



Brandon Hall Group™

**EXCELLENCE
AWARDS™ 2024**

CASE STUDY

IBM Ignites Global Cloud Excellence Through Community-Powered Performance

IBM Training

Best Use of Performance Support

November 2024



Company Background



Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	Armonk, New York
Year Founded	1911
Revenue	\$ 61.9 billion
Employees	280K
Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)	170 countries
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	IBM is an information technology (IT) company. The company operates in software, consulting, and infrastructure.
Industry	Information Technology
Stock Symbol	IBM

**Website**<https://www.ibm.com/>**Budget and Timeframe**

Budget and Timeframe	
Overall budget	6M
Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	15 employees
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	Over 100 Subject Matter Experts contributing to job task analysis, curricula, and certification exams.
Number of contractors involved with implementation	10
Timeframe to implement	2 years +
Start date of the program	Launched October 2020

Fit to the Needs**Overview**

Shifts in the marketplace, advances in the ways modern businesses engage technology to solve problems, and, significantly, the exponential growth of cloud computing and cloud services led IBM to the conclusion that it needed to evaluate where it stood in designing and delivering services to its clients. The IBM Enterprise Skills Team was assembled to survey the technology landscape and explore options to ensure IBM did not fall behind in a hyper-competitive technology ecosystem.

A key area of focus to come from the IBM Enterprise Skills Teams survey is the need to focus on building a robust and effective training program for IBM Cloud. The result was the founding of the IBM Center for Cloud Training (ICCT), which concentrates on IBM's investment in IBM Cloud education and certification. The



program is built for clients, partners, and employees and is delivered from an enterprise-wide perspective, with one or more levels of certification in each skill area with learner success built into all programs and initiatives. All training, support, and certification elements are supported by a carefully considered, well maintained system that is both broad-based and targeted to specific needs.

Since its founding, ICCT has evolved from its initial focus on educating and certifying employees to building cloud skills outside the company to creating processes and methodologies, which help ensure positive outcome and performance among learners. Today, and ICCT's plans for the future, is the continuing development of a robust performance support system that incorporates community-focused learning and performance support at its core.

Overview

Currently ICCT offers 14 role-based and specialty training and certifications to a global audience of learners comprised of IBM clients, business partners, domestic and international students, and IBM employees.

This is accomplished by:

- Deploying a hyper-efficient “build it once; deploy it twice” strategy, reusing proven best practices and improving ROI
- Centering its learning programs on the most in-demand cloud-related jobs:
 - Learners select the role, product, or solution where they want to be certified.
 - Learners can test out of content where they already are proficient, saving busy professional's time.
 - ICCT adds new learning paths and certifications as they are needed.
- Taking advantage of IBM's history of technological leadership by employing a variety of technical innovations to engage learners, helping to ensure their success.

IBM Cloud's learning strategy is a hybrid of online learning blended with and bolstered by supplemental learning elements. Curricula are designed for a broad range of learners in both technology-based and non-technology roles. Implementation is global, self-paced, and offered in several delivery options.



These learning programs include a host of elements, for example, live and recorded online instruction, Study Jams, Flash Jams, and study groups. ICCT also provides a mobile app that includes quizzes, flashcards, and study guides, and much more.

Each element is based on appropriate and effective technology, development of meaningful and useful content, efficient administration to support success (including high-touch communication with learners), and financial analysis to ensure viability within the organization.

The IBM Center for Cloud Training's goal is to meet learners where they are today. Considering the different learning styles, geographies, and modalities, the goal is to have the right solution for every learner.

That said, the need to deliver programming and resources with a community focus, using a hybrid approach became clear almost immediately.

The hybrid elements it developed to reach and engage learners included video- and instructor-led learning, on-the-job training, e-learning, asynchronous and synchronous learning, simulations, mobile and social platforms, video conferencing, and additional video content, as well as other delivery methods and tools.

To help assure positive outcome and performance among learners, ICCT designs and delivers performance support experiences, which reach and engage its full learner audience embracing their diverse styles of learning.

ICCT designs and delivers its curricula to meet learners where they are, with learning paths and certifications that are supplemented by a wealth of performance support initiatives.

These performance support initiatives have been designed to increase skill level, enhance retention, encourage remediation, factor in time limitations, and appeal to different learning styles.

The key to success is putting learners in control of their own learning journeys. ICCT delivers its curricula and performance support to meet the demands of busy professionals, including customized and free training that is available online, in-



person, in real-time, or at the learner's convenience. Meeting learners where they are in their careers facilitates successful outcomes, with the completion of cloud certifications.

Performance support initiatives can be divided into four main points of focus:

- Study support
- Motivation
- Information and knowledge sharing
- Community-driven programs

These are described further in Judging Criteria 2 (Design) and Criteria 3 (Delivery) below.

Organizational Goals

ICCT understands the need for and provides immediate access anywhere, anytime to support tools. The organization was founded upon a philosophy that it needs to give every type of learner as much access as possible to a variety of performance support materials.

As described by division leader, Jani Byrne Saliga, PhD, *“No matter what industry you're in, the value of continuing education is paramount. And if you're in the tech sector, you know it's even more important: either keep up with an ever-evolving industry or risk falling behind.”*

With this in mind, ICCT builds its training programs and performance support initiatives to ensure professionals not only have the resources necessary to succeed at various levels of cloud certification, but also education that helps them throughout their careers.

The evolution

ICCT discovered during its first full year – 2021 – that community-oriented performance support initiatives had the most traction, bringing like-minded learners together so that their peers and mentors (and themselves) encourage success. At first, ICCT deployed a three-day, two hours each day, live Study Jam sessions. The early success of those community-based experiences – with learners ready to earn their certifications after the sessions – quickly led to a series of smaller, personalized study groups during 2022, which joined learners on the curriculum path. Essentially, ICCT expanded its performance support from



meeting learners toward the end of their learning journeys during 2021 to earlier in the learning process.

