Brandon Hall Group
EXCELLENCE
AWARDS 2022

ServiceNow's Collaborative, Cohort-based Certified Technical Architect Program

ServiceNow and Intrepid by VitalSource

Best Advance in Learning Management Technology for External Training

February 2023

Brandon Hall Group
TECHNOLOGY EXCELLENCE AWARD
GOLD
2022

Company Background

servicenow.

Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	Santa Clara, CA
Year Founded	2003
Revenue	$5.75B
Employees	~18,000
Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)	Worldwide
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	We make the world work better for everyone. ServiceNow helps digitize and unify organizations so that they can find smarter, faster, better ways to make work flow. Our 7,400+ global enterprise customers include approximately 80% of the Fortune 500. They all rely on ServiceNow solutions using the Now Platform — the intelligent and intuitive cloud platform — for successful digital transformation.
Industry	Software
Stock Symbol	NOW
Website	http://www.servicenow.com

Company Background

INTREPID™ by VitalSource

Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	Raleigh, NC
Year Founded	1996
Revenue	
Employees	350
Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)	Worldwide
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	Intrepid by VitalSource is the corporate learning business within VitalSource Technologies, LLC. Intrepid offers a collaborative learning platform for companies to design and deliver high-stakes digital and blended learning programs for employees, customers and partners. Our clients and partners include Fortune 500 companies, executive education providers, consulting firms, training providers and learning services providers.
Industry	Learning Technology
Stock Symbol	NA, privately held
Website	https://www.intrepidlearning.com/

Value Proposition

ServiceNow delivers its award-winning Certified Technical Architect (CTA) program on the Intrepid by VitalSource platform to a global audience of experienced customers and partners who focus on system integration and orchestration, making digital transformation real on the ServiceNow platform.

Customers use the ServiceNow platform to reduce complexity for their customers and employees. These customers rely on Technical Architects to understand their business's desired strategic outcomes and analyze and translate business information and technical requirements to propose solutions to achieve these objectives with the ServiceNow platform, products and solutions. The increasing complexity of projects and rapidly expanding suite of ServiceNow products and solutions has led to a need to elevate the skills of Technical Architects and to increase the number of qualified Technical Architects available to support customers' needs.

In response, ServiceNow launched the CTA program in October 2021 to develop candidates' communication and collaboration capabilities as well as their technical architecture, governance and operational skills. The CTA program helps them develop and hone this diverse set of skills, provide advice and guidance about the ServiceNow platform and improve customers' technical integrations and workflows while reducing risk. The program is not for novices; rather it is an advanced certification program for experienced professionals. Prerequisites include four other ServiceNow certifications plus at least three years of ServiceNow subject matter expertise.

The CTA is an elective program for a very purpose-driven audience focused on deepening their knowledge, improving their skills and furthering their careers. It is a 13-week, cohort-based program, requiring 8-10 hours of effort from participants each week as they participate in live virtual sessions and complete self-paced content, individual and group assignments, quizzes and a capstone project. The cost is $6,000 (in Q3 2022).

In spite of (or perhaps because of) this rigor, the program is in high demand. The number of new cohorts has been increasing each quarter since its launch. Of the three cohorts that opened for registration in early July 2022, two sold out in just three days.

Cohorts for the CTA program include up to 60 learners and two ServiceNow trainers. Within each cohort, learners are assigned to a team of five to seven learners to work together on group projects that reflect the type of work technical architects typically do on the job. The cohort sizes are small enough to ensure rich collaboration among all participants and the trainers. The trainers also lead the weekly live discussion-and-presentation sessions, contribute to asynchronous discussions, provide feedback on team projects and share real-life use cases and experiences.

Achieving the Technical Architect certification means the participant has demonstrated the skills and knowledge needed to contribute to the creation of an enterprise-wide architecture and implementation strategy, drive standardization and leading practices, optimize platform performance and contribute to a platform team based on value and innovation. As of July 2022, four CTA cohorts have been completed. In these four cohorts, 207 participants registered for the course, and 206 participants sat for the certification exam. 183 participants (89%) passed the exam, earning the certification. Of those, 162 participants (89%) passed the certification exam on their initial attempt.

As of July 2022, six additional cohorts have been opened for registration (through Q2 2023), and 349 of 360 seats have been filled (97%).

