

Microsoft Office Specialist

Improving the Workplace



Study Overview

Employees with Microsoft® Office Specialist certifications clearly contribute to a more knowledgeable and productive working environment. A study of 14,000 Office Specialists and 1,200 supervisors of Office Specialists from North America, the United Kingdom, and Japan confirms that employees with Office Specialist certifications contribute to a more knowledgeable and productive working environment. Office Specialist certifications in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint®, Access, Outlook®, and/or Project improve the workplace not only for employees and their employers but also for their customers.

FAST FACTS

The study, conducted in 2001, verifies the value of being certified in Microsoft Office:

- **FAST FACT:** Office Specialist certification increases employee competence, productivity, and credibility.
85% of supervisors say Office Specialists are more productive because of their Office Specialist certification.

- **FAST FACT:** Office Specialist certification proves individuals have the ability to effectively use Microsoft Office desktop programs.
89% of supervisors say Office Specialists are more proficient users of Microsoft Office programs.

- **FAST FACT:** Office Specialist exams test relevant skills employees actually use in the workplace.
86% of supervisors say Office Specialists are more credible than non-certified employees.

- **FAST FACT:** Office Specialist certification supports the hiring process by providing a useful measure for screening and selecting individuals for employment.
71% of supervisors use Office Specialist in hiring, promotion, and advancement decisions.

Study Design

This study was conducted to determine the value of Office Specialist certification to the individuals certified in one or more Microsoft Office programs and to supervisors of certified Office Specialists. Over 14,000 Office Specialists and 1,200 supervisors of Office Specialists were given web-based surveys to evaluate the effect of the certification on their working environment and to rate the value of the certification on employee performance.

Employee Questions

Office Specialists participating in the study were “information workers” by job function. In general, these employees use computer technology to perform the majority of their job-related tasks. They were asked the following questions:

- Is Office Specialist certification relevant to the most important and frequently performed aspects of your job?
- Has the certification process increased your competence with Microsoft Office programs?
- Has the certification process increased your on-the-job productivity?
- Does certification contribute to your professional credibility with coworkers, customers, and employers?

In addition to rating the effect of certification on their competence, productivity, and credibility, Office Specialists were asked to provide responses on the following topics:

- Demographic characteristics
- Employment history
- Preparation and payment for certification
- The effect of certification on their earning potential
- Loyalty to Microsoft Office programs
- Interest in advances in desktop computing

Supervisor Questions

Supervisors of Office Specialists were asked the following questions:

- Do Office Specialists have an advanced level of competence?
- Are Office Specialist certified employees better able to use the Microsoft Office programs for which they are certified?
- Are Office Specialist certified employees more productive?
- Are Office Specialist certified employees more professionally credible to coworkers, customers, and employers?
- Does your organization realize tangible benefits when you hire Office Specialists?

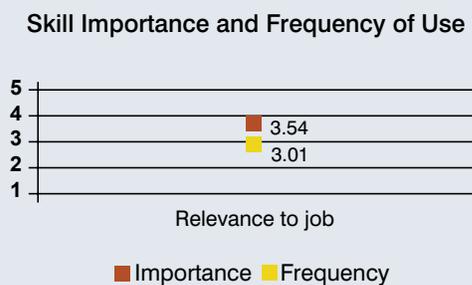
In addition to rating the effect of certification on their employees, Supervisors were asked to provide responses on the following topics:

- Effect of certification on an employee's prospects for advancement and/or recruitment
- Their own interest in desktop computing
- Their company's loyalty to Microsoft Office programs
- Their level of influence in the software acquisition process

Office Specialist Responses

Through their answers to research questions, Office Specialists indicated that the majority of the skills included in the certification are used frequently and are important to their jobs. They also indicated that certification has a tremendously positive impact on their ability to use Microsoft Office programs in the workplace. They are more productive because of the certification, and their coworkers, customers, and employers consider them to be more credible.

Is Office Specialist certification relevant to the most important and frequently performed aspects of your job?

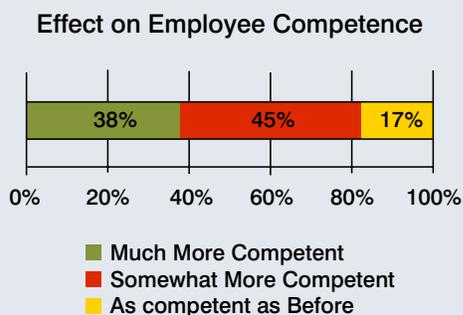


Importance and Relevance

Yes. Office Specialists indicated that the skills required to obtain certification include those most important and frequently performed in their jobs.

Office Specialists were asked to rate the importance of the skills they gained through certification using a five-point scale ranging from “Not Important” to “Very Important.” The average level of importance was 3.54. Office Specialists were also asked to rate the frequency of use of the skills they gained through certification using a five-point scale ranging from “Less Than Once a Month” to “More Than Once a Day.” The average frequency was 3.01.