At the same time, learners expressed an overwhelming interest in flashcards and study guides which led to a digital initiative – the IBM Cloud Prep App. Learning prompts in the form of flashcard questions and answers, and quick access to study guide topics were now available for learners on-the-go.

The study group experiences, and the Cloud Prep App success, became the foundation for the development of ICCT’s 20+ performance support initiatives – and in response to the market learners, 14 study jam community-based learning events for 2023 were developed to answer this demand.

Enterprise Integration

IBM is an organization made up of many business units. This includes ICCT. While ICCT could exist simply to upskill internal employees in IBM Cloud divisions, its programs and support initiatives have been expanded to reach all other IBM business units. As cloud technology evolves, the need for professionals to understand and utilize the cloud intersects with all aspects of business operations.

ICCT certification programs and support initiatives are shared across the global enterprise so employees, clients, business partners, and technology learners around the world can upskill as part of a greater ecosystem, while helping to promote the adoption of cloud.

Importantly, ICCT’s mission has been tied to IBM’s organizational objectives including two generational initiatives:

- **“30 by 30” Initiative:** IBM’s commitment to upskill 30 million people globally by 2030, with cloud training through ICCT being a key area of focus.
- **New Hire Skills Initiative:** A challenge to new hires across all IBM Cloud teams to earn an IBM Cloud role-based or specialty certification. This initiative was designed and delivered to assist learners from start to finish as they embark on their learning journeys.



Design

IBM Cloud is a niche player in the Cloud Services market, holding a share of approximately 5%. Known for its enterprise-grade solutions, IBM Cloud caters to specific business requirements and tailored cloud solutions. The IBM Cloud target audience includes enterprises with complex IT landscapes.

The IBM Center for Cloud Training follows a tested and proven design process as it develops performance support elements focusing on addressing the unique needs and challenges of its target audience.

- Evaluate learner needs for IBM Cloud
- Turn this needed knowledge into learning elements
- Develop role-based learning paths that align with the job roles and responsibilities of professionals using IBM Cloud services
- Include a mix of foundational knowledge, technical skills, hands-on labs, case studies, and real-world scenarios
- Engage support from IBM executive leadership to ensure ICCT certification programming ties to corporate strategy
- Provide on-demand access to resources, job aids, documentation, best practice guides, troubleshooting manuals, FAQs, quick reference cards, cheat sheets, and video tutorials
- Foster a community of practice where learners can collaborate, share knowledge, ask questions, and seek peer support
- Establish forums, discussion groups, virtual communities, and expert networks where professionals can engage with each other, exchange ideas, solve problems, and learn
- Incorporate subject matter experts (SMEs) and business units to collaboratively develop materials that prepare candidates to pass certification exams
- Conduct research to ensure ongoing success
- Keep content up to date with the latest features, updates, enhancements, best practices, and industry trends
- Develop webinars, workshops, virtual events, and podcasts to keep users informed about new developments and evolving practices
- Gather feedback from users, learners, and stakeholders to continuously improve the performance support approach
- Conduct surveys, assessments, user interviews, and feedback sessions to understand user needs, identify pain points, evaluate learning outcomes, and refine the content, delivery methods, and support



Tailoring this performance support approach specifically for the niche IBM Cloud audience enables learners to gain knowledge, skills, resources, and support aligned with their preferred learning style.

The instructional design uses the “ADDIE” model (analysis, design, development, implementation, evaluation). Elements at each stage of design include:

Analysis

- Needs and audience analysis
- Job task analysis (JTA) workshop
- Blueprint survey

Design

- Curriculum plan
- Exam question writing workshop
- Technical review workshop
- Angoff scoring workshop
- High-level design document

Development

All of the following are employed in developing curriculum learning paths, certification exams, and progressive mid-course badges:

- Use of rapid development techniques to keep up with an ever-changing digital technology (cloud) environment
- Synchronization of learning paths to prepare learners for the certifications that are most in demand
- Leveraging of IBM SMEs to help develop ICCT training programs and certification exams
- Integrating from the start, inclusion to account for diverse backgrounds, global perspectives, and a variety of learning abilities/preferences

Implementation

- Quality assurance
- User-acceptance testing
- General availability
- Communications (to target audiences)



- SME office hours (for participant Q&A, on-the-job learner support, and other support)
- Anytime Q&A via Slack and email

Evaluation

- Enrollment
- Pass rates
- Feedback
- Maintenance cycle

ICCT offers performance support that accommodates multiple learning styles to suit individual learners' unique learning abilities and preferences, including:

- In-depth, solo learning experiences, one course at a time
- Social interaction and intense, short-term study sessions with like-minded learners
- Hybrid training solution, providing a mix of instructor-led training blended with digital self-study

To support a large, dispersed global learning audience, ICCT has designed a variety of internal and external portals and tools to supplement training and assist learners as they pursue cloud certification. Each portal enables “anytime, anywhere” access to support for individual learners and is dedicated to building learner communities to foster better learner outcomes.