Product or Program Innovation

The most innovative elements of this online learning experience for an audience spread around the globe are:

- A single technology, the Intrepid platform, that provides clear, easy-to-use access to all program materials (no matter where they are housed, no matter how much we throw at them) and brings together both live and asynchronous collaboration elements
- Richly relevant and realistic assignments that involve teamwork; that include learners recording and sharing video presentations; that require learners to review, evaluate and provide feedback on peers' work and that improved the quality of learners' work
- Forming each class of learners from around the globe into a collaborative, semi-synchronous cohorts to support each other and learn and work together throughout the 13 weeks and beyond

Single pane of glass for the complete learning experience

Part of the reason ServiceNow moved its CTA program to the Intrepid platform was to reduce the number of systems and tools formerly required to deliver it—a number that increased complexity and effort for learners, delivery managers and program administrators.

Before implementing Intrepid for the CTA program, course materials, links and reminders were distributed across 6 different systems and tools:

- The Now Learning platform is our learning management system, the system of record for all our certifications and learning programs. For the CTA program, it also held 38 separate eLearning learning modules.
- Zoom is used for live sessions throughout the program.

- Miro was used for weekly small group collaboration and during the live sessions.
- Slack was used for weekly small group collaboration and for asking questions of coaches and facilitators.
- Brightcove held recordings of past live sessions, for learners who missed a session or wanted to review one.
- SharePoint was used to collect learners' submissions for their capstone project.

After migrating to Intrepid, we were able to eliminate the last 4 of those. All semi-synchronous collaboration, small group work, Q&A and submission of learners' documents and video presentations is done directly in the Intrepid platform. Learners can even access the Zoom meeting from within the Intrepid platform. All materials—content from ServiceNow and assignments, discussions and other contributions from learners—are now in one place, arranged in the logical instructional flow of the program, as shown in the sample screenshot below.

In other words, Intrepid is the single pane of glass through which learners access everything they will need throughout this three-month program.

This ease of access is not limited to just learners. The course authors creating and updating the program, the coaches and facilitators guiding learners through each week, the administrators pulling reports and monitoring progress—everyone can see the full, contextualized panoramic picture at a glance and quickly drill down to just what they need, when they need it.

Time release is another helpful feature of this single pane of glass. CTA is a 13-week program. That's a lot of content, and it can be overwhelming at first. That's why we chose to "reveal" a new week of content at a time, helping to keep the program fresh and

interesting over a full three months. The Intrepid platform lets a course author choose a time-release with a simple on/off toggle. When on, the course author sets their preferred release dates and times, and the platform does the work. So, while the week three screenshot shown above displays the complete range of program content (accessible via buttons at the top of the screen), the following screenshots show what a learner would see on the class home page and main content page during week eight—defaulting to that moment-in-time while and providing access to everything released to date. This feature keeps learners from being caught in an avalanche of content from day one, which can overwhelm and even contribute to attrition.

