


Understanding credentialing. Down to the letter.



Future-Forward, Strategic Consulting Services
for Professional Credentialing Programs

KNAPP

Our experience. Your success.



Knapp & Associates International works with organizations around the world to design, revitalize, and future-proof their professional credentialing programs. This guide outlines the signature services we have created to amplify *your* success in the business of credentialing.

**We are here to
guide you every
step of the way.**

Creating a certification

Each year, the number of professional certification programs continues to grow, and associations are at the forefront of this evolution. Creating a certification program has put many associations “on the map” and established them as standard-bearers for the profession or industry. And for some, certification and related products, such as continuing education, have proven to be a lucrative source of non-dues revenue.

The potential opportunities associated with creating a new certification are enticing. But before jumping in, you need to conduct a careful analysis of the goals, costs, and complexities associated with developing and maintaining a program.

That’s where we come in!

Early Exploration

WHAT EVERY BOARD AND STAFF SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE BUSINESS OF CERTIFICATION

In this 90-min virtual briefing, we reveal the most effective drivers of program participation and the activities critical to laying the foundation for success.

Your board and staff will leave the briefing with:

- a deeper understanding of the processes and resources needed to launch and maintain a program
- strategies for mitigating legal and financial risks associated with certification
- insights into factors known to increase program success

In-Depth Analysis

MARKET RESEARCH

If you build it, will they come?

Many organizations have discovered too late that the answer to this question is a resounding, “No.” The best insurance against this fate is to confirm – prior to launch – that there is sufficient market interest to make the credential a viable proposition for your organization.

We conduct market research with your target audience to gauge interest in the credential, identify potential challenges, and compare the results with our proprietary benchmark data.

VOLUME PROJECTION STUDY

Will enough people come?

We’ll formulate a range of volume projections for your proposed program based on our analysis of survey data and specific characteristics of your market. These projections provide key data for calculating your break-even point, estimating net revenue and determining if (and when) the program will become financially self-sustaining.

BUSINESS CASE DEVELOPMENT

Do the benefits outweigh the costs and potential risks?

Most certification programs test only a few hundred candidates per year and are not “profit centers” for the organizations that sponsor them. However, if you price the program correctly, and market it effectively, the program ultimately can become financially self-sustaining if there is sufficient demand.

We’ll work with your team to develop a business case which includes:

- organizational strengths and weaknesses related to the endeavor (e.g., visibility, credibility, resources)
- the market to be addressed (e.g., size, geographic areas, target segments)
- competitive threats and opportunities
- revenue and expense projections
- financial resources required to sustain the development stage and sources of revenue available after program development is completed
- personnel requirements, including volunteers, employees, vendors and consultants

Credential Design Blueprint

Many considerations go into designing a credential

These considerations include:

- assuring alignment with stakeholder needs and preferences
- conforming to certification industry standards
- identifying the most cost-effective options for your organization

Juggling so many balls in the design process – without the benefit of prior experience in credential development – can be overwhelming.

We'll guide you along the best path for your organization.

DESIGN A CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP

Design your credential in just 1 day

This workshop provides you with a credential design blueprint that includes:

- a statement defining the purpose and goals of the credential
- a description of the target market and the most viable segments within this market
- an overview of the scope of the credential and level of expertise it will target
- proposed requirements for acquiring and maintaining the certification
- types of assessments to explore further with psychometric partners
- governance and committee structures needed to support program operations

With this framework in hand, you'll be ready to proceed to the next step: engaging a psychometrician to build the assessments for your envisioned program.

Maximizing the success of your credential

Certification is a tough sell

- For professionals, the opportunity costs and level of effort required to earn the credential are high, and in many cases, there is no guarantee of immediate or tangible benefit.
- Employers know that certification is just one consideration when identifying qualified professionals and often weigh other factors, such as work experience and interviews, more heavily in decision making.

The proof is in the numbers: Even widely recognized, “gold standard” credentials typically capture only a small percentage of the market.

Competition in the credentialing market has expanded significantly

Today, it is rare for a credentialing organization to have no competitors or even to have just one. In some fields, there are 100+ credentials in the market. And the types of credentials and organizations issuing these credentials have expanded.

Is your certification business optimized for success?

