



UNLEASH THE WORKFORCE

Digital Credentials Are the Future of the Workforce

A Complete Guide to Issuing,
Earning, and Creating Digital
Credentials

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Chapter 1: What Are Digital Credentials?

Think about all of the achievements you've earned in your lifetime: graduating from college, joining a professional association, recognition at work for a job well done. Where are those achievements currently displayed? In your home? On your desk? Stuck at the registrar's office? There's a better way to surface and share those achievements: digital credentials. Digital credentials are a graphical representation of a person's abilities and competencies, combined with a verifiable description of the knowledge and activities it took to earn it. Digital credentials are the quickest, most secure way to verify knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Digital credentials save your organization money on marketing, human resources, and recruiting costs, which has an impact on the financial bottom line. Data shows that it costs less to upskill and train your existing workforce, with the goal to retain and fill unoccupied jobs, than hiring outside of your organization. Hiring new employees is expensive. On average, companies spend between six to nine months of an employee's salary to successfully recruit and onboard a new team member.

Digital credentials are highly-visual and optimized for sharing on social media channels and professional networks. This builds awareness, value, and demand for an organization's credential. According to the case study Shifting the Up-skilling Paradigm digital badges help IBM create a diverse, inclusive workforce. IBM's digital badge program has garnered more than 200 million estimated social media impressions through early 2018, which represents \$39,000 per month in marketing value.

Chapter 2: Why Digital Credentials Belong on Your Resume

The increasing number of global employers who are making the move to skills-based hiring are looking for clear evidence of in-demand skills and the capabilities of would-be employees. Imagine if there was a more direct way to quickly identify the skills your organization needed to fill jobs, or surface existing talent within your organization. When candidates include digital credentials on their resumes and applications, you can do just that. Being able to identify and surface verified skills, achievements, and recognition will make putting the right people into the right jobs easy.

Skills that are vetted and verified through digital credentials offer individuals the opportunity to own proof of their knowledge, and to share that proof with their current, or future employers. On average, companies spend between six to nine months of an employee's salary to successfully recruit and onboard a new team member. Decreasing the time that it takes to find talent will significantly reduce that expense.

Chapter 3: Employee Engagement in the Digital Age

Ensuring that your employees are engaged in their work is the easiest way to increase productivity and retain the best talent. How can your organization retain and engage employees? Issuing digital credentials. Digital credentials help organizations, both large and small, recognize achievements, and put value behind learning. Digital credentials allow a company to create a culture of recognition, rather than just awarding participation trophies for showing up. Digital credentials allow managers to see the achievements of their most dedicated and engaged employees. With access to real insights, companies can make more-informed human capital decisions.

Continued learning at work is vital not only for professional growth but personal growth as well. On [our blog](#), we've discussed how your least engaged employees are likely to be the first to quit. Without the opportunity to learn new skills or advance professionally, workers will look for employers who are willing to offer learning as a benefit. No one wants to remain stagnant in their work. Offering digital credentials and allowing employees, rather than the company, to own the proof of their skills and learning motivates employees toward lifelong personal and professional growth.

Chapter 4: Critical Keys to Employee Retention

Developing a relevant, impactful learning and development curriculum in the workplace is a strategy that can move the needle in improving employee engagement and retention. When on-the-job training becomes part of an overall benefits package, employees claim to have higher satisfaction rates, become actively engaged with their work, and are less likely to leave their current role.

Offering digital credentials as part of an overall learning strategy in the workplace reduces turnover and increases retention. When employees feel recognized, engagement, productivity, and retention goes up. Implementing recognition technology boosts employee engagement by 48%, productivity by 34%, and employee retention by 26%, according to a report by O.C. Tanner Institute. Because it's significantly less expensive to train existing employees than to find new ones, closing the skills gap, retaining the best employees, and promoting from within all together have a real, positive impact on the bottom line.

Chapter 5: How a Digital Certificate Can Verify Skills & Help You Find the Perfect Job Candidate

Recruiting top talent can be time-consuming and costly. Digital certificates allow hiring managers and Human Resources leaders to quickly identify internal and external talent, and decrease the amount of time spent on recruiting. The Society for Human Resource Management's [Human Capital Benchmarking Report](#) states that the average time it takes to fill an open position is 42 days. For white-collar jobs in areas like engineering, finance, and marketing, that time is even longer. The average time-to-hire for white-collar positions is 68 business days, according to a Gartner study [Recruiting Slowdown Hurts the Bottom Line](#).

Digital certificates can also be issued for “[soft-skills](#),” like leadership, management, and communication. Talent developers are relying more on online learning to support learning and development initiatives, according to LinkedIn. Digital credentials provide individuals with verified digital badges backed by metadata that detail the skills mastered to earn the credential. When shared on social media and resumes, these badges send clear signals to current and future managers--helping earners find a job or earn a promotion.

Chapter 6: Making Open Badges That Are Meaningful & Impactful

Open badges are the industry standard for secure, verified digital credentials. Creating open badges that are meaningful to the issuing organization, as well as to the individual earning the credentials, is simple to do if badges are built on the framework of robust metadata. The true meaning of a badge is the metadata behind it which goes beyond pretty design and graphics. Metadata is the endpoint of an open badge that describes who received the badge, from which issuer, when, and what criteria was met to earn it.

From an earner perspective, metadata that doesn't verify their achievement in a complete and secure way reduces the experience of learning, and earning an open badge to something that anyone can earn. A fully-developed badge with rich metadata affords the earner a new vocabulary for discussing and showcasing their potential. Open badges with exceptional metadata will also include real evidence of learning in the form of a work product.

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Chapter 6: Making Open Badges That Are Meaningful & Impactful

Open badges with insufficient metadata dilute the learning offerings made by that organization and decrease the value of the credential itself. The issuer may miss an opportunity to position themselves as a provider of quality learning experiences, and instead of branding the organization as having a higher value to their workforce over their competitors, they are instead left to find value elsewhere.

Take a look at how you are authoring your digital credentials and ensure that your organization is providing earners and outsiders a full and rich description of the relative value of the achievement, the skills, and competencies represented, the full program required, and all assessment methods.



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