



Learn to earn

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Increasing Importance of Professional Certifications in the Northern Ireland IT Marketplace.

VanRath Search and Selection represent a wide variety of software professionals in the Northern Ireland marketplace. Maintaining close professional relationships with our clients and candidates alike allows us the opportunity to gauge market trends and provide professional advice in all areas of IT recruitment.

Despite recent big name additions to the IT market in Northern Ireland, competition for positions can be as fierce as ever with talented new graduates entering the marketplace year on year. This is further compounded with the much publicised reversal of the 'brain drain' of the 1990s with experienced and qualified professionals moving back to NI from London, Dublin and further a field. Such competition has resulted in candidates having to work on their marketability when applying for the top roles as increasingly a strong IT degree on its own is not enough to make an interview shortlist. A growing trend amongst candidates is the pursuit of professional certifications, often in their own time and at their own cost.

Microsoft Certifications (www.microsoft.com/learning/mcp) have always proved popular as well as the Sun Microsystems certifications in Java programming (www.sun.com/training). We are also seeing a marked increase in candidates coming from a Testing background who have achieved or are pursuing the British Computer Society's ISEB certificate in Software Testing.

In our recent IT Recruitment Survey in conjunction with Momentum we found that 80% of the clients surveyed encourage staff to pursue these professional certifications. The survey underlined that IT companies feel that the pursuit of professional certifications by their staff was of significant benefit to their

organisation. This ties in with our experience that applicants who have already obtained a level of professional certification stand more of a chance of success in the recruitment process. The reasons for this are two-fold. In one sense the employee will have a focused and quantifiable degree of technical ability in their preferred field. Furthermore the employer can see that they have the extra motivation and tenacity in building their IT career.

One interesting point is that the process of employers increasingly asking for candidates to have professional certifications is to an extent candidate - driven. With more candidates independently taking the certifications companies are now in a stronger position to put them on their desirable criteria when recruiting. An example is the recent upsurge in Software Testers taking the ISEB exams which has had a direct impact on the number of Tester roles now asking for this certification

With Microsoft recently announcing a redesign of its certification programme for the latest technology releases, giving a more vocational direction, there is even more focus on the importance of such certifications in the marketplace.

At VanRath we are aware of such trends in the market and as a result will always brief candidates on the benefits of pursuing Professional Certifications, often in their own time, as a means to increase their employability and appeal in an increasingly competitive arena.



VanRath Search & Selection is a privately owned specialist recruitment consultancy. Core activities centre on...

-  Industry & Commerce
-  Public Practice
-  Banking
-  Information Technology
-  Management Consulting

VanRath have been at the forefront of the financial and IT recruitment sectors in Northern Ireland since 2002. We are proud of our reputation for investing in business and IT professionals for the future

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