ICCT has a variety of innovative Performance Support Experiences that include online, real-time, and customized study support designed. These experiences are designed to help learners successfully complete their certification. These Performance Support Experience initiatives motivate and support learners as they embark on their cloud upskilling journey, facilitating exam success. Additionally, the breadth of initiatives in the support programs means learners can gravitate to the support that best suits their current level of knowledge, experience, and learning style. ICCT strives to put the learner first and in control of their learning journey, supporting and empowering them with Performance Support Experiences that include the following:

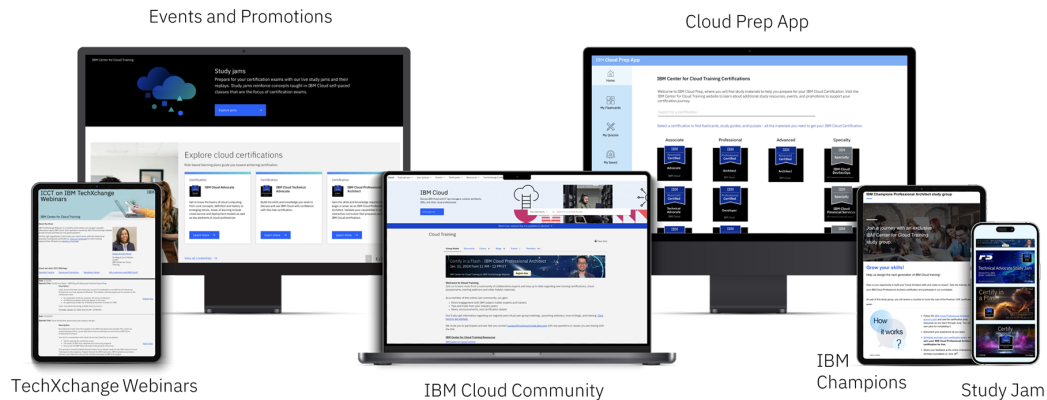


Figure 1: Example of Performance Support Experiences

Study Support

Study support is a performance support initiative that involves structured sessions where participants come together to focus on learning specific skills or content on their journey to role-based or specialty certification.

IBM Role-Based Certification recognizes the knowledge, skills, and/or competencies necessary for a performance role or specific work-related responsibilities.

IBM Specialty Certification recognizes the knowledge and competencies in key domain areas, such as cloud security and distributed computing, for example, as well as key technologies like SAP (enterprise resource planning) and VMware (virtualization and cloud computing).

Study support is designed as a collaborative event aimed at enhancing performance by providing targeted support, resources, and opportunities for practice and review. These events culminated with the goal of passing a certification exam. Examples of study support initiatives include study groups, study jams, and flash jams. Over time these initiatives have improved or been altered based on feedback and best practices.

Study Jams are first-of-a-kind, online exam prep experiences featuring IBM experts, videos, rapid response questions, and more, streamlined into two hours a day over three days. Based on specific role-based or specialty certification



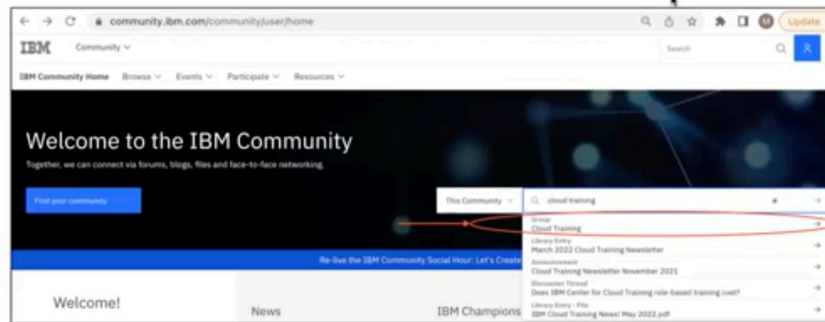
training and led by IBM Cloud experts, they also provide community-building opportunities for learners enabling success during the certification exam.



Thank you!

Don't forget to complete the learning path and schedule your exam

- Ask questions on the IBM Community forum (link and screenshot below) <https://ibm.com/community>
- Sign in with your IBMid, which should be the same login as the training
- Then search for Cloud Training and join the discussion: <https://ibm.biz/SAP-Jam-Community>



IBM Center for Cloud Training / Study Jam / June 2023 / © 2023 IBM Corporation

Figure 2: Screenshot from 2023 SAP Study Jam

In support of the Study Support Initiatives, the IBM Center for Cloud Training has created accelerators in the IBM Cloud Prep App and the Cloud Compass.

IBM Cloud Prep App is a study-on-the-go resource that enables learning on any device—phone, tablet, laptop—anywhere a learner happens to be. Resources include flashcards with sample certification exam questions, detailed study guides to help with exam prep, and practice quizzes to test mastery of the subject matter prior to the exam.