The easy-to-configure UI further contributes to learners' ability to see what is required in a given week while minimizing clutter on the page through the use of accordions. At a glance, learners can see how many topics are in their learning plan and can expand the accordion for a section when they want to see the specific activities related to a topic.
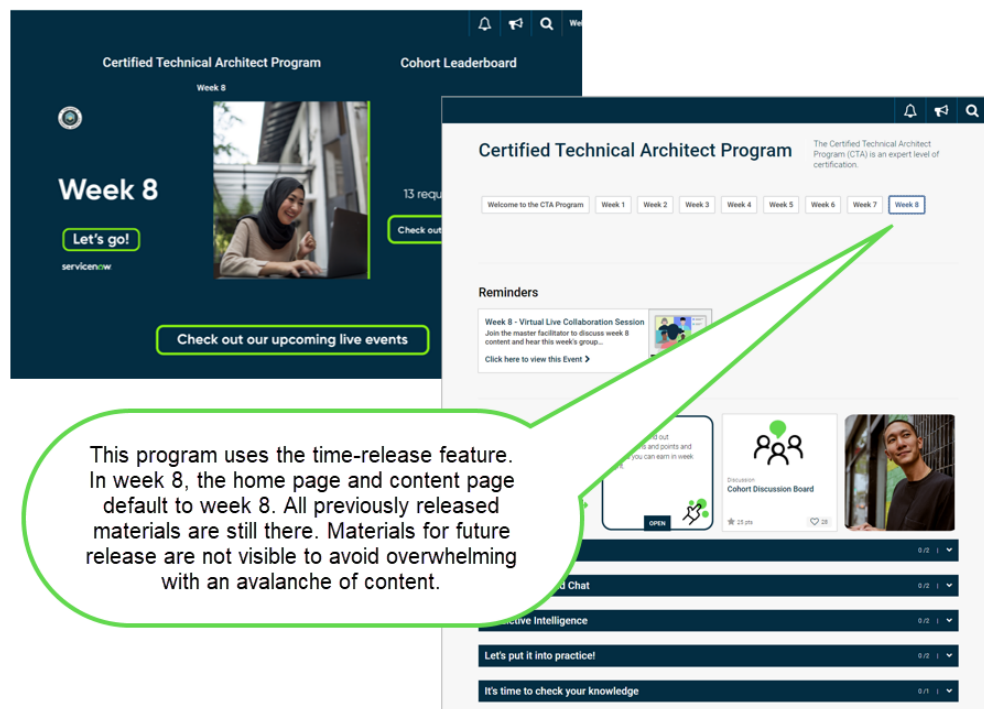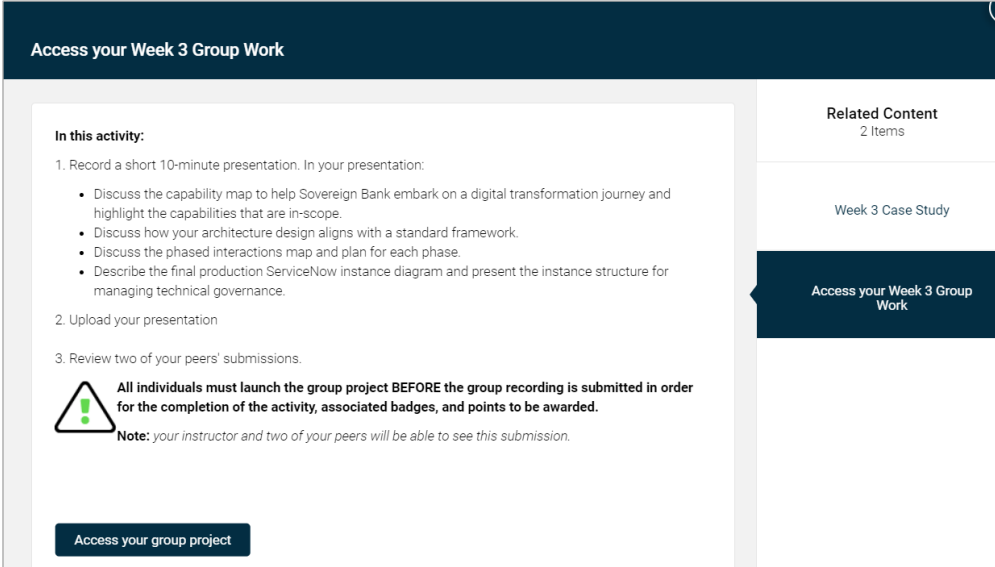

Peer-Reviewed Video Submissions Improve Performance

Certified Technical Architects need to combine deep understanding of the ServiceNow platform with equal understanding of the business needs, problem-solving skills, cross-functional collaboration skills and the ability to communicate with a range of business and technical audiences. Creating meaningful, relevant ways to test and evaluate this range of skills in a blended, semi-synchronous, cohort-based program can be a challenge for most learning technologies. Before migrating our program to the Intrepid platform, we

relied on presentations during live virtual classroom sessions. The Intrepid platform offered a wider range of capabilities, supporting more robust, relevant activities and improving learning outcomes.

Within the cohort of about 60 learners, we form ten teams of five to seven learners each. Each week, learners complete self-paced learning modules, then meet with their teams to prepare a presentation applying the technical content they have learned to a case study scenario. The intended audience for the presentation varies from one week to the next, reflecting the realities of the job. The team prepares a 10-minute video of their presentation and uploads it to the platform.

The Intrepid platform automatically distributes videos submitted for peer review. Each learner is given two videos to review and evaluate. As course authors, we were able to choose the number of reviews each learner would be assigned and create a custom rubric with questions and criteria learners use to evaluate their peers' work and provide feedback.

Comments provided in the reviews are time-stamped and matched to the specific part of the presentation that corresponds to the feedback. As a result, learners are able to see and review the specific parts of their presentation that received feedback.