CERTIFICATION VITAL SIGNS ASSESSMENT™

Fast, expert evaluation of your credential

Whether your certification program is in trouble or you're looking for new ideas to expand your success, our *Certification Vital Signs Assessment* provides rapid answers.

How it works

Your program is evaluated against multiple vital signs – proprietary success indicators derived from our work with more than 200 certifiers. No massive market research study required. This practical assessment is the perfect starting point for strategic decision making – delivered to your desk in just 2 weeks!

What we assess

We review vital signs within five dimensions: Brand & Marketing, Customer Focus, Value Equation, Competitive Position, and Certification Design.

CREDENTIAL VALUE PROPOSITION REALITY CHECK™

How valuable is your value proposition?

A strong value proposition sets the foundation for successful credential marketing. Yet, we see value propositions that fail to shine because they do not:

- resonate with stakeholders;
- differentiate the credential from competitors; or
- substantiate the implicit promise in the value proposition

Even a strong value proposition can diminish in effectiveness over time if it fails to evolve with changes in market demographics and needs and preferences.

Our *Credential Value Proposition Reality Check™* provides an independent, unbiased appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of your value proposition and basic tips for drafting a more effective one.

Want hands-on help from experts to create your new value proposition? Consider our Credential Value Proposition Makeover.

CREDENTIAL VALUE PROPOSITION MAKEOVER

We begin the makeover with our Credential Value Proposition Reality Check and a review of background information you provide (e.g., customer demographics, market research on perceptions of your credential). Next, we work together to define the essence of your credential's value and craft an impactful value statement that will break through the clutter.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

How do you stack up against the competition?

Our in-depth analysis provides:

- profiles of your direct and indirect competitors (market segments they target, their competitive strengths and weaknesses, and points of differentiation)
- an expert assessment of your organization's competitive position within the market
- potential opportunities presented by unmet market needs and competitors' weaknesses

Use this service when you're considering the creation of a new credential – whether it's your first or an addition to your current portfolio.

Revitalizing a faltering credential



Have the volumes of your formerly successful certification program reached a plateau? Begun to decline? Even worse, has your program never lived up to expectations?

These are the symptoms of an ailing credential and a sign that it's time to diagnose the problem and identify a remedy.

MAKING THE RIGHT DIAGNOSIS

Before you can begin “fixing” a program, you’ll need to understand the factors contributing to the problem. We will:

- conduct market research on stakeholders’ perceptions of your program
- analyze changes and trends and how they may be impacting your program
- evaluate the design of the credentialing process for unnecessary obstacles and lack of alignment with market demographics, needs and preferences

Maybe you read this and think, “we could do this ourselves.” In some cases, this may be true. But often, internal politics and hidden agendas get in the way of an accurate diagnosis. That’s why clients have trusted us, since 1992, to help them navigate these waters.

IDENTIFYING THE REMEDY

We’ll also work with you to determine what to do next with your program. The most common options are to:

- resuscitate the program
- place the program on “life support”
- sunset the program

Yes, these decisions can get emotional. From the volunteers who started the credential to the current credential holders and staff. But we can help you move swiftly through this process and with confidence.

MAKING THE CHANGE

Whichever remedy is selected, we’ll work with you to create a high-level action plan to map the implementation process, and we’ll be there to provide guidance as you complete the plan.

Future-proofing your credentials

No one wants to think about major disruptions, like a global pandemic, but they do happen. One day you're operating normally, the next you're putting out fires and cutting expenses as quickly as possible. But what if you could future proof your program? We can help!

TREND BRIEFING

Our 90-min, virtual trend briefing gets you up to speed quickly on the trends impacting the credentialing industry. The briefing is customized for your industry and profession.

FUTURE OF CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP

Ready to roll up your sleeves and develop strategies for future proofing your credentials? We'll facilitate a workshop with your team and board to: (1) explore, in depth, the implications of the trends for your organization and (2) identify strategies needed to maintain your credentials' relevance and success in the future.

VISIONING THE FUTURE OF THE PROFESSION

Successful planning for the future of your credentials requires a clear perspective on the possible futures for the profession as a whole. How will (or should) the role, scope, and value of the profession evolve in the next 10-15 years? How might professionals' own perceptions of, and connection with, the field change?