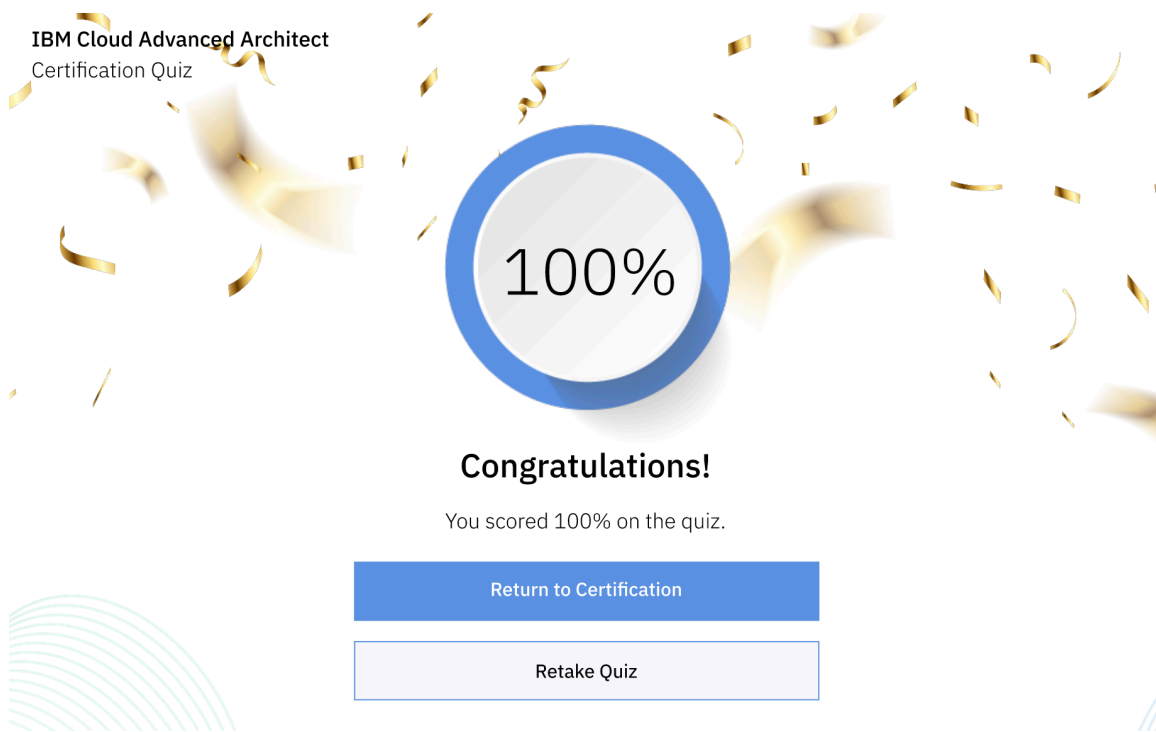


Figure 3: Example of an interaction with IBM Cloud Prep App

Cloud Compass is a training evaluation tool that helps learners find the certification that's right for them. Given the breadth of offerings from ICCT, it can be difficult for them to figure out how to proceed, but with this simple three-question assessment, learners can provide specifics about their role and experience to help ICCT steer them to an appropriate certification.



Cloud Compass



An IBM Cloud assessment for certifications and training

Welcome to Cloud Compass, a quick, interactive survey to help you decide your IBM Cloud certification path

“ Certification enables the acquisition of new skills; qualifying candidates for better and more rewarding jobs. ”

Source: Pearson VUE 2023 Value of IT Certification Report

Start the assessment →

Figure 4: Landing page of the Cloud Compass assessment tool

Motivation

A motivational performance support initiative is designed to inspire and energize individuals to achieve their goals by providing them with the necessary tools, resources, and encouragement. These initiatives focus on fostering a positive mindset, setting clear objectives, and offering rewards or recognition to reinforce desired behaviors and outcomes. These initiatives are designed incorporating elements such as goal setting, feedback mechanisms, gamification, and inspirational messaging to keep participants engaged and motivated. There are motivational aspects across all of the performance support initiatives. A few examples on how motivation is used in performance support are below:

BluePoints are incentive currency at the IBM Recognition Center for things like merchandise, travel, and entertainment options from catalogs that are customized for IBMers by geography. The IBM Center for Cloud Training launched a program called So You Think You Know Cloud. This program was a competition open for all IBMers. It is important for all IBMers to understand IBM hybrid cloud in order to advance the IBM Cloud position in the marketplace. Every IBMer who completed and passed a new IBM Cloud certification earned 2,000 IBM BluePoints. Through the BluePoints competition, ICCT has grown IBM Consulting division in IBM to over



10,000 IBM Cloud certified consultants. ICCT helped IBM Consulting achieve their target for the entire year during the first quarter of the year. As a result, our consulting team has built or migrated hybrid cloud applications for nearly 1,000 clients in 20 industries and redesigned.

Badges provide learners with a way to show their cloud knowledge to peers, managers, and future employers, by displaying them in digital communications like social media and email. Learners have opportunities to earn badges by testing their knowledge over the course of their training, and the tests also serve as good preparation for the official certification test at the end of their training.



Figure 5: A sample of Badges associated with ICCT Certifications

Second Chance is a program that gives learners the opportunity to retake certification exams for free if they do not pass the first time. It takes the pressure off first-time test takers who may fear failing and makes it easy for people who came close to passing initially to try again.

**IBM Cloud****Second Chance Promotion**
IBM Center for Cloud Training

The Second Chance promotion is exactly what it sounds like – an opportunity to retake your IBM Cloud certification exam for free.

Take a “second chance” for certification success. If you have already taken an IBM Cloud exam and didn’t pass, retake the same exam for free using the promotion code.

Here’s how to use the Second Chance promotion code:

1. Sign in to your [Pearson VUE](#) account and register for the same IBM Cloud exam* that you previously didn’t pass.
2. Checkout using this promotion code to retake the same exam for free: **ICCTSecondChance**.



Get your award-winning IBM Cloud certification now!

Figure 6: Flyer about the Second Chance program

Information and knowledge sharing

Information and knowledge sharing is an instrumental part of performance support. These initiatives foster a collaborative and learning-focused environment. Information sharing includes the dissemination of factual information, updates, announcements, and news relevant to education and development initiatives. It keeps learners informed about key events, new developments and evolving practices through the development of webinars, workshops, virtual events, and podcasts. Knowledge sharing initiatives involve the exchange, transfer, and dissemination of expertise, experiences, insights, best practices, lessons learned, and innovative ideas among individuals or groups within an educational or developmental context. This enables learners to leverage each other’s knowledge and skills, learn for successes and failures, and contribute to collective growth and development. A few examples on how information and knowledge sharing is used by ICCT in performance support are below:



ICCT Cloud Training News is a newsletter developed to keep learners in the loop with updates about certification process improvements, new study tools, special offers, and other promotions.

IBM Cloud IBM



Stay in the know with IBM Cloud Training

Check out the updated IBM Cloud for Financial Services certification

IBM Cloud for Financial Services (v2) offers new industry-specific content that reflects the tools, services, and processes found across the IBM ecosystem. Enjoy a shorter time to course completion: now only 6 hours. Plus, take advantage of section-specific study guides, with flashcards and quiz questions that prepare you for the revamped certification exam.

This important specialty certification also prepares you to protect your organization against disruptors and threats, increase the speed of your cloud deployment and operations, and exceed consumers' expectations. Show managers, clients, and peers that you have the skills and competency to help your team and your clients win!