Trainers for each class can also review videos and provide feedback. The screenshot below shows the instructor view, which supports easily navigating through learner submissions.
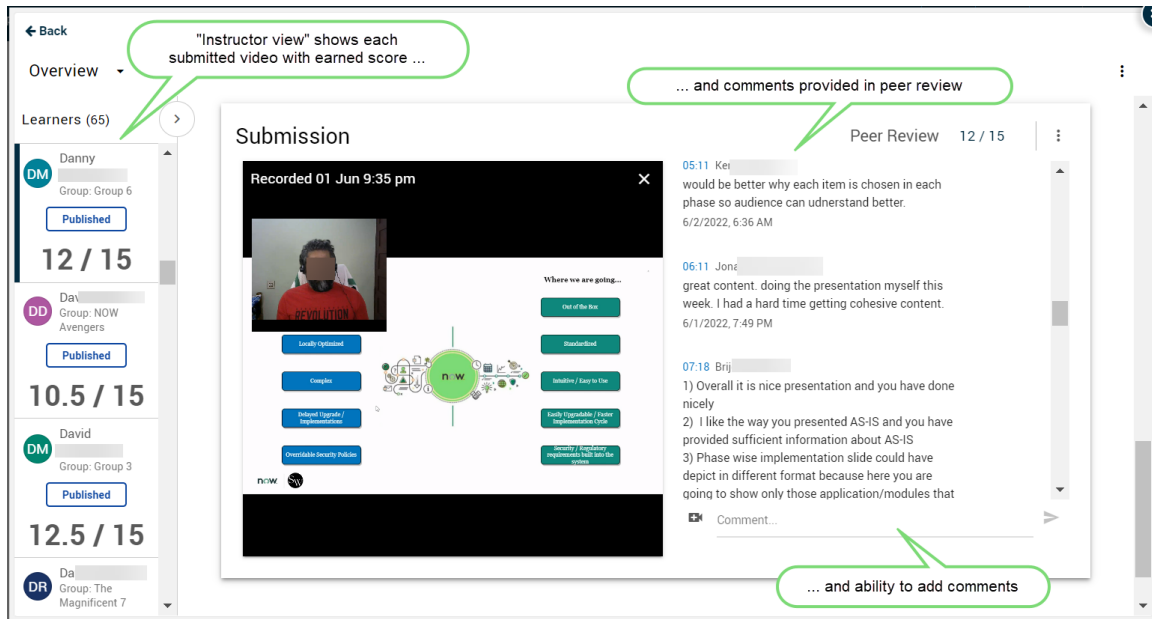
The real "wow factor" in the CTA program came through combining these peer-reviewed videos with presentations in our weekly live sessions. Learners would submit their videos each Wednesday and complete their peer reviews on Thursdays. Each Friday, we held 2 live sessions (to support how geographically dispersed our audience is), and trainers would select teams to present in the live sessions.

Trainers reported that learners very clearly adapted their Friday presentations based on the peer review scores and feedback, even in this very short timeframe. The quality of presentations in the Friday live sessions was better than the video submissions, based on what people learned from feedback received and from viewing other presentations. The quality of presentations was also better than those in classes we had conducted before migrating to the Intrepid platform because we didn't have the technology to support learners practicing, receiving immediate and specific feedback, then having the chance to revise and improve.

- *"Feedback from the peers has been extremely useful … I love the tools available to us via Intrepid to record and [analyze] our presentation."* — CTA Participant, 2022

Collaborative, Semi-Synchronous Cohorts

Learners go through the CTA program as a cohort, a group of about 60 learners. They spend 13 weeks learning and working together. They collaborate on weekly projects/assignments with their small sub-group of five to seven learners. Over the course of the program, they get to know many others through the weekly live sessions which feature presentations from different learners each week. The full class is invited to ask questions and give feedback on those presentations as they all grapple with the issues

presented in scenarios, the potential solutions and recommendations for addressing those issues and how to communicate those solutions and recommendations to a range of audiences.

Getting to know other learners and networking with them is a key component of the CTA program by design. Many of the questions Technical Architects face in their work have answers that start with, "It depends … ." This program is an opportunity for them to work with a wide range of peers—in small groups and large, in live sessions, discussions and through feedback on assignments. Those peers come from different industries, different backgrounds, work for smaller or larger companies, as consultants to or employees of ServiceNow customers. Sharing ideas and perspectives, brainstorming, learning and working together are all part of the CTA program experience to help them become outstanding resources for ServiceNow customers. In addition to building a network they can leverage in the future, engaging in discussion and exploring multiple approaches to addressing the same issue helps the learners develop critical thinking skills and a more nuanced understanding of the capabilities of the ServiceNow platform.