Future Foresight Workshop

The future is determined by a wide array of variables, which when combined, can result in any number of futures. Instead of attempting to predict the future, future foresight focuses on identifying a range of plausible futures, exploring the implications of these futures for the profession, and anticipating what will be required for the profession to thrive.

Knapp's Futures Foresight Workshop is designed to spark such thinking and surface specific impacts that can be further explored. During the workshop, we:

- explore possible futures
- gauge the likelihood of each future and how critical its impact could be
- identify how the profession and employers may be affected, and what this could mean for how work is performed and the competencies required to succeed in each plausible future

Future of the Profession Research

Need data to inform development of a new vision for the future or to garner stakeholder support for this vision? Ask us about our *Future of the Profession* research studies which incorporate one or more methodologies, including: secondary research, social media intelligence, qualitative research with professionals and stakeholders, and quantitative validation through surveys.

Managing your credential portfolio



Noticed a problem (or two) with your portfolio?

Maybe you've discovered that having a single successful credential (even one that is spectacularly successful) is no guarantee that the next one you launch will match this triumph. Or perhaps you've found that the resources needed to sustain some of your credentials exceeds their value to your organization and the market.

This is a common phenomenon among credentialing bodies. Why? Developing and managing a portfolio of credentials is more complex than tending to a single credential.

Imagine you have a portfolio of three certifications. How should you allocate your limited personnel, financial, and marketing resources among them? Should you invest equally in each certification or devote more resources to certain credentials? These are just some of the questions that organizations must consider to maximize the ROI of their credential portfolios.

How we can help

We'll analyze the performance of your entire portfolio and the relationship of the credentials to each other on a variety of variables, such as revenue generated and strategic alignment. With a fresh perspective, you'll be in a better position to make the right decisions and tough choices on strategy and resource allocation. Our portfolio analysis also informs decisions about whether to proceed with new credentials or discontinue existing ones.

Need to discontinue a certification?

We know how easy it is to become over-extended with under-performing programs and legacy credentials. More than a few organizations have reached out to us after finding themselves in the same circumstances. Together, we'll develop a process and timeline for sunsetting your certification that is fair to candidates and certifiants and will help to reduce negative fallout.

Launching a micro-credential



In professional credentialing, bigger is NOT always better

These “tiny” credentials pack a powerful punch. With a flexible design and narrow focus, they are ideal solutions for meeting the need of both workers and employers to verify learning and skill development which takes place continuously throughout the career journey.

Why you should be thinking about micro-credentials

Micro-credentials appeal to people in all stages of their professional development, including those:

- preparing to enter the workforce
- progressing through their career journey
- changing career paths

Yup, basically everyone can benefit from a micro-credential.

Benefits to your organization

- Engagement and relationship building with your target market throughout their career journey (and even pre-career)
- A product demonstrated to appeal to Gen Z's and younger Millennials -- the two age groups most likely to seek professional credentials now and in the near future
- Additional revenue and diversification of revenue

Why Knapp is THE go-to choice for micro-credential design

We have the longest history of prototyping and designing micro-credentials and micro-credential frameworks in the certification community. We'll make sure you avoid pitfalls and missteps in the design and introduction of your first micro-credential.

Leverage our expertise to:

- Select the best micro-credential model for accomplishing your goals
- Identify the most effective design for each micro-credential you offer
- Conceptualize and build out a micro-credential framework that integrates with your credential portfolio
- Effectively communicate the value of your micro-credentials and market them to your target audience

On-demand consulting

Want to brainstorm ideas for growing your program? Tap into the insights of an objective expert who's seen the successes, failures and lessons learned of hundreds of credentialing programs? Get real-time advice on a challenge you're facing?

Our *Knapp On Demand* service was designed for just this purpose -- and any other consulting need that doesn't fit neatly into the box of a formal scope of work. Use it for:

- a one-time consultation
- periodic, as needed consultation, on your certification business
- a series of virtual meetings during a program design/redesign or implementation of a new business or marketing strategy

Whatever your needs, you can count on timely, priority access to our expertise.

Interested in learning more?
Visit **www.knappinternational.com**
or contact us at **info@knappinternational.com**

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.