



Advance.

Microsoft Office Specialist
certification enhances employee
skills and effectiveness.

Microsoft
Office Specialist

Microsoft Office Specialist Productivity Study

This research study, conducted in 2012, highlights the value of Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certification, and shows that certified students and employees become more productive as proficiency in Microsoft Office increases.

FAST FACTS:

Microsoft Office Specialist certification increases employee proficiency for all job-types.

- » **99%** of all certification participants substantially increased their Microsoft Office "know-how" by becoming MOS certified.[§]
- » **89%** of supervisors say that Microsoft Office Specialist certified employees are more proficient users of Microsoft Office programs.*

Microsoft Office Specialist certification increases employee confidence, loyalty & satisfaction.

- » **82%** of certified employees said becoming MOS certified gave them more confidence in their abilities as a worker.[†]
- » **81%** of certified employees said they are more dedicated to their employer after being given the opportunity to become MOS certified.[§]

Microsoft Office Specialist certification improves employee effectiveness and initiative

- » **88%** of certified employees said MOS certification made them more effective in their work.[†]
- » **Six out of 10** certified employees say they take on more complex or difficult assignments after certifying.



Microsoft Office Specialist certification holders actively apply their new Microsoft Office skills for greater productivity in their work assignments

- » **83%** of employees use the knowledge and skills gained through certification often or all of the time.[†]
- » **85%** of supervisors say that Microsoft Office Specialist certified employees are more productive because of their certification.*

Microsoft Office Specialist certification helps employees gain greater competence and skill in using Microsoft Office to accomplish their work and assist co-workers.

- » **80%** of certified employees feel that they have become known in their workplace for their knowledge and skills with Microsoft Office programs in which they hold MOS certification.[†]
- » When asking certification participants to rate their skill level with Microsoft Office programs on a 1-8 scale (1=novice, 8=expert), the average rating was 4.15. Following certification, participants re-rated their skill level on the same scale and **the average increased to 6.23.**[§]



99% of all certification participants dramatically increased their Microsoft Office expertise by becoming MOS certified!

Microsoft Office Specialist certification makes a difference!

If you’re a student or business worker, the MOS certification helps you present yourself as truly knowledgeable and differentiates you in a competitive job market. If you’re a hiring manager, identifying candidates with MOS certification helps you in making job placement decisions.

Perhaps that’s why studies indicate that both managers and workers recognize the value of obtaining MOS certification. A recent research study and survey performed by the University of Utah and Certiport regarding the impact of certification on performance and the working environment, indicates that workers increase in proficiency, job satisfaction, initiative, and productivity after becoming certified.

Research Design

Employee productivity is something that employers know can make or break an organization. But how can true productivity be gauged?

In this research study, the University of Utah studied 117 participants at various companies around the world including the United States, China, Mexico, England, and Ireland. The study provided a quantitative analysis of the value of Certiport training and the Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certification process for employees and the companies that they work for. Results showed a significant improvement on a standard test of abilities in Microsoft Excel, Word, and PowerPoint.

The study participants were given several tools to help them learn and prepare for their certification test. They had access to an online program called “E-Learning for Microsoft Office Specialist.” This contained between five and eight sections (depending on the chosen MOS program), which consisted of pre and post tests, interactive labs and several hours of video training, divided into smaller sections according to subject. They were also provided “Certiport for Microsoft Office Specialist Certifications.” This program maps directly to exam objectives and uses a technology similar to the certification exams.⁵

The primary endpoint of the study was to determine whether or not the MOS certification program increased productivity in Microsoft Office. The results? All participants in the research study had gains, regardless of job role, gender, or prior experience with the Microsoft Office Suite. Everyone from professional accountants to administrative assistants increased their knowledge and proficiency—even participants who were more advanced in their careers with years of experience.

Portions of several additional studies are included here, and all reach the same conclusion:

Microsoft Office Specialist certification helps users become more productive by increasing proficiency, confidence, and effectiveness in using Microsoft Office programs to perform daily work tasks.

Increased Proficiency

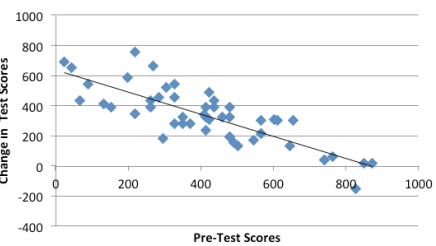
Students tend to surround themselves with technology. In fact, most would assume that today’s young people are far more computer literate than any previous generation. While this may be true for mobile apps and social networking, it is not necessarily the case for business software such as Microsoft Office. In reality, there is a significant gap between students’ perceived self-proficiency of Office skills and the actual assessment of those skills.¹¹

The good news is that educators are overcoming this gap through Microsoft Office training and certification. In the University of Utah’s pre-certification assessment study, participants were tested to determine their existing Microsoft Office skills. After certification, participants in the study were tested again. Out of a scale of 1,000 possible points, certification participants posted an average 370 point gain when comparing pre-certification vs. post-certification test scores.⁵

As an end result, 99% of all certification participants dramatically increased their Microsoft Office expertise by becoming MOS certified!⁵

Happily for employers, certified employees get up to speed much faster and show greater capability with Microsoft applications. In fact, 89% of supervisors say that Microsoft Office Specialist certified employees are more proficient users of Microsoft Office programs.* And once individuals become more proficient, they become more productive in performing tasks given them by their employers.