- *"Real-world use cases are being discussed with real problems that our customers face today … everyone's experience is different, and everyone is bringing same or different viewpoints on the table depending on their experience. It's great to sit down with such members along with excellent trainers who are great, fun, and sometimes challenging when they put themselves in CIO's shoes or leadership shoes and provide feedback on the presentations which is again a great learning experience."* – CTA Participant, 2021

Having an active sense both of community and accountability also helps with retention in a program like CTA that requires a significant commitment over time: 8-10 hours per week for 13 weeks. From the start and throughout each week, the program design keeps learners engaged with their small groups, the full cohort and with trainers. Learners are welcomed, heard and encouraged as colleagues in multiple ways each week. The use of small teams, the discussion board and peer reviews all mean that the effort of creating and sustaining community is shared by the cohort, rather than falling exclusively on trainers.

Some Tools for Semi-Synchronous Collaboration in the Intrepid platform
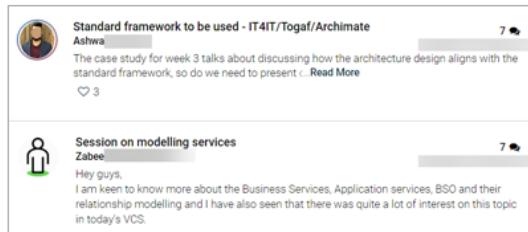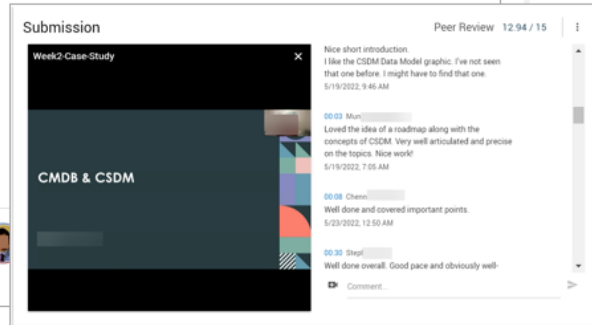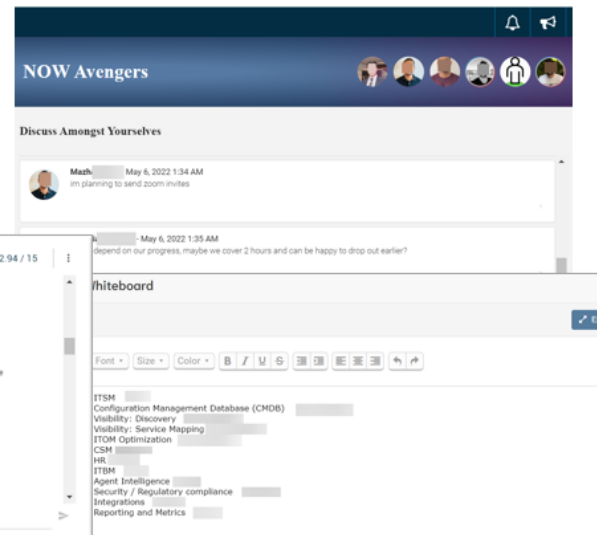
Feedback from peers and trainers on assignments

- "The value of the CTA is in the 13 weeks of topics split between Technical and Soft Skills. The technical topics I was able to learn, which I might have not been able to take the extra time to learn outside of the CTA, but because of my cohorts I was able to learn more from our weekly discussions. Also, the soft skills we learned together and help each other with was another bonus, where else can you be in a professional group of technical people and feel 'safe.'" — CTA Participant, 2021

The weekly live sessions are a great opportunity to discuss key issues as a group. In between those sessions, the Intrepid platform provides semi-synchronous opportunities through discussions, through the peer review process, allowing learners to view and comment on all assignments (not just those assigned for peer review) and with small group workspaces.

The Intrepid platform automatically sends a "daily digest" email on days when learners have received replies to their discussion threads, feedback on their assignments and other similar social interactions with their own contributions. A learner can choose to change the daily digest to weekly, but given the pace and level of activity in a program like this, most preferred daily. These are meaningful reasons to return to the platform — someone commented on *my* post or offered feedback on *my* video — with a link directly to that element in the program.