Has the certification process increased your competence with Microsoft Office programs?



Competence

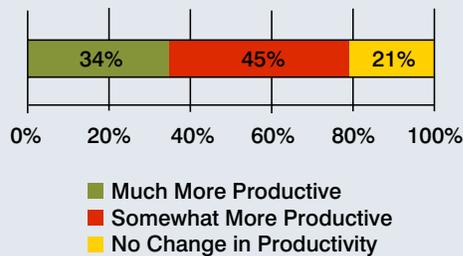
Yes. Office Specialists indicated that the process of obtaining Office Specialist certification has a positive effect on their ability to competently use Microsoft Office programs.

Office Specialists were asked to rate the effect of certification on their ability to use Microsoft Office programs using a three-point scale ranging from “As Competent as Before” to “Much More Competent.” Overall, 83 percent of Office Specialists indicated the certification process had a positive effect on their competence with Microsoft Office programs. Of these respondents, 38 percent indicated the process made them “Much More Competent.”



Has the certification process increased your on-the-job productivity?

Effect on Employee Productivity



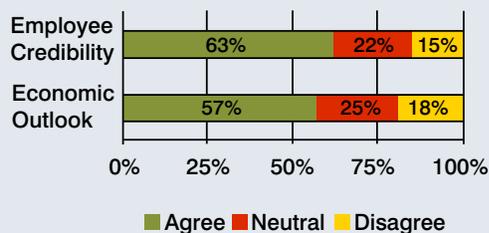
Productivity

Yes. Office Specialists indicated that they are better able to use Microsoft Office programs to more productively perform their jobs thanks to Office Specialist certification.

Office Specialists were asked to rate the effect of certification on their productivity using a three-point scale ranging from "No Change in Productivity" to "Much More Productive With the Respective Program(s)." Overall, 79 percent of Office Specialists indicated the process of obtaining certification had a positive effect on their productivity. Of these respondents, 34 percent indicated the process made them "Much More Productive."

Does certification contribute to your professional credibility with coworkers, customers, and employers?

Effect on Employee Credibility and Economic Outlook



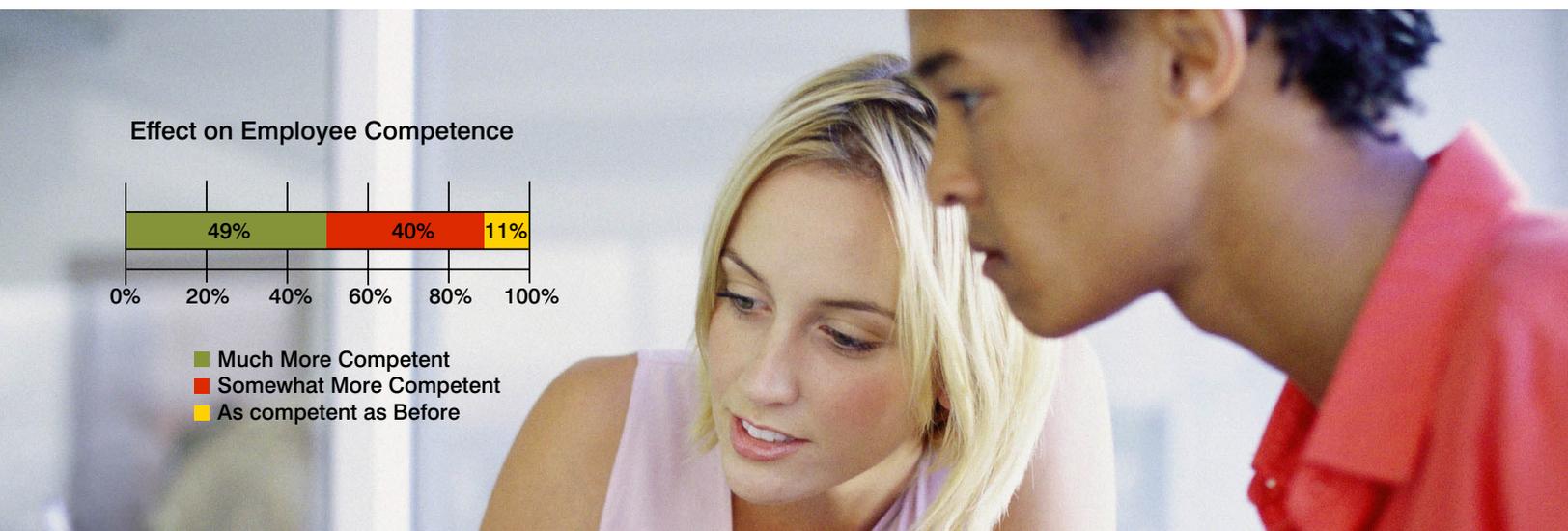
Credibility

Yes. Office Specialists indicated that certification produces a positive effect on coworkers, customers, and employers. In fact, the majority of Office Specialists believe certification has enhanced their economic outlook.