[Learn more](#) →

Take the Study with Me challenge

Earn your IBM Cloud for Financial Services certification by signing up for our 30-day blog challenge, starting April 8. Exam prep that's fast, easy, and free.

[Sign up today](#) →



Coming May 9: FS Cloud webinar

Join us on May 9 for a 1-hour Flash Jam TechXchange webinar, an exam prep session with tips on how to pass the IBM Cloud for Financial Services cert exam.

[Register now](#) →

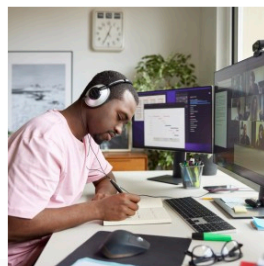




Figure 7: Newsletter example executed via email

IBM TechXchange Webinars are monthly broadcasts featuring IBM Cloud experts sharing information of interest to learners—often featuring special guests that may range from the IBM Cloud CTO to a learner who has earned all 14 certifications.

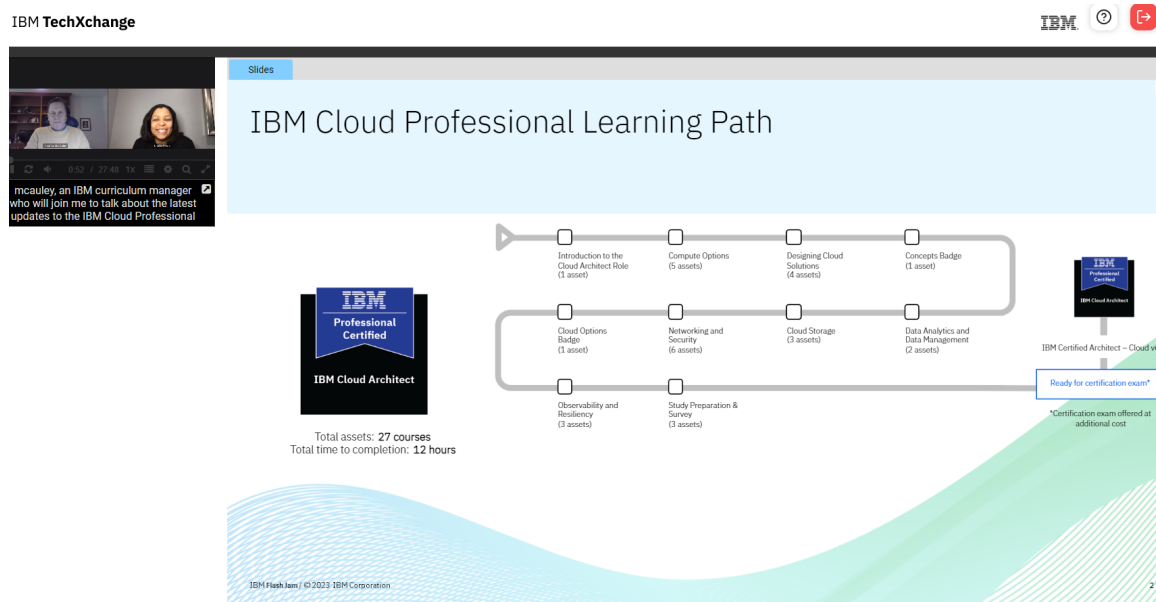


Figure 8: IBM TechXchange Webinar Screenshot

IBM Cloud Certification FAQs provide answers to typical questions and include an exam checklist. They are particularly useful for learners who find it helpful to become familiar with the exact steps involved in completing their certification.

ICCT Podcasts feature cloud-centered episodes on Spotify and Apple Podcasts. TechXchange webinars are also replayed as podcasts through this program.

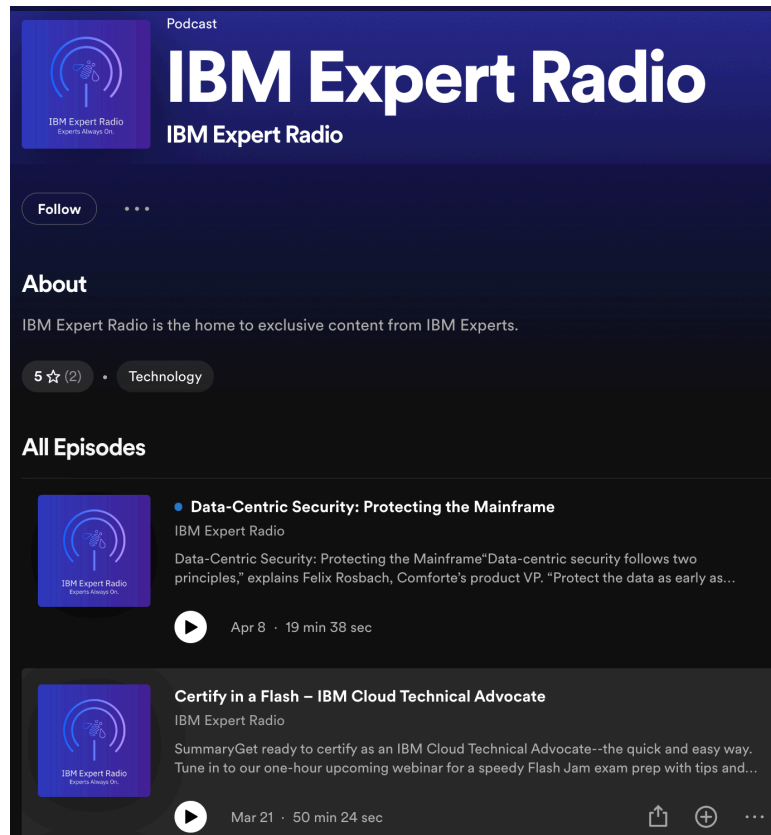


Figure 9: “Certify in a Flash...” is an ICCT episode on IBM Expert Radio podcast on Spotify

Slack channel is a dedicated resource supports communication for the entire learning community at all stages of training, enabling them to ask questions, receive encouragement, and build the community.

