



## Certifications: To be, or not to be...

Today morning I received ISTQB Foundation certificates for my batch, which cleared exam some time back. Obviously, everyone was excited to hear the news and was eager to see physical realisation of their achievement, the certificate. Many of them again Thanked me, for helping them clear the ISTQB Foundation certification in 1<sup>st</sup> attempt itself.

I recalled my initial discussions with the team before we started with our preparatory sessions for ISTQB Foundation. Fundamental question, most of them had was, **Why certification?** I will put forth my views about certification in general which may be helpful for any certification aspirants in general.

**Certification** is an authorization of someone's knowledge in specific area by a third-party neutral organization/ certification-body. This **Certification-body** is represented by group of experts in those respective areas and thus ensures best of the industry knowledge. Authorization happens based on aspirant's performance in written test and/or in practical hands-on examination. Scope of examination is based on prescribed syllabus (typically called as **BOK – Body Of Knowledge**). Neutrality of the certification-body eliminates any biases towards aspirants and assessment process. It also brings in uniformity and consistency in assessment. Thus, all certified candidates would have lot of common traits, similar amount of knowledge. It is kind of 'Bench marking' process against consistent, neutral criteria. Certification helps you accelerate your learning in new areas and can help you build a better career.

I could think of some tips for people who are planning for any certification.

1. Aim of certification should be to learn new concepts, consolidate existing knowledge. It would certainly add weightage to your resume, but it should not be the only objective in mind, else it will defeat the sole purpose of Certification concept and process.
2. Study whole syllabus (BOK), it's not a college examination to keep any sections as 'optional' 😊
3. Bigger the reach of a certification-body, better the recognition for the certification. e.g., prefer **Global Certifications** as compared to certifications having limited geographic visibility.

4. Certification provides you maximum benefits if you implement knowledge you gained through certification, just clearing the certification without getting to use and implement the gained knowledge will reduce it's worth to just a small sheet of paper. Consider this aspect before taking any certification.
5. Select certification suitable to your experience and knowledge level.
6. Always talk to your superiors / mentors for selecting Certification and make use of their experience to prepare well.
7. Some certifications come with Lifetime validity while many Certifications mandate re-certification at specific time intervals, so one needs to continue his/her journey towards continuous learning so that re-certification does not become a challenge. Many certification bodies require aspirant to get actively involved in prescribed professional activities (providing Training, publishing paper/s, attending related Conferences etc) and accumulate points which can aid in re-certification.

For testing professionals, **ISTQB (International Software Testing Qualifications Board)** provides array of Certifications. I strongly recommend you visit <https://www.istqb.org/> and <https://istqb.in/> (Indian Testing Board - ISTQB approved national board for India) and plan Certifications suitably (refer to point 6 above)

So, please do not look at Certification just as a solution to your stagnated career OR career booster, but if you take it with right attitude then it will certainly be satisfying and rewarding decision with long lasting benefits.