



IT CERTIFICATION REMAINS STRONG IN UK, SAYS PEARSON VUE

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DESPITE an economy in which IT training budgets are going down, industry insiders have confirmed that IT certification has remained strong in the UK, and that training companies can look to this as grounds for hope in a coming difficult year.

Leading test provider Pearson VUE has commented on recent research from the Institute of IT Training's Learning Directors' Network, confirming its latest findings. The research, commissioned to consultancy Pardo Fox by the IITT, shows widespread IT training budget cuts, which come as no surprise, yet certification is still growing.

Suzana Lopes, EMEA commercial director at Pearson VUE, comments, "We have seen no drop-off in demand or in numbers of candidates sitting IT tests at our UK test centres, and our IT clients are in fact optimistic about the coming year. It seems to be generally anticipated that, as the economy suffers, both IT professionals and those who use IT in their day-to-day work are placing increased emphasis on gaining meaningful qualifications, to gain a competitive edge in a tougher employment market."

The IITT's figures show that, at the end of 2008, training revenues went into negative growth for the first time since early 2004. Meanwhile, spend on end-user certification remained level, while IT professional certifications are forecast to continue growing in 2009.

Suzana Lopes continues, "Feedback from our IT training clients and channel partners has shown that they are undoubtedly suffering from an adverse economy and that their recovery and future success would appear to depend on two things. Firstly, they are mitigating the general squeeze on trainer-led training by developing their e-learning portfolios; and secondly they have high hopes in selling certification and training in the same package, as their clients at large corporations continue to place value on certifying their staff."

Peter Howell, at IT training company Global Knowledge, agrees: "We see the demand for certification training continuing as a key driver for our business throughout this downturn. Our Vendor Channel Partner customers need to maintain and enhance their certifications to remain competitive and our

Enterprise and small-to-medium customers need to be able to differentiate themselves through superior demonstrable technology qualifications. In fact, our test volumes so far in 2009 are up more than 10% on this time last year.”

Suzana Lopes adds, “Our IT vendor clients too would back this up, as they too are finding that as technology continues to advance, the demand for certification rises.”

Andy Hunt, vice president EMEA channels at VMware, gives an example: “Investment in training and certification from VMware, our partners and our customers, has helped fuel the growth in virtualisation. Thanks to this investment, virtualisation continues to grow in popularity with our customers, who are now standardising on the VMware platform to achieve virtualisation's significant business benefits. Certifications from our partners help customers get the most they can from their VMware investments as they are forced to do more with less in challenging economic times.”

Ends.

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Notes to editors: Pearson VUE (www.pearsonvue.co.uk) is a global leader in computer-based testing for information technology, academic, government and professional testing programmes around the world. Pearson VUE provides a full suite of services from test development to data management, and delivers exams through the world's most comprehensive and secure network of test centres in 165 countries. Pearson VUE is a business of Pearson (NYSE: PSO; LSE: PSON), the international media company, whose businesses include the Financial Times Group, Pearson Education and the Penguin Group.