Community-driven programs

Community-driven programs for ICCT leverage the power of collaboration, shared expertise, and collective learning within a community of learners, educators, experts, and stakeholders. These initiatives empower participants to actively engage, collaborate, and contribute to a shared learning ecosystem. These programs focus on fostering a sense of community, belonging, and collective ownership of learning and development goals. Here participants learn from each other, share knowledge, exchange ideas, collaborate on projects, and solve problems collectively. A few examples on how community driven programs are used by ICCT in performance support are below:



IBM Cloud Community is an online source of expert information about new certifications, with cloud discussions, webinars, blogs, videos, and opportunities to ask questions of other IBM Cloud professionals. The IBM Cloud Community participants benefit from diverse perspectives, collective wisdom, and collaborative learning experiences that enhance the overall learning journey. The community enhances the learning experience; facilitates the sharing and transfer of knowledge, skills and experiences; build a professional network; fosters innovation, creativity, and problem solving; and fosters engagement and empowering the active contributors in their learning journey.

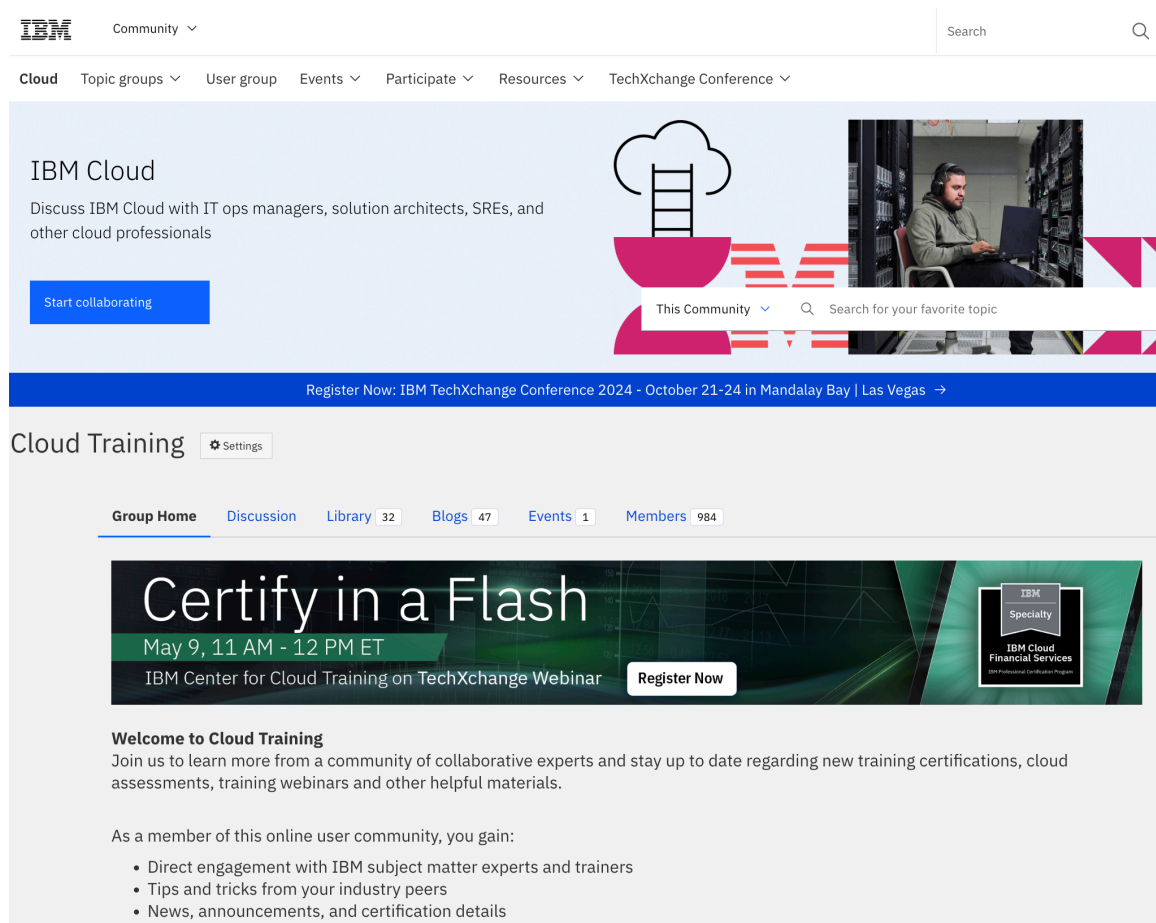


Figure 10: IBM Community forum Cloud Training home page

IBM Cloud blog reaches 200,000+ readers with online articles that highlight IBM Cloud-related information, research, and case studies, including ICCT-authored posts.



Amplify website is home to communications that complement the IBM Cloud blog with success stories and training best practices.



IBM Learning Blog Contributors Archive Categories

Credentials

Celebrating Phenomenal Women: Champions of Change

8 March 2023 | Written by: [Natalie Brooks Powell](#)

Categorized: [Credentials](#) | [Events & Conferences](#) | [Free Courses](#)

Share this post:



International Women's Day 2023
Women who have inspired us.

Today, across the globe, we celebrate the achievements of women.

At the IBM Center for Cloud Training (ICCT), we have the incredible opportunity to work with talented women who have made the commitment to continuous learning. Women who are making a difference for clients and communities – globally and locally.

Here are their stories. Please join us in celebrating their achievements.

Meet Maria Godoy, Certified Cloud Architect and Customer Success Manager

Cloud architects make an impact at every stage of a project, especially during design. And, most importantly, when working with clients.