Change Between Pre & Post-Test Scores



Post-Certification Participant Self-Assessment

% Agree

My ability to perform assigned tasks has improved.	97%
I am more creative in my use of Microsoft Office.	91%
I am able to perform new tasks that would have been difficult and time consuming to accomplish before certification.	89%

Greater Confidence, Loyalty & Satisfaction

Educators are learning that students acquire and retain knowledge more effectively by being tested on it, rather than through constant drilling or repeated lessons. Fortunately, Microsoft Office Specialist certification goes beyond traditional training exercises to utilize this “testing effect”. As a result, students undergoing MOS certification dig deeper to capture, retain and retrieve critical knowledge needed to pass their exams. And when students finish their completed studies and attain MOS certification, they’ve truly earned the confidence they feel. In fact, 82% of employees in a Certiport post-certification survey said becoming MOS certified gave them more confidence in their abilities as workers.[†]

MOS certification can also help increase feelings of employee loyalty. **81% of certified employees said they are more dedicated to their employer after being given the opportunity to become MOS certified.**[§]

From the employer point of view, a study by IDC showed 43% of hiring managers said that investing in employee development reduces turnover as it increases job satisfaction and feelings of engagement.[‡] It is clear that MOS certification can provide employees with the increased confidence and capacity that leads to greater job satisfaction and loyalty.

Survey results from a prior study also show:

- » 58% either “agree” or “strongly agree” that their job satisfaction depends, in part, on being able to use their newly acquired Microsoft Office skills.
- » 86% reported that “moderate” or “tremendous” opportunity exists in their job to use their new skills.
- » Two-thirds indicated that an employer who provides Microsoft Office Specialist certification for employees increases the likelihood that their employees will be more dedicated to their jobs.

Students who go through the process of Microsoft Office Specialist certification are more likely to gain skills that build confidence as they plan for employment opportunities. By providing certification opportunities for students, educators not only increase the proficiency and employability of their students, they lay the foundation for a confident, engaged workforce.

Post-Certification Participant Self-Assessment

% Agree

I feel more confident in my abilities now that I have become certified.	91%
Becoming certified has improved my skills and talents that are valued by my organization.	89%
I am more dedicated to my employer after being given this certification opportunity.	80%

Increased Effectiveness and Initiative

Many students and employees use Microsoft Office with relative ease. The mature toolset helps users complete routine tasks, but not everyone takes the time or initiative to explore the product beyond their comfort zone. In fact, most average users are only familiar with around 10% of its features!

This is why training and certification are so important. Don Fields, Microsoft Learning’s director of certification and training said, “MOS helps the user figure out how to be maximally productive by highlighting features they may not have realized they could use. Having those skills has helped to be more effective in their jobs.” Not surprisingly, **88% of certified employees said MOS certification made them more effective in their work.**[†]

Microsoft Office Specialist certified employees have the skills in place that allow them to execute more challenging assignments than they could otherwise complete prior to certification.

Managers likewise see the benefits of certification as certified employees require less supervision and are also better prepared to accept additional responsibilities than their non-certified co-workers. Mark Smith, president of Smith and Company, an accounting firm says, “The more trained employees are, the more independently they can work [and] the less oversight they need.”[‡]

In short, MOS certified employees use their skills to make a larger contribution in their jobs. They are more effective because they take greater initiative in stepping forward to use their new-found skills in support of their work team.

88%
report MOS
certification makes
them more effective

Certified employees took on more “complex or difficult” assignments after going through the process of certification.

After becoming certified, workers have the skills to execute more difficult assignments.

Certified employees are better prepared to accept additional responsibilities than non-certified co-workers.



“Before training for the MOS certification exam, I did not realize Excel is so extensive, powerful, and time-saving. Impressive software!”

