Teradata Master Certification builds reputations, adds value.

by Shirley S. Savage

Database management, one of the hottest technology job sectors, is expected to grow 13%, according to a 2007 survey of CIOs by Robert Half Technology. But these days, in order to stand out from the crowd, it’s not enough to have real-world experience in database technology. Employers are looking for third-party validation of an individual’s skills and knowledge. That’s why certification is increasingly important. It also explains why the Teradata Certified Professional Program continues to grow to meet demand. More than 10,000 individuals have embarked on the Teradata certification path since 1999, when the program began. All told, more than 23,000 certifications have been earned, with the number rising each month. As of Dec. 1, 2006, a total of 1,061 individuals had achieved Teradata Master status, the highest level of Teradata certification, according to Oliva Baronner, Teradata Certified Professional program manager. The Teradata Master Certification is eagerly sought after, with another 10 to 20 individuals receiving Master status each month,” says Baronner. These individuals are proving their dedication, skills and knowledge with each certification they earn.

Why is certification so important? Because it provides an industry-standard validation of an employee’s skills, assuring a current or prospective employer that the individual has a firm understanding of the technology. In addition, it demonstrates the individual’s interest in excelling at the job and a desire for self-improvement. The combination of certification and real-life experience can boost your standing at your current job and can help your resume stand out when applying for a new job.

Teradata certification begins with three baseline exams: Teradata Basics, Teradata Physical Implementation and Teradata SQL. Passing those exams earns you the title of Advanced Teradata Certified Professional. To achieve Teradata Master status, three additional job-role exams must be taken: Teradata Administration, Teradata Design Architecture and Teradata Application Development. At each stage, Teradata Certification validates your knowledge of the technology.

Teradata-authorized courses are available to provide high-quality training from certified instructors to help you achieve your certification goal. J. Russell Perkinson, a Teradata Master at The Boeing Company, says, “Teradata’s training was exceptional. The instructors were always well-versed in the subject.” Of course, exams are available around the world, enabling you to pursue your certification no matter where you’re based.

For those interested in achieving Master status, there’s a benefit found nowhere else: Membership in the Master’s Team Discussion Forum, aka the Master’s Team Mailing List. Membership to this forum opens the door for people in the industry to share insights with one another, including problems encountered by other customers and their real-world solutions.

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Find out what Perkinson already knows: Being Teradata-certified solidifies your reputation as a technical expert. You’ll earn kudos from your colleagues and your boss. Furthermore, you will know, without a doubt, that your skills and knowledge are exemplary.

Shirley S. Savage has published articles on technology, energy and science.

Validating your Knowledge

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Database management, one of the hottest technology job sectors, is expected to grow at least 13%, according to a 2007 survey of CIOs by Robert Half Technology. But these days, in order to stand out from the crowd, it's not enough to have real-world experience in database technology. Employers are looking for third-party validation of an individual's skills and knowledge. That's why certification is increasingly important. It also demonstrates the individual's interest in excelling at the job and a desire for self-improvement. The combination of certification and real-life experience can boost your standing at your current job and can help your resume stand out when applying for a new job.

Teradata certification begins with three baseline exams: Teradata Basics, Teradata Physical Implementation and Teradata SQL. Passing these exams earns you the title of Advanced Teradata Certified Professional. To achieve Teradata Master status, three additional job-role exams must be taken: Teradata Administration, Teradata Design Architecture and Teradata Application Development. At each stage, Teradata Certification validates your knowledge of the technology.

Teradata-certified instructors are available to provide high-quality training from certified instructors to help you achieve your certification goal. J. Russell Perkinson, a Teradata Master at The Boeing Company, says, "Teradata's certification is more than a piece of hardware sitting in the data center." He explains the value of certification, "It's more than that. It's a nice milestone on the road of learning," he says. "It's an accomplishment that's very tangible to Perkinson's colleagues as he proudly wears the evidence of his Teradata certification— the black wool and leather letterman-style jacket emblazoned with the Teradata logo and the words "Teradata Certified Master."

Perkinson was first introduced to Teradata in 1998 as an applications developer at Boeing. In 2003, Perkinson moved into his current position in Teradata administration. He and his team are responsible for Teradata hardware and software configuration, business continuity work, database administration support, client software distribution and support, capacity planning support, security performance analysis, and consulting with database administrators. Perkinson took the first Teradata Basics Certification Exam at the Annual Teradata PARTNERS User Group Conference & Expo in 2004. "At the time, I wasn't going to be a Teradata Master," he says. "I just wanted to learn what I needed to know and validate that I really learned it. It turns out that I really did need to know everything."

That realization led him to take Teradata training at Boeing and at Teradata in San Diego, Calif., in addition to "lots of on-the-job training from my extremely talented co-workers." As a result, Perkinson took two more certification exams at the PARTNERS Conference in 2005 and the last three certification exams at the Conference in 2006. Reaching the Teradata Master level has changed how Perkinson approaches database administration. "I tend to think about Teradata more as a whole than just a database or just a piece of hardware sitting in the data center," he says.

That knowledge benefits Perkinson in his relationships with his colleagues. "The Teradata Master Certification gives me an added level of believability and trust in what I say," Perkinson notes. "Becoming the 1,000th Teradata Master is a great source of pride. It's an achievement I'm proud of, more so than I'd thought I would be. I was mostly using it to validate that I'd learned the material. It's more than that. It's a nice milestone on the road of learning," he says. It's an accomplishment that's very tangible to Perkinson's colleagues as he proudly wears his Teradata jacket to work. His example is encouraging co-workers to strive for Teradata Master status. "One of my co-workers tried on the Teradata Master's jacket for incentive," says Perkinson. "Who knows? Perhaps that person will be the next Teradata Master at Boeing."