Figure 11: Sample of IBM Cloud Blog

Amplify website is home to communications that complement the IBM Cloud blog with success stories and training best practices.

In addition to IBM's four core support categories (study support, motivation, information and knowledge sharing, and community-driven programs), 2023 saw the successful introduction of two community-oriented performance support initiatives: the "Study with Me" certification challenge and the "New Hire Initiative."



“Study with Me” certification challenge

This hybrid certification challenge encompassed a 30-day study plan aimed at helping learners certify as IBM Cloud Technical Advocates. This entry-level certification underpins all subsequent cloud certifications.

Learners were invited to join one of ICCT’s leaders, who also enrolled, to earn their certification – this format that gave rise to the program’s title. A community of motivated learners signed up to earn their certifications together.

Be a winner when you bet on Cloud. It’s Day 27 and time for a question. IBM Cloud is comprised of a wide variety of services, which can be found in which of the following?

- A. IBM Cloud Catalog
- B. IBM Cloud Block Storage
- C. IBM Cloud Object Storage
- D. IBM Cloud File Storage

Read today’s study with me post for the answer. <https://lnkd.in/gvrZau3f> It’s not too late - Let’s become a certified Cloud Technical Advocate together. #IBM #technicaladvocate #ibmtechxchange #studyfromhome #IBMCloudCertified #ibmcloud #ICCT #studywithme



Figure 12: Example Study with Me promotion on LinkedIn



New Hire Initiative

All new hires across IBM Cloud divisions (from technical to sales and all others) were tasked with earning IBM Cloud certifications. This challenge was designed to assist learners from start to finish as they trained and earned a certification. Among the program’s objectives were to create a sense of community and engagement and assist new hires in completing their IBM Cloud learning assignments.

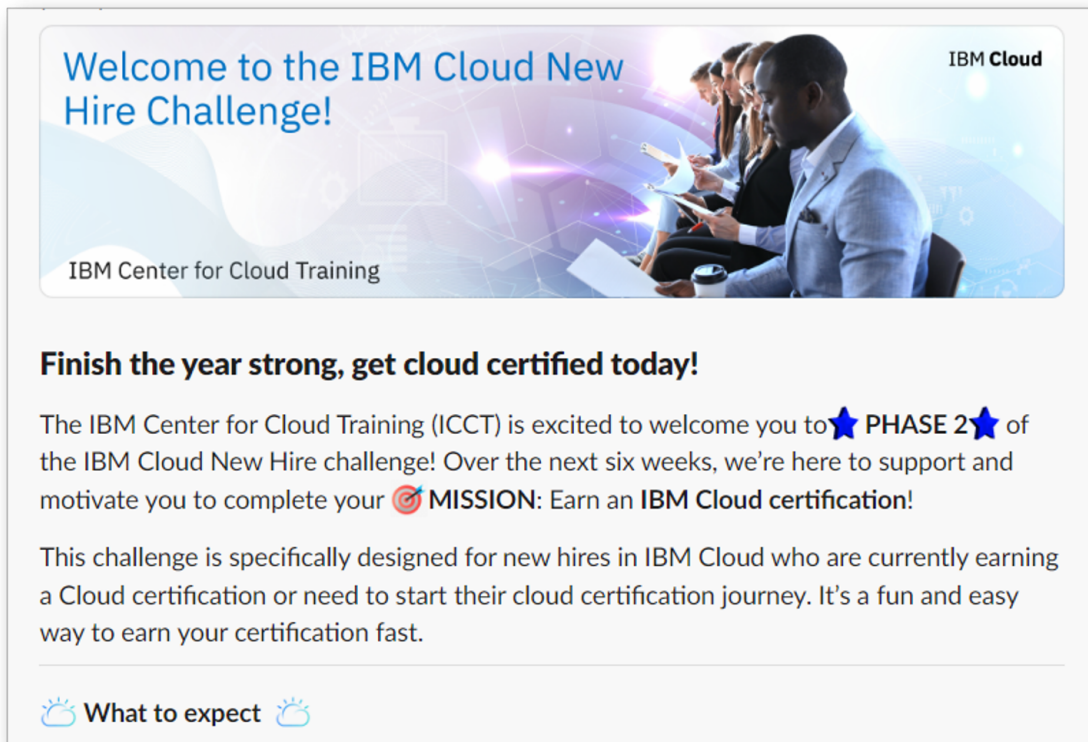


Figure 13: Example motivational Slack Channel post for New Hire Initiative

These programs will continue to be explained in Criteria 3 (Delivery) below.

Delivery

The delivery support in ICCT is delivered through various methods and technologies to ensure that learners have access to the necessary resources, guidance, and assistance when they need it. Some common delivery methods used by ICCT include a unique landing page, blog, newsletter, videos, simulations, hands on labs and other methods offering “anytime, anywhere” access to all learners. At the same time, ICCT’s community-building performance support



initiatives deliver tools to personalized, engaging, supportive learning and knowledge that meets the needs and learning styles of the diverse audience throughout their learning journey (including integrated set of emails, e-nurtures, progress tracking, and in-person and hybrid events).

The following detailed look of delivery mechanisms illustrates how ICCT supports performance in each of its learner initiatives.

Study Jams

Study Jams are delivered online or as hybrid offerings and are structured as follows.