Unique Differentiators

Technology certification programs have grown in number and sophistication in recent years, in keeping with the number and influence of technologies on which our businesses depend. All those options make this a competitive marketplace for those offering technology certification programs. ServiceNow is aware of and responsive to the need to offer differentiated learning across our programs. Some of the elements that make the CTA program stand out include:

- The use of points and badges to drive more engagement with program materials. This is a 13-week program with no shortage of content offered or effort required. And yet when points and badges were incorporated to help participants track their progress through the lengthy program, the team was surprised at the degree to which this gamification also incentivized completion— even of optional materials.
- Experience accelerators like team projects, peer review and particularly the focus on presenting to a range of different audiences mirror the actual work of an experienced Technical Architect and build highly relevant communication, collaboration and presentation skills beyond just the technical knowledge most programs focus on.

Points and Badges Drive More Engagement

Moving the CTA program from multiple systems and tools to the Intrepid platform created a more cohesive, unified program, as described above, with all elements either hosted on or directly accessible through Intrepid. That move also allowed us to introduce the use of points and badges, both as rewards for work done and as progress indicators to keep track of work done and work remaining in a lengthy program.

Learners could tell at a glance what was important, based on the points assigned and whether it contributed to earning a badge. They could also use the completion indicators and points and badges earned to track their own progress and remaining work at a glance. Have I earned the weekly badge? Are my points consistent with this point in the program and other learners? If the answer to either question is "no," it is clear and simple to discern what I must do. In fact, when a learner earns a badge, the platform displays an icon near the top of the screen to notify and celebrate that achievement.

Domain Separation
✔ 2/2 | ⌃

About this module

In this module, you will learn about domain separated architecture concepts and how to work in the domain model.

Points: 35

Time: 20 mins

Package
Domain Separation
eLearning

⭐ 25 pts   ♡ 1

Document
Domain Separation
Quick Reference Guide

⭐ 10 pts   ♡

Points are like airline miles: little rewards that reflect progress along a journey. They also reflect value or effort with more points awarded for more time-consuming, difficult or important components.

Let's put it into practice!
0/2 | ⌃

Let's put it into practice!

It is time to gather in your groups and apply the learning of the week!

Document
Week 5 Case Study

⭐ 10 pts   ♡ 0

Group Project
Access your Week 5 Group Work

⭐ 100 pts   ♡ 2

What is happening in week 5?

Welcome to Week Five

In order to fulfill the requirements of this course, each week there will be mandatory content that you must complete. If you successfully complete these, you will be awarded your weekly badge.

The requirements for Week 5 are as follows:

- Finish all lessons in the eLearning course and download the QRG
  - Data Strategies
  - Instance Data Replication
  - Domain Separation
- Completion of the case study group activity
  - Read and download this week's case study activity
  - Complete the group activity by uploading your presentation recording
  - Review and provide feedback on two other groups' recordings
- Knowledge check
  - Complete the short quiz and achieve 80% pass mark
- Attend the Virtual Collaboration Session

Week 05

Badges reflect milestones and aggregate accomplishments.

Upon completion of these activities, you will be awarded the Week 5 badge!

Cohort Leaderboard — The cohort leaderboard enables you to check how your completion rate is going and where you are at in the cohort!

What surprised us was how incentivizing learners found the points and badges. Because the program was disaggregated across multiple systems and tools before migrating to Intrepid, it was not feasible to offer points or badges in that format. The transition gave us an interesting perspective to evaluate how learners responded to this gamification. One of the most interesting things we found is that points motivated learners to engage with and complete optional content.

Before moving to Intrepid, very few learners accessed optional materials like supplemental content and weekly feedback surveys meant to help the ServiceNow Learning team identify program improvements. After moving to Intrepid and assigning a small number of points to these optional materials, use went up dramatically. The drive to earn points and a top position on the Leaderboard surprised us, in spite of all we had read and heard about the impact of gamification in learning programs. That response in the first few cohorts on the Intrepid platform led us to do a thorough review of how points were assigned and what that conveyed to learners and/or incentivized them to prioritize and value.

We were also able to leverage badging in the Intrepid platform to incentivize behaviors other than content completion. We created two bonus badges that are awarded to two learners each week during the Virtual Collaboration Session. The "Star of the Week"

badge is awarded to a learner who demonstrates exceptional performance during the week. This may be an outstanding presentation or thought-provoking contributions to discussions. The "Super Contributor" badge is awarded to recognize a learner who went the extra mile for the cohort—answering another learner's question, providing additional resources or other noteworthy actions. These additional recognition opportunities further motivate learners to engage with and contribute to the group.

