

ICT SKILLS: TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION WORKS

ICT SKILLS TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAMMES SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVE EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY AND OFFER CONSIDERABLE SAVINGS TO EMPLOYERS AND NATIONAL ECONOMIES

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A recent study from the Applied Research and Innovation Department of the ALBA Graduate Business School in Greece shows clearly that investment in ICT skills training and certification is highly effective, and that it represents a real and immediate return on investment for companies. ICT-trained employees are more efficient, they work quicker, and make fewer mistakes; and the time that supervisors and other colleagues spend dealing with difficulties is halved where employees have been trained. Companies also benefit by having much more accurate knowledge about the skill levels of employees and can therefore deploy them more effectively.

The ALBA study puts figures on how much 'digital illiteracy' costs, and looks at ways that training can help to reduce those costs and build benefits for companies. The study looked at IT practice in 44 companies across different industry sectors in Greece, and it measured the cost of 'IT ignorance' based on a comprehensive range of factors. In total, 140 people participated in the study as candidates, along with their supervisors (140), 43 HR Managers and 41 IT managers.

Each of the candidates took a sample ECDL Advanced test in their own area of specialisation. This was followed by a one-month period of training provided by ECDL Hellas, after which the candidates took the actual ECDL Advanced test. In this way, the ALBA researchers were able to measure the changes in participants' workplace performance across a range of criteria, and could quantify the time and cost differences between their performance before and after training and certification.

In parallel with the ECDL Advanced testing, both candidates and their supervisors were asked to assess the likely performance of the candidates. In all applications a clear majority of candidates overestimated their own skill levels, and the assessments of supervisors were also out of line with expectations. The clear implications are that most users have unfounded confidence in their own competence, and supervisors are not aware of the levels of competence available among their staff. And the consequences of these mismatches include companies assigning employees to tasks for which they do not have the skills, and not making the best use of the depth and range of employees' skills.

Following the ECDL Advanced training, over 90 per cent of candidates achieved better results and had a much better appreciation of their own skill levels. Candidates and their supervisors reported a substantial fall in the time spent dealing with ICT-related difficulties. Among employees, there were also significant improvements across a range of areas, including:

- Improved work efficiency and use of knowledge;
- Better job satisfaction and better working relations with colleagues;
- Greater loyalty to the company; and



- More confidence in their own ability.

As Europe struggles with the deepest recession in decades, businesses everywhere are seeking ways to save money, to improve performance, and to leverage the skills base they currently have to better effect. ICT skills training and certification can make a real contribution in this area and can help deliver a more innovative and knowledge-based economy.

To read the summary of the ALBA Study, please visit www.ecdl.org

In Malta, ECDL Malta is responsible for operating ECDL certification programmes on behalf of the ECDL Foundation which is the certifying authority of the world's leading end-user computer skills certification programme.

For more information about the ECDL programmes view our website on www.ecdl.com.mt ECDL Malta may be contacted via e-mail on info@ecdl.com.mt or phone number 21667706.