NT 4.0. This designation applies to the following certifications: MCP, MCSE, MCSE+I, MCP+I, and MCP+Site Building. Thus, this MCSE would formally be called "MCSE on Windows NT 4.0."

...on Microsoft Windows 2000, which designates the related certification as based on Windows 2000, Windows XP Professional, or Windows Server .NET. This designation applies to the following certifications: MCP, MCSE, MCSA, and MCDBA (except for the latter, it's called "MCDBA on SQL Server 2000" instead). Here, this MCSE would formally be called "MCSE on Microsoft Windows 2000."

The bottom line is simple. Those of us who have the MCSE certification do not need to worry about losing it at the end of the year. It also makes

things much easier for me as an employer – now I will be able to look at a certification and get a little more information. Instead of just finding out someone is an expert on Microsoft operating systems, I will now find out exactly which operating system.

Microsoft also added a new certification, called MCSA, or Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator. This certification is great news, as it provides something between MCP and MCSE. Why is this necessary? The new MCSE for Windows 2000 is a very tough exam and it might take someone (especially those of us who work for a living) quite some time to get it done.

The MCSA certification requires three core exams and one elective. The certification is actually very well designed, and should serve as a useful guide for employers.

Why the change? Well, I think there are a number of reasons. The biggest reason? The terrorist attack and its effect on the economy.

My peers and I have seen, in just a month, our budgets disappear, especially for things like upgrades and certifications. My boss put it very well to me last week, "if you have the choice between upgrading and laying people off,

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what are you going to do?" The answer is obvious. At my company, we have postponed upgrading until next year at least, which means we do not need to get certified.

Another big reason is that MCSE's have jobs, and I don't know about you, but I have trouble finding time to take the classes and tests to continue certification. It's hard enough just to keep the wife happy, write some articles, and maintain the job. So the certification, testing and learning will wait.

On top of that, Microsoft has been very unsuccessful in trying to force the computer industry to upgrade to Windows 2000 and beyond. Yes, my company did install Windows 2000 on all of our laptops, but we've found Windows NT 4.0 works very well on our other servers and workstations. We have no intention or need to upgrade our hundreds of systems for the next several years, unless there is a valid business reason.

Even more importantly, even though we may upgrade our systems to Windows 2000, we have no intention of installing Active Directory anytime soon. Why not? This is a huge change and we simply don't want to support it at this time.

Finally, the industry backlash on Microsoft has been huge, and the power of 400,000+ MCSE's and their supervisors should not be underestimated.

Personally, I am happy that Microsoft has made this change. Now I can concentrate on important issues like polishing our disaster site, upgrading our security measures, ensuring our backups work properly and making our systems work better for our users.

Richard Lowe Jr. is the webmaster of Internet Tips And Secrets at <http://www.internet-tips.net> – Visit our website any time to read over 1,000 complete FREE articles about how to improve your internet profits, enjoyment and knowledge.

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