In addition to the demonstrated increase in learner engagement, points and badges directly benefited the ServiceNow learning team through a decrease in learner questions related to their progress and completion as well as a significant reduction in the amount of time the team needed to spend in multiple systems and tools reporting on and tracking participation. In other words, one automated feature in the Intrepid platform motivated learners and reduced the workload for learning staff.
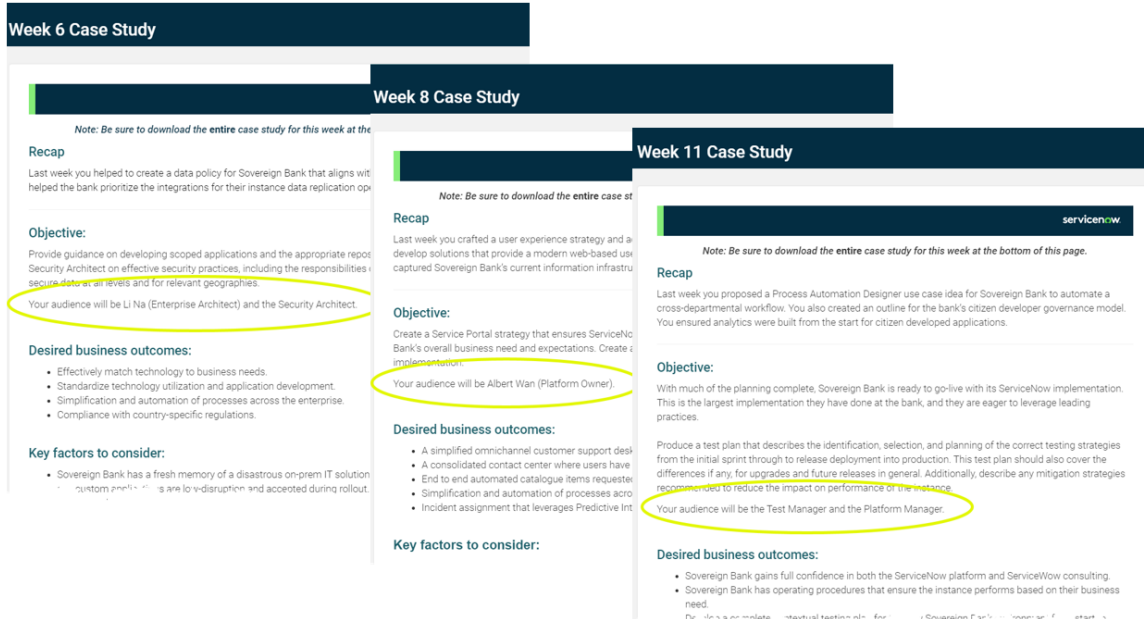
Experience Accelerators Increase Value for Learners

Several aspects of the CTA program differentiate it from other elective certification programs for experienced technical professionals:

- The focus on presentation and communication skills, especially to a range of different audiences (such as a team of developers, a product owner, enterprise IT leadership, etc.)
- The cohort-based approach that also includes small group activities, mirroring the actual team-based work environment for Technical Architects while providing a crucial learning and support network during this 13-week program
- The role of peer review to engage participants in learning from and even evaluating each other, then immediately applying what they learned to revise their own work

In the real world, it could take years for a Technical Architect to build a diverse network of other Technical Architects and have the opportunity to work with them, brainstorming solutions and bringing their diverse backgrounds and experiences to bear on customers' challenges. In the CTA program, they are part of a closely-knit cohort of 60 colleagues, led by trainers. They work even more closely with their small team of five to seven other learners to solve weekly assignments based on case studies (as shown in the screenshot below). Their fellow learners come from different companies and industries. Some work for consulting firms to support a range of customers while others are part of the IT team at a ServiceNow customer. In this program, they are all on the same team, and they forge networks that persist beyond the class, based on the deep working relationships they build across those 13 weeks.

- *"[One of the strengths of the program] is the ability for ServiceNow customers and partners to come together as a 'TEAM and really work together, share ideas, and put forth best practices."* — CTA Participant, 2021

When considering the most effective way to accelerate the acquisition and application of skills and knowledge for ServiceNow customers and partners, it was clear that the CTA program would need to have application activities as a cornerstone of the design of the program. The range of audiences that the different weekly assignments address is a microcosm of the range of work a Technical Architect may do across several years. The CTA program prepares them for that diversity, forcing them to consider the different priorities and issues of different audience and how their own presentations and messages need to be adapted.

