

# Ensure Your Team Has the Knowledge and Skills to Succeed



The talent development profession is adapting to disruptions in the global marketplace. It has never been more critical for professionals in this field to become key partners with organizations to ensure that their workforce is prepared for the future.



TD professionals can take several steps to position themselves and the team as valued business partners:

- Develop the capabilities that are associated with talent development excellence.
- Model lifelong learning.
- Stay up-to-date with talent development trends and best practices.

You can ensure that your TD professionals have the skills, knowledge, and expertise needed for the challenges of today and tomorrow by grounding their development in the 23 capabilities outlined in the [Talent Development Capability Model](#).

## Industry Research

In 2018, the Association for Talent Development (ATD) conducted research to define the concept of talent development; assess, upgrade, and expand foundational skills; and connect training and workforce development to organizational strategies and goals.

The study lays out the major societal forces and business changes that are requiring TD professionals to adopt new approaches and upgrade skills to keep pace. It provides a common language to equip a network of global practitioners with shared definitions, methodologies, and concepts.

More than **3,000 professionals** from 73 countries provided complete responses (23 percent of the participants were located outside the United States). Respondents evaluated the importance of 197 competencies for successful job performance now and in the next three to five years. Of the 197 competencies included on the survey, the ATD advisory panel identified 188 as important for successful performance as a TD professional now and in the future.

Comprehensive literature review, expert practitioner interviews, and advisory panel discussions identified industry trends that span a variety of areas in business, technology, learning, science, and the profession itself.

### Top Industry Trends Identified

**Digital transformation** – advances occurring rapidly, driving how people interact. New technologies offer new paradigms for learning

**Data analytics** – need to capture, organize and leverage analytics to actionable talent strategies

**Information availability** – learners are driving their own learning agenda; cognitive science changing our understanding of learning; need to guide and critically analyze value of information

**Business partnership** – need to collaborate with business leaders in organization to convey value of learning and how it supports organizational strategy and competitive advantage

**Learner-centric strategy** – need to create processes and systems to support formal and informal lifelong learning for competitive advantage

## Talent Development Capability Model

Out of the survey and interviews came ATD's Talent Development Capability Model. The model answers this question: **What should talent development professionals know and do to be successful?**

ATD's focus shifted from a competency framework to a capability model to help TD professionals build capability that will not only help them be competent performing their work today but also be prepared to face future challenges. Competence refers to having the knowledge and skills necessary to perform a job. It remains integral to performance and is one element of capability; however, capability is about adapting and flexing to meet future needs.

Our research generated a body of evidence that confirms the required knowledge and skills needed, which became the components of the model. Research showed that the new model should include:

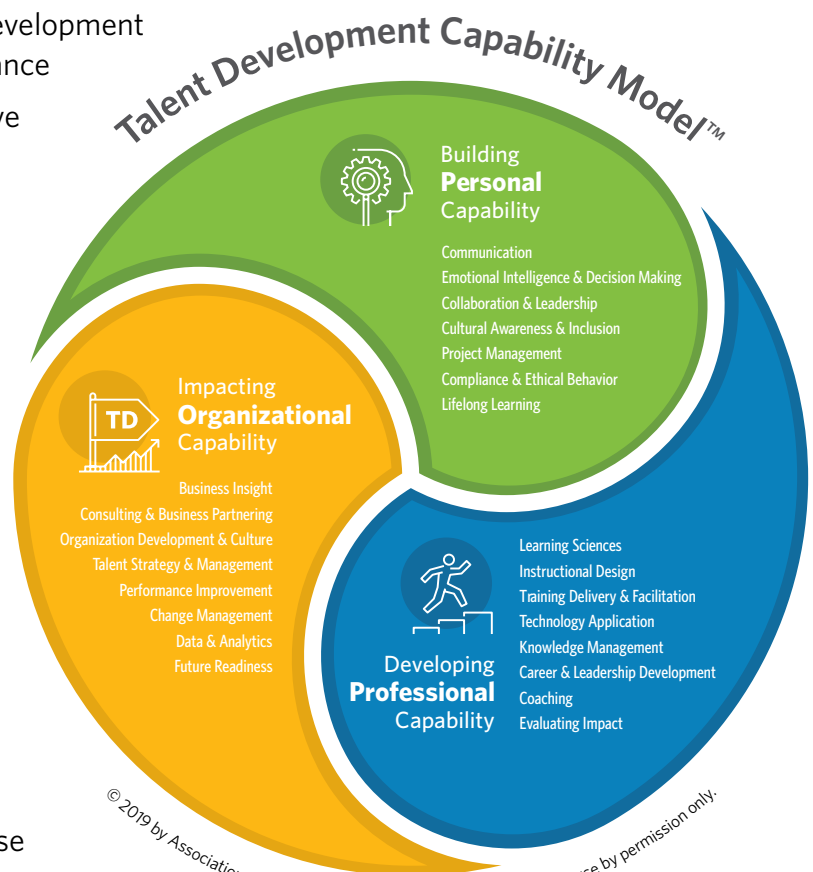
- Strategic, specialized or technical, and foundational competencies
- A definition of the scope of talent development and talent development competencies
- Customizability through interactive elements to expand areas and access more detailed information
- Career development guidance through inclusion of proficiency levels or career paths
- Simple structure easy to interpret and remember with relevant labels that conveys how structural elements are connected/integrated
- Common language to support role of talent development in both organizational and individual performance

The current study reflects practice today and five years into the future.

