

## Putting Objective Skills Measurement to Work

According to widely-accepted figures on corporate training, companies spend up to \$5,000 per year on training for each IT employee.\* But where can companies look to document skills improvement or return on investment in training? Skills measurement solutions are providing an answer, and online skills measurement is becoming the leading enterprise solution. The reason for the growing use of online skills measurement is its versatility—the ability to measure skills for a variety of purposes across a large employee population.

### **Skills Measurement as a Jumpstart for Learning—the Prescriptive Assessment**

When most people think of measuring skills, they think about the quintessential graded “test.” Indeed, nothing is more familiar, or intimidating, than taking a single standardized test designed to indicate success or failure.

In the professional environment, however, employees come from many different backgrounds and must meet a variety of job demands. That’s why managers are increasingly using skills measurement as a pre-training tool. The prescriptive assessment, also known as a pre-assessment, gives employees and training managers the data they need to decide whether additional training is needed. Pre-assessments are valuable as a way of enabling employees to “test-out” of costly and unnecessary training.

### **Improving Returns on Training—the Post-Assessment**

Traditionally, companies have been forced to track training performance with an inconsistent array of measurement tools. Post-training assessments often come in the form of an instructor-developed exam, or as part of a pre-delivered training curriculum.

Both of these forms of assessment are valid, but at an enterprise level, a mixture of the two can lead to an inaccurate picture of training performance. Is one test easier or more difficult than another? Can scores in one training program be compared to scores in another? In this case, consistency is paramount.

Today companies are realizing the benefits of being able to make apples-to-apples comparisons through online skills measurement systems. A consistent set of employee pre-and post training results tracks the difference in skill levels before and after training, and it clearly demonstrates areas of strength as well as opportunities for improvement.

### **Proving Skills for Customers and Prospects—the Online Certification Exam**

The certification exam is probably the most recognized use of online skills measurement today. Particularly among job candidates in the IT field, online certifications from providers such as Brainbench are providing an essential source of validation. But the need to validate skills doesn’t end once a candidate is hired. Companies are also certifying the skills of existing employees to improve performance standards and differentiate their products and services in the eyes of customers and prospects.



**Revealing Skills Gaps Within the Enterprise—the Technical Assessment**

Within any organization, managers have a great opportunity for using objective skills assessments to measure and improve skills across departments or project teams. The technical skills assessment enables decision-makers to identify critical skills among the group, assess those skills, identify and address skills gaps, and reassess those skills to track improvement.

A combination of several benefits make online skills assessments ideal for revealing skills gaps within the organization. First, they provide a consistent unit of measure, delivering an assessment score with enough detail to show improvement over repeat tests (something a pass/fail exam cannot do). Secondly, online assessments are repeatable. Computer Adaptive Testing technology is now enabling repeat tests that deliver test questions based on knowledge demonstrated by the test-taker. The result: a new and challenging assessment with every test taken.

Finally, an effective enterprise system provides advanced reporting functionality, delivering actionable information to help decision-makers focus learning resources or, in many cases, find top performers for mentoring, building teams or making assignments.

**Smart Measures Deliver Actionable Results**

Whether a company measures skills to improve the performance of existing employees, certify skills, or track training success, an effective skills management initiative must have the same ingredients—the objective metrics and repeatable process of an online skills system. To learn more about online skills measurement and how companies are tracking skills to improve business performance, visit [www.brainbench.com/business](http://www.brainbench.com/business).

\*See “Boost Training ROI” at [www.brainbench.com/businessperformance](http://www.brainbench.com/businessperformance) improvement, and see how companies are using skills measurement to help put these steps into action.