

CASE STUDY

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Internal Training Partnership Results in 100% Exam Pass Rate for MSP Staff

How to build an IT training program that incentivizes employees to train, pass exams, and grow.

Vertikal6

Industry

Managed Service Provider

Location

Warwick, Rhode Island

Founded

2002

Business size

Medium

**SUMMARY**

At Vertikal6, new hires start out as apprentices and work their way into Level 1 technician roles, a process that includes earning certifications. Investing in IT training has made all the difference in helping Vertikal6 team members develop their skill sets and adapt to the constantly changing IT industry.

Vertikal6, an advanced IT solutions firm in Rhode Island, developed a training and apprenticeship program for their IT staff, which:

- Built an internal training program that delivered high-quality training to their technical staff
- Formed a partnership with CBT Nuggets to augment their program with world-class IT training videos

By building an IT training program with incentives for earning certifications, Vertikal6:

- Increased employee retention
- Increased employee morale
- Improved customer satisfaction
- Increased first-time exam pass rates to 100%



Rick Norberg, CEO

Invest in Your People and They'll Stay

Rick Norberg, the CEO of Vertikal6, had long heard the argument some MSPs use against building a training program for their technical staff: “What if we train our people and they leave?” More important to him was the inverse of that argument: “What if we don’t train them and they stay?”

The Math on Internal Training Programs for MSPs

Rick did the math on building an IT training program for his MSP. He acknowledged that some employees may leave the company, taking with them the certifications and training they received at Vertikal6. But a technical staff of untrained, long-term employees would always be more detrimental than a trained one — even if not all of them stick around for long.

An MSP like Vertikal6 depends on its support staff, and Rick knows it. If he were using untrained or badly trained personnel, he’d have unhappy customers. By apprenticing his newest employees to more experienced ones and putting them through a training program that relies on CBT Nuggets videos and courses, Rick can rest assured that his clients’ problems are being addressed by the some of the industry’s best-trained problem-solvers.

Paying for Certs and On-The-Job Training Wasn’t Enough

Vertikal6 went through several iterations of their training program before finding the right combination of key components:

- On-the-job training
- Paying for employee certification exams
- Internal training
- Incentivizing certification with career progression
- CBT Nuggets training



John Loven, Training Manager

From Apprentice to Certified Pro

New hires at Vertikal6 start as an apprentice, and they're trained into the role of Level 1 technician. "They're taking calls, unlocking passwords, and troubleshooting applications," said John Loven, training manager at Vertikal6 and CBT Nuggets learner. They progress out of apprenticeship into a full-time technician when they earn their first certification. When they first started their training program, Vertikal6 encouraged them to pursue industry certifications by offering to pay for their first exam attempt.

"When we first started with the apprenticeship program, we didn't have CBT Nuggets. There was a massive failure rate when it came to certifications. Vertikal6 paid for the apprentices' first exam, but unfortunately the first exam was going to waste because they weren't prepared," Vertikal6 training manager Jenna Barboza explained.

Even more intensive on-the-job training wasn't enough for apprentices to increase pass rates for certification exams, which was the only way to progress out of the apprenticeship. They hoped that real-world experience and ad-hoc training from experienced technicians would be enough to get their apprentices certified. Instead, they realized they needed to build both a training program and incentivize improvement.

"The only way to make yourself more valuable is to increase the breadth and depth of your capabilities."

Rick Norberg, CEO, Vertikal6

Incentiving Employees to Train, Pass Exams, and Grow

Vertikal6 started a relationship with CBT Nuggets and got assigned an accountability coach. Accountability coaches from CBT Nuggets design unique strategies to implement CBT Nuggets material that address a company's particular goals. "We reached out to our coach Molly and her advice was very helpful when it came to how we should use the videos and how we should promote the trainings and options to motivate the technicians," said Jenna Barboz, training manager at Vertikal6.

After talking with their CBT Nuggets accountability coach, Rick implemented additional training resources into the program to increase exam pass rates — and accelerate employee progression. Rick kept the on-the-job components, certification requirement, and the training program, but he augmented each step of the way with CBT Nuggets training.

There's no one-size-fits all solution when it comes to certifications and preparation, and Rick knew that. And so does CBT Nuggets. And that's where Joe Lefrancois came in — one of Rick's leads in the training program and also a CBT Nuggets learner.

"We usually do three training sessions a week. For each class, there's a set number of videos that the students watch. Then they ask us questions based on those. After, I go through what was covered in the video with real-world examples. If possible, I also relate it to something an actual customer went through," said Joe.

The apprenticeship program at Vertikal6 used CBT Nuggets training, on-the-job training, and mentorship to not only resolve technical issues, but also help techs understand why they occurred.



Jenna Barboza, Training Manager

**6 in 10 employees
say they aren't
getting the on-the-
job coaching they
need to support their
core job skills.**

Source: 2025 Gartner HR Toolkit report

Real-World Results: 100% Pass Rate for Exams

The decision to augment their apprenticeship and training program with CBT Nuggets videos and course material was the key turning point for Vertikal6. Vertikal6 found that while individual technicians could pursue training on their own, it was more efficient when the business or company dictated the path.

The reason was simple: Most new technicians can only guess what technology, vendor or software they should learn. The company knows what their techs need to learn to be successful based on experience and data.

“We’ve had a really high success rate ... 100% pass rate for people who’ve gone through CBT Nuggets’ training and then our program. We’re doing really well,” said Joe.

For Rick, the successes range from intangible things like watching his staff succeed to firmer benefits like seeing his clients happy with their excellent care. “I just believe that you have to invest in training your people. You have to constantly make them better. You want them to evolve and grow — to grow their careers, to get promoted, to do all these things. And the only way to make yourself more valuable is to increase the breadth and depth of your capabilities. From a cultural perspective, training is absolutely key because the industry is changing constantly.”



Companies that invest in employee development report up to 24% higher profit margins and 218% higher income per employee.* Internal training pays off in retention, performance, and measurable business results — making it one of the smartest investments you can make.

*Source: Devlin Peck, Forbes

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