1. **Discovery and registration.** It begins with ICCT communicating Study Jam as an end-step in the learner journey before taking the exam. The typical Jam is a three-day group study session (two hours each day).
2. **Learning journey.** As the learner accumulates knowledge and skills along the path to certification, ICCT maintains contact via email with reminders to complete the online training and join the Jam. Performance Support Elements such as social learning platforms leverage social media-like features to promote collaboration, knowledge sharing, discussions, and peer-to-peer learning among learners as the event date approaches. These support elements enhance the learning experience and foster a sense of belonging and participation.
3. **Main event.** As the event date approaches, learners are encouraged via Slack and calendar reminders to join the Study Jam. Attendees also may receive voucher codes for discounted or free certification exams as encouragement to complete the certification process. Registered learners receive reminder emails to follow the FAQ thread on the IBM Community site and to schedule their final exam. The performance support elements like the Cloud Prep App, video tutorials, reference materials, flashcards, blogs, community, badges and more are all embedded in this step.
4. **E-nurture Campaign(s).** A separate e-nurture campaign targets those who might require a little more encouragement to pull them over the finish line and pass their exam. Learners are encouraged to share their success on social media. Learners also receive offers to re-take the exam free using ICCT's Second Chance promotion. These campaigns include polls, surveys, and



asynchronous access to enable live, interactive sessions that encourage discussions from the learners.

Delivery mechanisms for performance support initiatives encompass a range of tools, platforms, and approaches used to provide timely, context-sensitive, and relevant support to individuals as they perform tasks or encounter challenges.

IBM Cloud Community for example leverages online forums, discussion boards, social media, blogs, and virtual communities to provide channels for users to access and contribute to the ICCT performance support initiatives collectively.

The Cloud Prep App is available on both web and mobile device delivers study aids, microlearning modules, flashcards, videos, quizzes, and on-the-go support tailored to the learners' device. Learners are reminded of this application constantly, in newsletter, during flash jams, in conversations, in Slack, in the community, everywhere all the time, made available to all and reinforced all of the time.

The community of **Study with Me** learners received just in time learning and contextual support providing relevant information, guidance and resources at the moment of need. These learners also received daily emails from one of IBM Cloud Training's leaders, who was also enrolled to earn certification. These emails contained notes of encouragement, status updates on the leader's progress to help learners know where in their studies they should be, and practical assistance such as learning prompts and study questions with knowledge necessary for the certification exam.

The **Slack Channel** accessed through an application provided instant help and support. This dedicated resource supports communication for the entire learning community at all stages of training, enabling them to ask questions, engage conversation, receive encouragement, and build the community.

Flash Jams (mini-Study Jams) are single one-hour study sessions conducted in-person. Certification exam flashcards, exam tips and tricks, and study recommendations are offered during these quick sessions.

The Cloud Compass is delivered as an assessment tool that directs users to the certification training that best suit their experience level and interest in IBM Cloud.



ICCT Cloud Training Newsletter is delivered monthly as an e-newsletter with updates on curricula, changes, success stories, and study support.

IBM TechXchange webinars delivered monthly and broadcast for ICCT updates and news for the learning community. Replays are available on demand for anytime, anywhere online access.

These are just some of the ways that the IBM Center for Cloud Training delivers performance support initiatives that meet the needs, preferences and learning styles of the IBM Cloud learners.

Overall

Community-building performance support leads to positive learner outcomes

Learners thrive when they know they are members of a greater community. One that supports them as they make their way along the stages of various learning paths. ICCT brings learners together through its programming and support initiatives. By complementing and enhancing digital curricula with a range of activities that engage the learner, ICCT reinforces the importance of community and leverages the group to help individual learners succeed.

A long-term commitment to learners is important

When long-term relationships are built between the Learning and Development (L&D) team and learners, trust is built, and learners can be confident in the value of the training program. A short-term, transactional approach turns learners into customers, who may not continue their relationship with the L&D once they have attained their immediate goal. A long-term commitment by the L&D to its learners, featuring continuous outreach and performance support that considers individual needs, makes learners much more likely to return for future training. They become loyal clients, even evolving into advocates, like the IBM Champions.

Collaboration is a key to community-oriented performance support



A marvelous example is through Slack. What started with a Slack channel where new hires ask questions of the ICCT team developed into a strong community of learners helping learners across multiple channels. Because of the nature of Slack, where everyone can see all messages, learners began to chime in to help fellow learners, encouraging each other as they reached milestones and earned badges and certifications. Collaboration enabled participants to learn from each other, share knowledge, exchange ideas, and solve problems collectively.

Local advocates expanding the international focus

Creating an international community encourages learners to take the initiative.

For example:

- An IBM employee who is a native of Japan has begun an initiative to modify Study Jams to present content in Japanese in order to increase learner success with IBM Cloud certifications.
- An IBM learner in Brazil has expanded the community by working on offering cloud training curricula in Portuguese to increase the number of certified learners in his country.

The future is bright

Community-oriented learning offers L&D leaders an opportunity to harness the power of the group to spur all participants to achieve. To make the most of this, ICCT is building in support and motivation as foundations of all of its learning programs. Our learning and certification initiatives are based on the belief that when programs are designed thoughtfully and participants are nurtured carefully, learners will want to succeed and are more likely to succeed.

Initiatives like IBM's Study Jams, Study with Me challenge, Flash Jams, and the Champions program are designed to excite learners. Once in a program, participants often help one another. But when the day's workload grows heavy or personal responsibilities limit time, learners may have difficulty keeping up. In these cases, a community setting can increase self-motivation and necessary support. This internalized motivation is at the root of success for ICCT programs.

All of which points to an optimistic future for IBM's Cloud learning initiatives. The performance support initiatives will continue. Study with Me challenge and the New Hire initiative will be further enhanced in 2024 with additional innovations.



Study with Me will be expanded to include training for new and more demanding certifications. The next New Hire Challenge will focus on a different audience to include IBM Sales personnel beyond the Cloud division as part of a focus to upskill sellers and better connect them with their customers. Studies have shown training that benefits the sales team as well as their customers, improving the return on investment for both.

Of course, any person could continue professional education individually. But as ICCT has experienced, when people come together to learn, they build a supported and supportive self-motivating community. Resulting in learners who are empowered to learn faster, have a desire to help their fellow learners, which ultimately achieves a better outcome for all learners involved.



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