# 10 Strategic Conversations for Certification Programs

Presentation for the

National Organization for Competency Assurance

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# How can we create value for our credential?

# Precipitating factors

- Plateauing or declining volumes for initial certification
- Low or declining recertification rates
- Emergence of a competitor
- Review of overall business/marketing strategy

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# What to ask:

- What are our desired market segments and what needs could/does certification fulfill?

- What is our value proposition and how can we enhance/maintain it?

- What are the elements of our value network and how can we leverage them?

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# Should we add a
# new certification program
# to our offerings?

# Precipitating factors

- Development of specialties and subspecialties within the profession
- Older certificants demand an advanced credential to distinguish themselves
- Desire to capitalize on previous successes
- Desire to enter a new market
- A competitor is entering the market

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# What to ask:

- Is there an important need?

- Is the market sufficiently large?

- How will this impact our flagship credential?

- Will we be first to market?

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# Is it time to rename or revamp our credential?

# Precipitating factors

- Volumes have plateaued or not lived up to expectations

- The name or content of the credential is passe/obsolete

- The name of the credential is not consistent with the new name of the parent organization

# What to ask:

- How will this impact our brand equity?
- What will we do with the current certificants?
- How can we avoid another name change in the future?

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# What should we do about our declining/plateauing volumes?

# Precipitating factors

- The profession/occupation is contracting
- Loss of traditional sources of new candidates
- Increased competition
- Absence of an integrated marketing strategy

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# What to ask:

- What is the cause and what control, if any, do we have over the outcome?

- Was our previous growth fueled by unusual or irreplicable circumstances?

- How can we minimize the impact on our financial status?

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# Should we discontinue our certification program?

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# Precipitating factors

- Volumes have not lived up to expectations

- Volumes have declined

- Desire to introduce a new credential which would replace existing credential

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# What to ask:

- Is this more than just a marketing problem?

- Do the resources expended justify the number served (or benefits)?

- What will we do with existing certificants?

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# How can we manage our rapid growth?

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# Precipitating factors

- Certification exam is being used to fulfill licensure requirements
- Certification is required by government regulations
- Certification is required by influential entities (e.g., third-party payors)
- Movement into global markets

# What to ask:

- How can we continue to ensure quality, consistency and minimize error?
- What infrastructure will we need to support growth?
- How can we better leverage technology?
- What functions can/should be outsourced?

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# Should we transform our domestic certification into a global program?

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# Precipitating factors

- Candidates from other countries are applying for the certification

- Local organizations have expressed an interest in the certification

- Desire to grow the program and generate more revenue

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# What to ask:

- Which international/global model is best for us?

- Which markets should we enter?

- What infrastructure will be needed to support a global program?

- Do we really have the expertise or can we access it?

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# Is it time to transition to computer-based testing?

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# Precipitating factors

- Candidate demands for quicker scores and more convenient scheduling and test sites

- Significant expansion in number of test sites is needed

- Concerns about security of current test administration procedures

- Introduction of new item types, including use of multimedia

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# What to ask:

- What is the best strategy for implementing the transition?
- What are the financial implications – for us and for our candidates?
- How will operations be impacted?

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# How can we ensure that our certification remains relevant to post-Boomer generations?

# Precipitating factors

- "Graying" of candidates/certificants
- Younger professionals seem less interested in certification
- Greater candidate focus on efficiency and "results"

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# What to ask:

- Is it (just) a generational issue?

- What do candidates today really want from our certification program?

- How can we transform our program while maintaining our: (a) rigor and (b) brand equity?

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