Case study

Central Technology Center Implements HP Institute

The Center serves more than 27,000 students and provides customized industry training

Challenge
Students were not gaining the right IT skills

Solution
Offer students certifications to boost their resumes

Results
Students earn certifications and grow in confidence

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HP Institute provides the right skill set for today's IT career.

Central Technology Center Implements HP Architect-level Certification to Prepare Network Security & Administration Students for Workforce

The Central Technology Center (www.centraltech. edu) serves more than 27,000 students and provides customized business and industry training to more than 500 area businesses in Oklahoma. Central Tech uses a combination of online and hands-on lab curriculum to serve both secondary and adult students. The Network Security & Administration (NSA) class prepares students for careers in computer networking, administration and cyber security.

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Nick Gaunt,
NSA Instructor at Central Tech

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Challenge

Central Tech aims to teach students the technology and applications skills they need to enter the workforce, and is constantly striving to keep up with the latest industry advances. They train students with no prior experience in the field, so instructors are starting from scratch to get students up to speed on current network skills.

"The biggest gap we see in our program is students can learn theory or study a textbook, but they cannot actually apply those skills in real world situations," says Phil Waul, Superintendent of Central Tech. "We needed a way to help them apply the new technologies they are learning in real world situations to prepare them for the workforce."

One of Central Tech's main goals is placement, so the reason they sought to fill the gap from knowledge to real-world application is to improve the job placement opportunities for students.

Budget is another concern. "As an education institution we are constrained by our budget, and we can't just go out and buy enterprise level equipment to train our students on," said Clint Webb, NSA Instructor.

Solution

Central Tech wanted to offer their students an industry-leading technology certification that boosts their resumes and validates their IT competencies. In addition, they wanted to provide skills that keep up with the fast pace of technology. Central Tech found the HP Institute program fills the gaps in their IT curricula. They found that the architect-level certification provides a good fit for their students and their budget plan.

"The beauty of the HP program is it allows our students to access enterprise equipment and software in a remote environment, which makes this technology available to them when before there was

no feasible way to get that kind of training," said Webb.

Another NSA Instructor at Central Tech, Nick Gaunt, explains why they chose the HP Institute program: "One of the things I love about the HP certification is that it is very relevant to today's industry. I have offered a lot of different certifications, and many of them cover outdated technology that is not relevant in today's society. HP Institute covers topics like tablets and smart phones and things that are very real to IT today."

Central Tech became a Certiport Testing Center, so their students can certify in a comfortable environment at their own school and without driving long distances due to their rural location. With the complete learning pathway of course materials, practice exams and certification exams, Central Tech cut their development time in half.

Results

During the pilot phase, Central Tech had 70 students earn the HP ATA certification. "Once a few students took the exam, they all wanted to have it and it grew like wildfire," said Gaunt. "It has really changed the outlook of the classroom as more people want to feel that success and they can see themselves going into IT and succeeding in this field."

Gaunt indicates how much the HP ATA certifications prepare his students for entering the workforce: "Nationally recognized certifications like the HP Institute program help students get that first job when their resume is lacking work experience. This is my 12th year teaching in the IT field and helping students get out into the market and I've found that being able to get the students an industry-recognized certification is always a benefit."

Webb adds, "What I like about the program is it combines both the business concerns of IT and the hands-on skill required by industry."