

5 **Reasons why certification preparation is critical for MSSPs**



MSSPs depend on client trust, and that means staying ahead of the evolving threat landscape

Managed security services are notoriously difficult to scale. Every client brings a unique set of needs and technology environments to the table, and accommodating them requires a large range of skills. If an MSSP lacks the expertise needed to work with a particular platform, then that translates into lost business. These challenges combine to place enormous pressure on internal resources as MSSPs try to keep up with a highly competitive market. In particular, it means there is a constant need for training, reskilling, and certification preparation.

● Which certifications do MSSPs need?

Given the huge number of different platforms, methodologies, and compliance directives, no two MSSP training portfolios look the same. That said, there are a few certifications that every MSSP should have for certain employees. Here are three of the most important:



CISSP

A certified information systems security professional qualification is essential for anyone in a security leadership role, as well as high-level practitioners.



CompTIA Security+

This certification aligns with the ISO-17024 standard to cover network access control, threat management, cryptography, and risk identification.



CISA

A certified information systems auditor is an essential role for any MSSP, since it provides the ability to analyze and mitigate threats effectively.

Naturally, MSSPs must also close knowledge gaps and build skillsets across many ancillary areas beyond security alone. For example, an MSSP that provides SIEM services to clients whose systems are based on AWS must have ample knowledge about using that platform.

By encouraging certain employees to obtain these industry certifications, MSSPs will be better placed to demonstrate their expertise across various domains. This is highly beneficial for a number of reasons, which are discussed below:

#1 Respond to market needs

In the world of cybersecurity, the only constant is change. As technology continues to evolve, so do the methods cybercriminals use to exploit it. As such, many of the things people learned a few years ago about information security are no longer as relevant as they once were. There is a constant need to keep up to date with the latest trends and developments, and the battle between cybersecurity practitioners and cybercriminals is unending.

This pace of change is also driving the market itself. Businesses want to innovate quickly without adding risk, and they often depend on MSSPs to help make that happen. MSSPs must be at the forefront of innovation for that very reason, hence the need for regular certifications and recertifications across the full range of disciplines the company's services cover.

#2 Nurture client loyalty

MSSPs build their entire brand reputations on trust and accountability. Failing to protect client data, even if it is only a small and isolated incident, can shatter that brand image in no time. To build and maintain that trust and loyalty, MSSPs must be able to demonstrate authority in every consultation and other interaction with clients. Even those on the sales and marketing teams need to have at least a reasonable level of knowledge about what their security teams actually do.

Certification preparation streamlines the training process and ensures employees are always up to speed with the latest developments. Even before they have earned their certifications, a certification preparation program creates a culture of learning which, in turn, directly impacts client loyalty.

#3 Gain new revenue streams

With millions of unfilled cybersecurity positions around the world, the demand for MSSPs has seen unprecedented growth over the last few years. As a result, many MSPs are making the transition into the managed security services market as well. This allows them to enlarge their service portfolios to the extent they can even become full-service technology providers to the clients they work with.

Certification preparation helps MSPs navigate this new market proactively. By building up the internal skills and knowledge resources, both MSPs and MSSPs can prepare themselves for rolling out new services as well as expanding upon existing ones. For example, if a company wants to add penetration testing to its service portfolio, then having employees trained in that area will be essential to making that happen.

#4 Reduce staff turnover

Many cybersecurity professionals begin their careers working for an MSP or an MSSP, and they often do not stick around long. As such, high staff turnover rates are a major problem for many service providers. One of the most common reasons for employees to leave a company is because of a lack of mobility within the organization. If they do not feel their skills and efforts are being invested in, they are less likely to remain loyal to the company.

Implementing certification preparation and other training programs is an excellent way for any MSP or MSSP to demonstrate their willingness to invest in their employees. If employees can see a way to advance their careers, without having to go looking for a new employer, they will be far more likely to stay with the business.

#5 Increase success rates

Some certifications require dozens of hours of training and preparation. While there are some exams that can be taken without any specific entry requirements, doing so is likely to result in failure, in which case it might not be possible to take the exam again for several months or years. In the meantime, whoever is hoping to acquire the certification in question will have their career advancement effectively put on hold.

Preparation is vital for improving pass rates, and while some training methods are undoubtedly faster and more effective than others, there are no ways around this. That is why MSSPs must encourage their employees to take up online training programs that help them maximize their chances of success and, therefore, the value they bring to the company.

● What does a successful training program look like?

It is important for security leaders to avoid taking a traditional academic approach to training, since no one wants to feel like they are back at school. Instead, training should be flexible and able to accommodate the individual needs of every employee. Materials should be accessible anywhere, and ideally organized in such a way that they align with specific career paths. For greater accountability and better risk reduction, it will also help enormously to have a training program that includes certification practice tests.

Cybrary for Teams provides a cost-effective solution to help MSSPs prepare their employees for earning and maintaining critical certifications. Schedule your [interactive walkthrough](#) today.

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