

# OCCUPATIONAL ALERT



"From the smallest necessity to the highest religious abstraction, from the wheel to the skyscraper, everything we are and everything we have comes from one attribute of man - the function of his reasoning mind."  
*Ayn Rand*

Innovation, change, and global competition continue to redefine employment in every sector of the economy. The Sierra Group, follows the employment trends and innovations in a number of sectors and compiles and distributes our OCCUPATIONAL ALERTS to help keep

you informed of vocational changes so that you can leverage opportunities and control risk.

## The Truth about IT Certification Trends

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With the growing number of attainable technology certifications, professionals must remain continually savvy about what type of training these designations actually represent. A Google search of "IT Certification", brings up no less than 17,900,000 hits. A quick scan produces literally hundreds of various certifications that can be obtained in a live classroom setting, or via an on-line learning format. There is much professional controversy regarding the way in which a technician receives his or her certification, but two facts are universally agreed upon:

- Many certifications exist!
- Some certifications matter more than others – a lot more!

The proliferation of wireless and remote technologies will continue to emphasize the need for skills in the Voice Over IP, Unified Communications, Hybrid Network, Wireless, and Security skill sets.

There are, in the array of certifications available, some that are poised to be leading indicators of those who find success in the marketplace over the next few years; especially those that focus on TCP/IP.

**Today's skills are all about expertise in TCP/IP to stay current follow these trends: Voice Over IP, Unified Communications, Hybrid Networks, Wireless Technology, and Security.**

**What is TCP/IP?** TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol) is the basic communication language or protocol of the Internet. It can also be used as a communications protocol in a private network (either an intranet or an extranet).



The following is not intended to discount any technical certification, it is merely a look at 4 different (and emerging) designations that are either in high demand, or growing demand.

Note: When it comes to salary, it is generally concluded that there is no substitute for a four-year degree, given the broad spectrum of material covered, however; achieving any of the following 4 certifications will only strengthen your competitive edge, regardless of college experience.

Additional Note: While experience counts for a lot, it is extremely difficult to re-enter the IT field after any hiatus (however brief), and command a competitive salary, which is an unfortunate result of the speed at which this industry evolves.

### **The IT Certification Trends to Follow**

**Microsoft Certified Technical Specialist (MCTS)** – The latest MCTS's are seen as having the capacity to manage and maintain Windows server 2008, administer, deploy and maintain SQL Server 2008, and work within .NET Framework 3.5, to name just a few. There are literally dozens of other competencies that one can be qualified for within this certification – to learn more, please visit: <http://www.microsoft.com/learning/mcp/mcts/default.mspx>

**Cisco Certified Security Professional (CCSP)** – As wireless networks become more prevalent, the need for enhanced security grows. CCSP's are expected to have the skills required to secure and manage network infrastructure to protect productivity, alleviate threats, and reduce costs. To learn more about wireless networking and CISCO certifications, please visit: [http://www.cisco.com/web/learning/le3/learning\\_career\\_certifications\\_and\\_learning\\_paths\\_home.html](http://www.cisco.com/web/learning/le3/learning_career_certifications_and_learning_paths_home.html)

**Certified Internet Web Professional (CIW)** – This is a very broad designation, as it caters it's program to the very broad environment that is the internet. A CIW certification validates that all "practical" aspects of job competencies are addressed as they relate to the current web market. It exists in an evolving capacity as it shifts with the web-based marketplace. For more information, please visit: <http://www.ciwcertified.com/>

**Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL)** – This designation signifies that a person has studied the various strategies by which IT infrastructures should be implemented within some of the largest corporations (Microsoft, IBM, HP, etc.). These strategies are designed to increase productivity, efficiency, and most importantly, quality of service. For more information, please visit: <http://www.itil-officialsite.com/home/home.asp>

Again, gaining any technical certification is never a bad idea, and the aforementioned represent only a small portion of potentially viable pursuits. They do, however, represent leading designations in today's IT Marketplace and deserve special attention for prospective employee's looking to stay within the competitive curve.

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