

A Glimpse Into IBM Professional Certification

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The IBM line of offerings spans across all segments of the IT industry: hardware, software, consulting and IT services. The challenge for the IBM Professional Certification Program is to keep pace with the certification needs across the many professions within all of these segments of the IT industry.

To make the challenge even more interesting in the fast-paced world of IT, business frequently is re-evaluated and reorganized to meet the needs and demands of the rapidly growing IT marketplace. Business models, product lines, services and organizational structures all change to support business growth and customer demand. As a result, skills requirements continue to evolve at a rapid rate, requiring certification to keep pace.

To meet the challenge, **IBM** provides 18 certification programs under the umbrella of the Professional Certification Program. Each area includes certifications that cross the various roles of IT, including users, administrators, developers, architects and technical and sales professionals.

The programs include new certification offerings based on technology from the IBM Systems and Technology Group and long-established and popular DB2 certifications from the IBM Software Group.

A New Power Requirement

In January, IBM combined the System i and System p product lines, simplifying them and renaming them Power Systems. At the same time, IBM announced a shift in its sales process from a brand-specific focus, with sales professionals who concentrated on System i, System p and Storage, to a client-centric focus with sales teams focusing on the best solution for the client, regardless of brand.

With all these changes and the emergence of Power Systems, a new certification program was needed.

Laura Calley, the Power Systems certification program manager in the IBM Systems and Technology Group, was tasked to evaluate the certification portfolios of the former System i and System p, converge them where appropriate and create the new Power Systems certification program.

Calley had experience in revamping certification programs. In 2007, she resized the portfolio of the System i certification exams. Certifications were evaluated, and exams were updated or retired. In addition, plans were put in place with IBM's Academic Initiative to help college students earn certifications to facilitate them gaining employment in the IT field.

Restructuring for Power

To successfully restructure the new certification program for Power Systems, executives, brand managers and partner-channel management offered input. Test-delivery and tracking methods were evaluated and budgets scrutinized. All of the data was gathered and analyzed.

When the analysis was complete, it was determined that, while the hardware was important, it was the operating system chosen by the customer that reflected the customer's business and dictated how the hardware operates. Calley began plans to implement the new program by preparing new certifications reflective of the new Power6 generation of processors, with focus on the IBM i V6.1, AIX 6.1 and Linux operating systems. With the design of the new program, existing System i and System p certifications were identified for withdrawal.

To develop the exams, the IBM Power Systems certification program used carefully screened subject matter experts from the customer, partner and IBM sales and technical communities. These IT professionals set the standard of each certification, clarifying the job role of the certification candidate, determining com-



mon tasks and evaluating which skill level is required to validate that the test-taker has the skills in question. As experienced volunteers, they keep the certifications grounded in the real world of customers and partners.

The team for the first pair of exams was divided into two groups: Power Systems Sales for the IBM i operating system and Power Systems Sales for AIX and Linux. These teams worked both remotely and in face-to-face sessions over several months, developing the tests that were designed to be reliable measurement instruments, relevant to the Power Systems Sales role for the targeted audience.

The result was two new Power certifications:

- **IBM Certified Specialist - Power Systems Sales for IBM i Operating System (Test 973):** This certification is for those with experience in sales and sales support roles. The successful candidate has 12 to 18 months of strong product experience. He or she also has experience assessing customer business requirements, utilizing sales tools and resources, presenting solution proposals and managing customer relationships.
- **IBM Certified Specialist - Power Systems Sales for AIX and Linux (Test 331):** The successful candidate for this certification should have a minimum of six months of hands-on experience selling Power Systems servers, related application software, middleware and services.

To learn more about IBM's new client-centric solutions approach, visit www.ibm.com/businesssolutions

Details about these certifications, as well as information regarding promotions and special offers for discount testing, can be found on the Power Systems certification Web site at ibm.com/certify/certs/ps_index.shtml.

Preparation: Key to Success

Preparation for certification is essential. The test — preparation information for each certification is available on the Web site, including road maps, training resources and access linking to the online assessment tests. These online tests provide a means of assessing a candidate's readiness for taking the certification exam and are available at www.ibt.prometric.com/ibm. These assessment tests are the only method supported by IBM to determine candidate readiness for certification.

More to Come

The next step was to form the Power Systems technical test teams to design and develop the corresponding technical certifications. The teams are putting the finishing touches on the second pair of exams prior to publication.