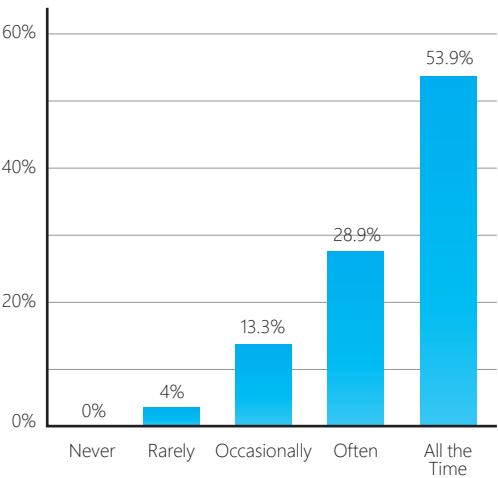
—Research Study Participant



80% of certified employees feel that they have become known in their workplace for their knowledge and skills with Microsoft Office programs in which they hold MOS certification.

Enhanced Productivity

How often do/did you use the knowledge and skills that you acquired during the certification process?



83%
Often + All The Time

So much to do, so little time. With most companies trying to manage their workload with fewer headcount, the challenge can seem daunting.

When relying upon their existing knowledge or help from co-workers, employees will usually “figure things out” and get the report done, or the slideshow ready for the staff meeting, but at what cost? According to one manager: “Before training, it took an hour and a half to complete a certain task, but after the training, the time was reduced to 45 minutes.”[†] Simply stated, achieving Microsoft Office Specialist certification increases employee productivity, which of course saves time and money.

In a previous study, 62% of respondents indicated that the skills learned through certification helped them focus on the end result of their work assignments, rather than on the tools needed to finish the task. These respondents also felt that they were more productive than their non-certified co-workers with similar job functions. Additionally, according to participants in a 2012 Certiport research study, 83% of certified employees use the knowledge and skills gained through certification often or all of the time.[†]

85% of supervisors say that Microsoft Office Specialist certified employees are more productive because of their certification.*

There’s no question that productivity gains result from increases in proficiency. Students and employees who become MOS certified have a greater depth of MS Office knowledge that allows them to produce work more quickly, with greater ease, and in a way that boosts team and company productivity.

Willingness to help co-workers

Many find satisfaction in helping co-workers in the workplace. And as MOS certified employees use their expertise to contribute to the efforts of the team, they tend to become known as trusted subject experts who possess invaluable skills and knowledge.

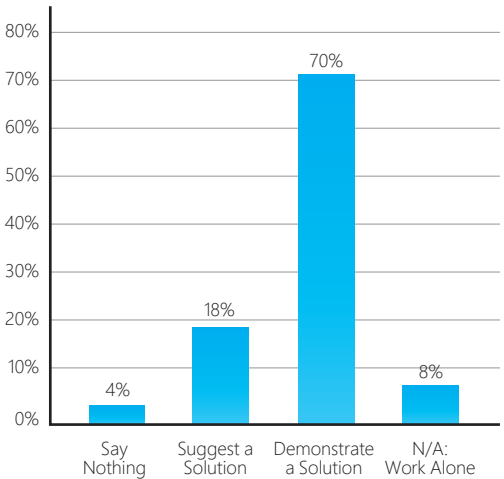
In fact, 80% of certified employees feel that they have become known in their workplace for their knowledge and skills with Microsoft Office programs in which they hold MOS certification.[†]

Particularly in team-oriented work environments, managers recognize the benefits of knowledge-sharing and believe that certified employees have a greater credibility and are valued as a resource both internally and externally.[‡]

So, just how great a resource are certified employees? When asking pre-certification participants to rate their skill level with Microsoft Office programs on a 1-8 scale (1=novice, 8=expert), the average rating was 4.15. Following certification, participants re-rated their skill level on the same scale and the average increased to 6.23.[§]

MOS certification helps employees gain greater competence and skill in using Microsoft Office to accomplish their work and assist co-workers.

7 out of 10 certified workers are willing to show co-workers how to use a Microsoft Office feature to help with work-related tasks



Conclusions

This research study examined the impact of Microsoft Office Specialist certification, and demonstrates that becoming Microsoft Office Specialist certified has far-reaching benefits for both employees and employers.

The knowledge gained through the certification process empowers employees in their ability to contribute successfully on the job. While many employees may know enough about Microsoft Office to get by, Microsoft Office Specialist certified employees gain valuable skills that improve their efficiency and productivity, encourage them to seek opportunities to perform more complex tasks and assist their co-workers, and enjoy more satisfaction in their employment.

Certified employees agree:
Microsoft Office Specialist
certification makes a difference.



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* "Microsoft Office Specialist: Improving the Workplace," Credentio, 2001.

+ "Post-Microsoft Office Certification Survey," Certiport, 2012.

"Preventing Bad Hires: The Value of Objective Prehire Assessment," IDC, 2007.

§ University of Utah, David Eccles School of Business—MBA Field Study, 2012

|| "A Comparison of Student Perceptions of their Computer Skills to their Actual Abilities", Journal of Information Technology Information, Volume 8, 2009

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