- *"Real-world use cases are being discussed with real problems that our customers face today … everyone's experience is different, and everyone is bringing same or different viewpoints on the table depending on their experience. It's great to sit down with such members along with excellent trainers who are great, fun, and sometimes challenging when they put themselves in CIO's shoes or leadership shoes and provide feedback on the presentations which is again a great learning experience."* – CTA Participant, 2021

Measurable Result

The measurable benefits of the CTA program can be seen in two ways: through the impact on ServiceNow and the impact on the learners.

Impact on ServiceNow

For ServiceNow, the impact on the business is measured through the number of certified architects added to the ServiceNow ecosystem, as well as the program revenue.

The primary objective of the Certified Technical Architect program is to increase the talent pool of ServiceNow experts. To date, the program has been successful in increasing the talent pool as demonstrated by the number of participants completing the CTA program and by their certification pass rate.

As of July 2022, four CTA cohorts have been completed. In these four cohorts, 207 participants registered for the course, and 206 participants sat for the certification exam. 183 participants (89%) passed the exam, earning the certification. Of those, 162 participants (89%) passed the certification exam on their initial attempt.

As of July 2022, six additional cohorts have been opened for registration (through Q2 2023), and 349 of 360 seats have been filled (97%).

Based on registration demand, the CTA program will continue to be successful in increasing the talent pool of ServiceNow architects.

2021 revenue targets were calculated at 80% enrollment for the first public course. Actual revenue surpassed that target by 17%.

Impact on Learners

For CTA participants, the impact of the program is measured through the Net Promoter Score (NPS) and capstone pass rate. The net promoter score increased from 58 to 83 after we transitioned the program to the Intrepid platform, which is a significant jump. The initial pass rate for the capstone project increased from 62% to 78.5% after the program transitioned to the Intrepid platform.

After the Intrepid platform was implemented for the CTA program:

- Learners' evaluation of the content increased from an average of 3.48 to 3.8 (on a 4-point scale)
- On-time completion of assignments increased, which we attribute to:
  - Improved ease of use for learners, as described in the "single pane of glass" section above

- o Clear messaging and user interface in the Intrepid platform to better communicate expectations and deadlines in the flow of the learning program
- o Improved ease of administration for Delivery Managers through the use of automated communications, such as a weekly email reminding learners of key activities and deadlines in the next few days

- Increased performance feedback for learners due to the inclusion and automation of peer reviews which resulted in accelerated improvement in presentation skills
- Administrative overhead for Delivery Managers decreased, in large part because the program—and all related data and reports — was consolidated within one learning platform (the single pane of glass we described above)

In addition to the quantitative metrics, qualitative feedback from participants indicate they are elevating their technical skills and mastering the presentation of solutions to different levels of management.

- *"Each week I was able to apply what I learned with my existing accounts. I repeatedly reference my notes from the program in my day-to-day activities and have become more comfortable facilitating and leading discussions with leadership."*
- *"The CTA program helped me have better in-depth understanding of technical or platform governance processes, estimations, planning, architecting business complex applications on the platform."*
- *"I am already applying what I have learned to my current engagements and practice deliverables where education from the CTA program can be used to drive strategic discussions, solutions offerings within ServiceNow, and collaborative efforts to build applications from scratch that align with the business."*
- *"The CTA program has strengthened my ability to solve complex business requirements in my day-to-day job working with multiple enterprise customers. It added more opportunities to deepen expertise in cross-platform disciplines which we started applying in our daily conversations with the customers."*

About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 30 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

Professional Certifications
Self-paced certification programs. Virtual group sessions for companies. In-person conferences and summits.

Membership
Individual and Enterprise Membership Options: Includes research assets, advisory support, a client success plan and more.

SOME WAYS WE CAN HELP

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Two annual programs recognize the best organizations that have successfully deployed programs to achieve measurable results.

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recognizes world-class HCM programs that transform their organization and achieve breakthrough results. This designation is the next step beyond the HCM Excellence Awards, which focus on a single program, and looks at the department as a whole.

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uniquely places HCM service and technology companies at the top of organizations' consideration list of vendors. It adds an unmatched level of credibility based on BHG's twenty-eight-plus years of experience in evaluating and selecting the best solution providers for leading organizations around the world.