Another View of IBM Certification

Meanwhile, on the other side of the IT spectrum, IBM has a variety of software certification programs. One is IBM Information Management: Information management provides a means to represent, access, maintain, manage, analyze and integrate data and content across diverse information sources. At the core of Information Management is DB2, a relational database that allows businesses to organize and transform data into actionable information.

DB2 certification has a strong following and has been well-established for several years. Susan Dykman, the certification program manager for IBM Information Management, has crafted a certification portfolio that allows DB2 professionals to customize their certification paths based on job role, specialty area and level of skills advancement. Each industry-recognized IBM DB2 9 certification is designed to validate the in-demand skills in today's competitive market.

The IBM Certified Solutions Developer - DB2 9.5 SQL Procedure Developer is new to the DB2 9 portfolio.

The program begins with an entry-level certification, the **IBM Certified Database Associate**. After establishing a base knowledge of the fundamentals, the DB2 9 certification portfolio provides a choice of certification paths: On the database administrator (DBA) path, there is a choice between specializing in DB2 9 for Linux, Unix and Windows (LUW), or a specialization in DB2 9 for z/OS. An application developer path also offers a variety of options.

DB2 9 Associate

Database professionals who have never taken a DB2 9 certification will want to start with the DB2 9 Fundamentals. This certification requires knowledge about areas such as planning, security, database objects, DB2 tables, DB2 data with SQL and data concurrency. The IBM Certified Database Associate for DB2 9 Fundamentals certification is awarded upon successful completion of the single exam (730).

DB2 Administrator

The next level of skill advancement is database administrator (DBA), and there are a variety of DBA certification opportunities.

DB2 9 Administrator for LUW

The IBM Certified Database Administrator for DB2 9 for Linux, Unix and Windows certification is recommended for DBAs who have significant experience with DB2 9. The exam for this certification (731) covers areas such as DB2 server management, data placement, database access, DB2 utilities, analyzing DB2 activity, high availability and security.

Upgrade Exams

DB2 certification offers a fast path for DBAs who already hold certifications for DB2 UDB V8 by passing exams 700 and 701. These DBAs can benefit by taking a short upgrade Exam (736) and bypassing exams 730 and 731 to achieve the IBM Certified Database Administrator for DB2 9 for Linux, Unix and Windows certification. The upgrade exam has 38 questions covering areas such as server management, data placement, XML concepts, analyzing DB2 activity, high availability and security.

DB2 9 Administrator for z/OS

Successfully completing the exam DB2 9 DBA for z/OS (732) earns the credential of IBM Certified Database Administrator - DB2 9 for z/OS. This certification is designed to validate z/OS skills, includ-

ing database design and implementation; operation and recovery; security; auditing; performance; and installation, migration and upgrade.

Additionally, the DB2 certification portfolio provides opportunities for advanced-level certification.

DB29 Advanced DBA for LUW


The IBM Certified Advanced Database Administrator for DB2 9 for LUW requires three exams:

- DB2 9 Family Fundamentals (730).
- DB2 9 DBA for Linux UNIX and Windows (731).
- DB2 9 Advanced Database Administrator for Linux UNIX and Windows (734).

The advanced DBA is the lead for the DB2 products on one or more of the following platforms: Linux, Unix (including AIX, HP-UX and Sun Solaris) and Windows. This individual has extensive experience as a DBA and extensive knowledge of DB2 9.

DB2 9 Application Developer

There also are different options on the application developer career path. IBM Certified Application Developer – DB2 9 is an intermediate- or advanced-level application developer specializing in creating applications that run on any of the DB2 platforms: Linux, Unix (including AIX, HP-UX and Sun Solaris) and Windows, z/OS, s/390 and iSeries. This application developer should be skilled in the areas of data manipulation, XML manipulation, advanced programming, database objects and programming methods and others.

The IBM Certified Solutions Developer - DB2 9.5 SQL Procedure Developer is new to the DB2 9 portfolio. The certification requires exam 735 and is designed to measure the important knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to design, build, test and deploy SQL Procedures, triggers and functions. The certification exam covers areas such as SQL procedural language, DB2 SQL procedures, functions, triggers, advanced SQL features and more. 

Laura Calley has seven years experience in the field of IT certification. She is currently the program manager for IBM Power Systems Certification. Kate Dawson, is a marketing product planner for IBM Information Management. Her areas of responsibilities include education and certification. They can be reached at editor@certmag.com.