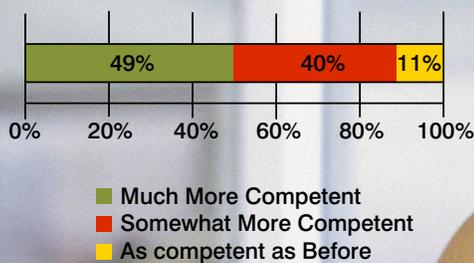
Office Specialists were asked to rate the perception of credibility their certification has on their coworkers, customers, and employers using a five-point scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." Overall, 63 percent of employees agreed that Office Specialist certification has a positive effect on their professional credibility. On average, 57 percent of respondents believe Office Specialist certification has directly enhanced their economic outlook.

Supervisor Responses

Supervisors of Office Specialists indicated they experience tangible benefits from hiring and managing Office Specialist certified employees. Office Specialists directly benefit their departments and organizations because they more competently use Microsoft Office programs to perform job tasks and are more productive and credible to coworkers and customers. Supervisors also indicated that certification is influential in making hiring, promotion, and advancement decisions.

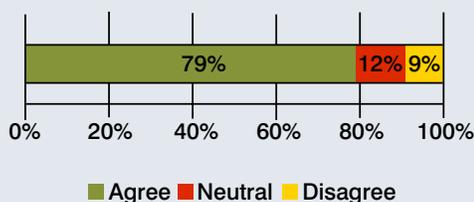


Effect on Employee Competence



Are Office Specialist certified employees better able to use the Microsoft Office programs for which they are certified?

Office Specialist Are More Competent than Non-Certified Employees

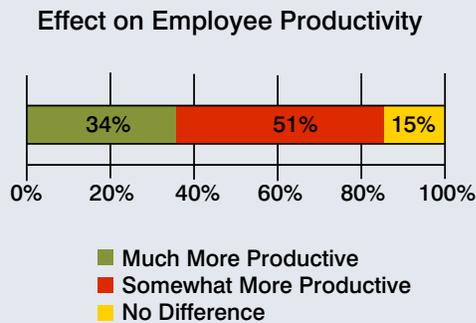


Competence

Yes. Supervisors indicated that Office Specialists competently use Microsoft Office programs to perform job tasks.

Supervisors were asked to rate the effect of Office Specialist certification on employee competence using a three-point scale ranging from "As Competent as Before" to "Much More Competent." Overall, 89 percent of supervisors indicated Office Specialist certification has a positive effect on an employee's ability to effectively use Microsoft Office programs. Supervisors were also asked to compare the competency of employees with and without Office Specialist certification using a five-point scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." An overwhelming majority—79 percent—indicated Office Specialist certified employees more competently use Microsoft Office programs to perform job tasks than their non-certified peers.

Are Office Specialist certified employees more productive?

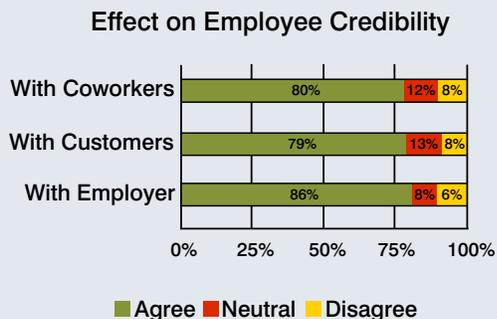


Productivity

Yes. Supervisors indicated that Office Specialists use Microsoft Office programs more productively to perform their jobs.

Supervisors were asked to compare the productivity of employees with and without Office Specialist certification using a three-point scale ranging from "No Difference" to "Much More Productive." Overall, 85 percent of supervisors indicated Office Specialist certified employees are more productive in the aspects of their jobs that require use of Microsoft Office programs than non-certified employees. Of these respondents, 34 percent rated Office Specialist certified employees as "Much More Productive."

Are Office Specialist certified employees more professionally credible to coworkers, customers, and employers?



Credibility

Yes. Supervisors indicated that Office Specialists are more credible to their coworkers, customers, and employers.

Supervisors were asked to rate their opinion of Office Specialist certification on their employees as well as how certification is perceived by an employee's coworkers and customers using a five-point scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." Overall, 86 percent of supervisors indicated Office Specialist certification has a positive effect on their opinion of an employee's abilities. Approximately 80 percent indicated Office Specialist certification produces a positive effect on coworkers and customers. Supervisors were also asked to estimate the effect of Office Specialist certification on an employee's consideration for recruitment or promotion. Overall, 71 percent of supervisors indicated Office Specialist certification is advantageous to employees considered in hiring, promotion, and advancement decisions.

Conclusion

This study of Office Specialist employees and their supervisors clearly demonstrates a relationship between Office Specialist certification and the ability of employees to competently use Microsoft Office programs; work more efficiently and productively; achieve professional credibility with coworkers, customers, and employers; and obtain an advantage in hiring, promotion, and advancement decisions.

Office Specialists and their supervisors agree: Microsoft Office Specialists Improve the Workplace.

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