DITY™ Weekly Newsletter

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ITIL's Virtual Training Community

By Rick Lemieux

The days of flying to exotic locations to get trained by your favorite instructor/consultant/mentor are over.

Let's face it, with the economic downturn in full swing and training budgets shrinking, we are all looking for new ways to acquire the education we need to deliver the value our current (or future) employer expects from us.

Virtual communities like LinkedIn and Facebook, combined with of a new generation of online self-study training solutions, may provide the answer we are all looking for.

With thousands of IT professionals looking to update their skills or come off the unemployment ranks, I thought it might be a good idea to provide our readers with some guidance on how they can band together in the context of a virtual community to leverage each other strengths and experiences to get the training, skills and certifications required to be successful in today's economic climate.

The following DITY outlines the five steps to making this happen.

Step #1 – Building the Community

The best part about this step is that you do not have to reinvent the wheel as others have already done it for you. LinkedIn and Facebook (along with many others) provide you the opportunity to connect with peers (some you know, some you don't) who share a common goal of mastering some portion of the ITIL.

In most cases these online communities already have in place the framework to support mentor-to-student or student-to-student interaction along with places to post content that others in the community might find valuable as they go through their training. This community will not only provide students the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience with others but formalized communities may also give students the leverage to secure the best possible pricing from their content provider.

Step #2 – Acquiring the Content

Unlike ITIL version 2 training, the version 3 syllabi from APMG provides support for self-study online training solutions. These accredited online training solutions provide the community with a flexible, on-demand venue that enables the community to procure ITIL training solutions without the boundaries (fixed delivery and exam dates, single program delivery, minimum student counts, etc) normally associated with the traditional classroom.

When combined with the mentoring power of the community to amplify the certified instructor/mentor, the community is able to recreate the true value of the classroom program – student-to-mentor and student-to-student interaction.

Three types on online training solutions exist in the market today. They are:

- Professionally Produced Streaming Video – These self-study programs recreate the instructor-led classroom online, using streaming video technology to deliver the instructor lectures (usually from a certified ITIL Expert), student courseware and practice exams. Since these programs recreate the classroom online, no time is required to become familiar with an underlying software program or navigation system.
- Scenario-based Training – These self-study programs present the training in the context of a simulated case study, using animated characters and other training tools. These programs offer some neat value-added tools but do require some training to become familiar with them.

- Voice over Programs – These self-study programs use low-cost development tools to create online programs built on classroom slide decks with instructor voice over. These programs are very simple in design and only require you to be familiar with PowerPoint.

Step #3 – Assigning the Mentors

The community has a couple of options when assigning primary mentors to support their training program. Option one involves using members of the community to perform this function. Option two involves using mentors from the content provider. In both cases the mentor needs to meet the following requirements to mentor the V3 ITIL Certification programs.

Basic Requirements to be certified as an ITIL®Mentor

- Hold the ITIL Expert Qualification if teaching any level higher than Foundation
- Hold ITIL Qualification for the relevant Lifecycle, Capability, or Managing Across the Lifecycle course
- Have a minimum of 3 years practical experience in IT Service Management
- Demonstrate the ability to manage, run and deliver training courses
- Have a minimum of 10 days experience delivering classroom-based ITIL training (this could be as "trainer under instruction")

Program Specifics

- V3 Foundation
  - The ITIL Expert Qualification is not mandatory to deliver this training course although it is recommended
  - Trainers must hold either the ITIL V3 Foundation or ITIL V2 Foundation plus the ITIL V3 Foundation Bridge or Service Manager
  - Trainers must hold a minimum of 9 credits in the ITIL v2 and ITIL v3 examination program.
- V3 Intermediate Lifecycle Classes
  - Standard v3 trainer criteria will apply from release
  - Trainer must hold a valid certificate in the ITIL Expert and Lifecycle module they teach
- V3 Intermediate Capability Classes
  - Standard v3 trainer criteria will apply from release
  - Trainer must hold a valid certificate in the ITIL Expert and Capability module they teach
- V3 Managing Across the Lifecycle
  - Standard v3 trainer criteria will apply from release
  - Trainer must hold a valid certificate in the ITIL Expert and Managing Across the Lifecycle module
- V3 Foundation Bridge
  - The ITIL Expert Qualification is not mandatory to deliver this training course although it is recommended
  - Trainers must hold either the ITIL V3 Foundation or ITIL V2 Foundation plus the ITIL V3 Foundation Bridge or Service Manager
  - Trainers must hold a minimum of 9 credits in the ITIL v2 and ITIL v3 examination program.
- V3 Manager Bridge
  - Trainers must hold the ITIL V2 Managers certificate plus the ITIL V3Managers Bridge certificate

Step #4 – Online or In-Person Exam Review Sessions

Some communities may want to set up an exam review session online with their mentor using Go To Meeting or similar services. Once again, no one has to leave home for this to happen.

Step #5 – Taking the Exam(s)

Unlike classroom training programs where students take the exam on the last day of the training program, online training programs require that students coordinate their own examination schedule.

For V3 Foundation or Foundation Bridge certification exams, students have the option to schedule their exam through their accredited content provider or through a Prometric or VUE testing center.

For Intermediate or Service Manager Bridge certification exam, students must schedule their exam through their

accredited content provider. Examination services vary by content providers. Some providers place the burden on the student to locate their certificates (V3 Foundation certificates and classroom attendance certificate are required to sit for an Intermediate exam) and work with an examination institute (EI) to set up a location and proctor, while others provide this as part of their exam service offering. Either way, the community will have a vehicle to take the exams once they complete their programs.

Summary

Hopefully the above article has provided insight into how IT can come together as a community to leverage its knowledge, experience and size to secure cost-effective training and certification services that will help them grow individually and as a community.