

The History of ISPI's Certification

By Judith Hale

How Did Certification Come About? Employers and clients have been asking for standards and criteria that would help them distinguish practitioners who have proven they can produce results through a systematic process. The current situation is that anyone can claim that they are professionals in training, performance consulting, and human resource development. At the same time, practitioners have been asking for a credential that would help them assess their capability, better focus their professional development efforts, and recognize their capability. In 1999 ISPI conducted a think tank to address the issues facing the Society and make recommendations about how to better service members, practitioners, and society. There were a number of recommendations that emerged. Two were especially significant: 1) the *Landscape* that depicts where we work, what we do, and how we do it, and 2) the recommendation to develop a certification.

In response to concerns expressed by employers and practitioners and armed with the recommendation of the think tank, Dale Brethower's board voted to support the creation of a performance-based credential. The Board under John Swinney's leadership approved a taskforce to do the work. Judith Hale, president-elect at the time, was the chair. The certification was launched under her presidency.

Who developed the standards and the requirements for certification? The taskforce, referred to as the "kitchen cabinet" developed the standards and requirements. Members were from business, government, academia, and independent practitioners (see below).

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Business	Academia	Practitioners
Aid Association for Lutherans Lorrie Formella	Boston University Reza Sisakhti	Ann Battenfield
Argonne Laboratory Karen Kroczek	Indiana University James A. Pershing,	France Gagnon
Canon USA Daniel Messick	Western Michigan Dale Brethower	Judith Hale
Johnson Controls Donald Kirkey	Northern Illinois University Ken Silber	Lynn Kearny
Lucent Skip Douglas	Bob Sheets	Mark Lauer
Maritz Corporation Rodger Stotz	Florida State Roger Kaufman	Cindy Schaeffges
Omnicell Deb Barrett		Kelly Smith
Plato Rob Foshay		Guy Wallace
Rockwell Automation Jim Momsen		Stacy Yusim
Source One Gail Hahn		
Technip Ray Robertson		
U. S. Steel – Gary Works Dean Larson		
U.S. Treasury Elaine Rand		
Walgreens Annemarie Laures		
Karen Preston		

The Standards. The kitchen cabinet decided that the standards should reflect the principles and process depicted in the *Landscape*. With that, the first four standards parallel the four principles:

1. Focus on Results
2. Take a Systemic View
3. Add Value
4. Partner

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The remaining six standards parallel the systematic process.

5. Needs Assessment
6. Cause Analysis
7. Design
8. Development
9. Implementation
10. Evaluation

Were the standards validated? Graduate students under the direction of Jim Pershing conducted literature reviews to confirm the standards appear in practice. Also, ISPI is conducting pilot studies with companies to confirm the usefulness of the standards and the workability of the process.

How will the credential be managed? In the beginning a special taskforce will be set up to administer the program. As volume increases, management will shift to staff.

How will the success or effectiveness of the program be measured? What will be measured are:

- The number of employers asking for certified professionals.
- The number of organizations funding staff's pursuit of the credential.
- The number of people pursuing it.
- The number of providers tailoring their training to the standards.
- Perceptions of certificants that it helped their career.
- The degree the program is self-funding and generates auxiliary income for the Society.

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What is Certification? It is a credential or designation that people can get who have demonstrated worthy performance achieved through a systematic process. ISPI's is not about taking classes or passing tests. It is about delivering service that clients' value and doing it in a way that can be measured and replicated.

What is the name of the designation? The designation is called "Certified Performance Technologist."

What are the requirements? To be certified, you have to:

- Have three years of experience in performance improvement efforts.
- Demonstrate your proficiency in 10 standards three different times using a minimum of three and a maximum of seven projects or assignments.
- Commit to a code of ethics.
- Commit to recertification every 3 years.
- Membership in ISPI is **not** required.
- Completion of ISPI's Institutes is **not** required.
- Completion of a formal training or education program is **not** required.