



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Shifting The Up-Skilling Paradigm: Digital badges help IBM create a diverse, inclusive workforce



The global workforce is facing a serious talent shortage. With the emergence of new and rapidly-evolving technology, workers at all levels need new skills to meet the workforce demands. However 51% of industry executives cite finding appropriately skilled workers in local labor markets as the greatest challenge related to skills. And, 71% of corporate recruiters indicated they cannot find applicants with sufficient practical experience.

Innovative organizations such as IBM are not immune to these challenges. This case study looks at IBM's business decision to create a digital badging program to foster employee skill progression and the outcomes of its program adoption.

IBM and digital badges

IBM launched its industry-leading digital badge program on Credly Acclaim with the goals of increasing employee recognition, motivating skill progression, and making the IT workforce more inclusive.

At the pilot launch in 2015, IBM offered four types of digital badges across learning and certification tracks representing foundational, intermediate, advanced and expert-level skills and competency. As badging became more integral to the organization's training and recognition approach, IBM rapidly expanded the types of badged activities. While this expansion has focused primarily on learning and certification, the program now includes recognition of essential contribution and advocacy-based programs. In 2018,

there are more than 1,600 different badged activities available for individuals to engage with.

Since the program launch, the IBM ecosystem of employees and consumers has overwhelmingly embraced digital credentials. As of 2018, the program has more than 350,000 badge earners and 1 million badges have been issued.

The rapid adoption of the badging program has also spurred increased awareness of IBM's learning and certification programs. Digital badges are easily shared to professional networking sites, and as of early 2018, IBM's program has garnered more than 200 million social media impressions. This organic social sharing is equivalent to \$39,000 per month in marketing value.

IBM's Badge Program Generates Measurable Results



Course enrollments in IBM-badged online courses increased 125%



Increased brand exposure: IBM garnered 200M+ social media impressions, worth \$39,000/month in digital marketing value



Certifications achieved a **57% pass rate increase**



Employability: 92% of badge earners say the badge verifies job skills



64% direct increase in product trial downloads.



Course completions of IBM-badged online courses increased by 694%



195 countries are represented in the skills registry



Increased engagement: 87% of IBM badge earners feel more engaged with IBM and are motivated to learn more

Endnotes

- 1) "Facing the Storm: Navigating the Global Skills Crisis." IBM Institute for Business Value, 2016.
- 2) Pursuit of relevance: How higher education remains viable in today's dynamic world. IBM Institute for Business Value, June 2015.