

Certification Solutions in **VAR Training**

Xerox Europe ensures technical skills and competency of its European solutions providers

Business Challenge

Xerox is one of the world's most successful technology companies. Placed 132 on the Fortune 500 and generating over \$15 billion in revenue last year, Xerox leads on global document management.

Europe represents approximately a third of all revenue and is responsible for delivering services, hardware and software to organisations in 15 countries. The fast pace of technology innovation means product development is frequent at Xerox. The integration of new technologies often results in more powerful yet complex offerings. In this environment, maintaining the Xerox benchmark of quality requires regular training to ensure that customer facing sales and support staff always have the skills and knowledge required to manage any customer enquiry.



Xerox Europe has always provided excellent pre- and post-sale support through its own highly trained consultants, analysts and network engineers. They support the sales force working with large national and pan-European customers, providing valued consultancy and a consistently high level of quality. It ensures Xerox customers never need look elsewhere. Small to medium customers are supported by Xerox-branded partners, and by Value Added Resellers in specific market segments including commercial print, advertising, public sector and mainframe printing. Xerox relies on this network of channel partners to grow and nurture customer relationships.

Benefits Provided by CompTIA

In 2004 Xerox Europe turned to CompTIA to bolster the knowledge of its support network by developing a new programme of certification. It retrained partners on its own products but also increased their general understanding of computing fundamentals using several CompTIA certifications.

"We needed something which covered everything from IT basics right through to advanced consultancy and system design," said Julian King, solutions education manager, Xerox Europe, who championed the initiative. "Technology advances quickly and keeping up can be a challenge. Some of our partners needed a refresh and we had to ensure everyone had a benchmark level of understanding in the fundamentals of IT, so customers had the best possible experience."

Xerox surveyed its channel to identify a specialist in base-level IT certification. When the majority of respondents recommended CompTIA, the choice was easy. Xerox is now rolling out CompTIA A+, Network+ and Server+ certifications to over 1000 partners as part of their Xerox Europe membership. Partners will receive training and learn new skills online via the Xerox Virtual Learning Environment. By 2006 it will be compulsory for every partner to have customer-facing representatives skilled and certified on CompTIA. Xerox will also offer partners the opportunity to access training on CompTIA CDIA+ document management course for a supplementary fee.

CompTIA
Certifications

A+

CDIA+

CTT+

e-Biz+

HTI+

i-Net+

IT Project+

Linux+

Network+

Security+

Server+

CompTIA's position as an industry association means its vendor neutral certifications are developed by industry itself. CompTIA has access to a membership of over 20,000 organisations worldwide. It works with them to ensure certifications are relevant to industry and the skills required in the business environment.

It is still early days, but Xerox believes training will increasing the ability of its partners to address customer concerns and add benefits for the partner network.

"We see this as a skills gateway," explained Nesbitt. "CompTIA training is something support teams need to go through before we develop them further. We expect the CompTIA certification to quickly increase the ability of our partners to deal with customer demands. In time, we expect this to deliver an increase in installations and, most importantly, an increase in the quality of professionals representing the Xerox brand."

"We chose CompTIA because we needed a recognised, eligible standard in which the industry already had confidence. CompTIA's ability to roll out across Europe and its proven success with existing brand name customers ensured we had a solid skills benchmark in place from day one."

Dave Nesbitt, general manager,
Xerox Analyst Services



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