The new model is structured around three domains of practice:

- **Building Personal Capability:**  
Capabilities that derive from interpersonal skills
- **Developing Professional Capability:**  
Capabilities that come from building professional knowledge related to developing people and helping them learn
- **Impacting Organizational Capability:**  
Capabilities that affect an organization's ability to drive toward results and mission success.

In addition, 23 capabilities detailing the core components of the field are included within these three domains. This model is the foundation of ATD's certifications.





## Certifications Validate Employee Expertise, Capability, and Credibility

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By supporting your employees' pursuit of certification in talent development, organizations are guaranteeing that their talent development professionals have the cutting-edge industry knowledge and best practices to ensure that their workforce is ready to tackle all future challenges.

Certifications are more than just education; they test on the most current best practices in the profession and validate competency of critical knowledge and skills that TD professionals need now and in the future.

"Certification is valuable because organizations are counting on [TD professionals] to develop their people. **If [TD professionals] have a certification, it ensures that they have the cutting-edge" knowledge and skills necessary to successfully develop your workforce**, says Elaine Biech, president of ebb associates inc. and the winner of ATD's 2020 Distinguished Contribution to Talent Development Award.

Professional certification is a type of credentialing that provides an independent assessment of the knowledge, skills, and capabilities required for competent performance of a professional role. Bob Collins, in a [November 2018 edition of \*TD at Work\*](#), states, "It also establishes to the community that the person is competent and properly trained to carry out his or her responsibilities."

Companies receive many benefits from certified employees. In the post "[4 Reasons a Professional Certification Benefits the Entire Company](#)," Robert Half points to happier employees—employees who also stick around longer. Further, "certified employees learn from their training the importance of adhering to certain professional standards." Certification also aids employers by giving clients greater confidence in the business, and boosts productivity, Bob Collins wrote in an [April 2019 ATD blog post](#).

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"As a CPTD credential holder, the scope of my work includes my ability to view tasks in a more holistic way. The CPTD is more than a piece of paper; it is an acknowledgment of my efforts, past and continual, to stay abreast of current trends in adult learning and learning theory and apply them where they make sense. By obtaining this certification, I provide a resource for expertise to others in the L&D field and also provide my employer with confidence that my work product will be professional, well thought-out, and in accordance with industry standards."

—MICHAEL LAUGHLIN  
curriculum designer for Centene Corporation

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Individuals who go through the rigor of becoming certified understand the many benefits of lifelong learning, which is something that many companies also are beginning to understand and appreciate, especially in the increasingly fast-paced world of work. When employees develop new skills and—especially for young ones—zero in on an area of specialization, they become more confident in their knowledge and skills. The [EvoLLLution.com](#) article, “[The Shared Value of Lifelong Learning for Professionals and Employers](#),” notes, “confident employees deliver better service to internal and external customers.”

Supporting an employee who is preparing for a certification exam is an investment. Certification provides many benefits to HR, the hiring manager, and the employer, especially in terms of greater job satisfaction and lower turnover, increased industry reputation, and higher quality of work.

Employers on a [2019 ATD webcast](#) pointed to many benefits they get when supporting employee certification:

- Strong combination of business acumen and L&D skills
- Flexibility and adaptability to the needs of the organization
- Alignment of development to business outcomes to help the organization stay relevant
- Validation of L&D methods
- Credibility and professionalism of the team and the certified individuals
- Increased ability to meet varied needs across the organization

According to the ATD research report [Lifelong Learning: The Path to Personal and Organizational Performance](#), lifelong learning is a higher priority in top companies, and encouraging employees to continue to develop leads to improved employee engagement levels and overall organizational performance.

## Certification Benefits for Companies

Organizations receive several benefits by supporting employees' pursuits of professional certifications.

### **Happier, more-engaged employees.**

When employees see that the company is willing to invest in them and their career, they are more likely to feel noticed and valued. Employees who feel valued tend to stay longer, which reduces employee turnover.

### **Rise in employee confidence and knowledge.**

Preparing for and earning a certification adds significantly to an employee's comfort level with their work responsibilities and their ability to better handle them.

### **Greater trust in employees' abilities.**

Certified employees are better able to meet industry benchmarks, and their work tends to be of a higher, more consistent quality.

**Increased productivity.** Microsoft and other organizations have conducted research that demonstrates that employees with a professional certification are more productive. That's because certifications prepare workers with best practices that help them work more efficiently. The presence of certified employees can help improve the productivity of team projects.

*[TD at Work](#); November 2018; [Develop Your Career With a Professional Certification](#)*

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“What I got out of the certification process was a deeper understanding of the depth and breadth of the talent development field as well as a general confidence boost in my role within the industry.”

—**SANDRA SMITH, CPTD**  
Talent Development Professional,  
Financial Industry

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## ATD Certification Institute

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The Association for Talent Development’s **Certification Institute** offers the Associate Professional in Talent Development (APTD) and Certified Professional in Talent Development (CPTD) certifications.

The APTD is designed to serve the needs of talent development professionals with at least three years of experience in the talent development field. The APTD certification focuses on the foundational areas of talent development, as defined by the Talent Development Capability Model.

The CPTD is the premier credential that tests the breadth of skills needed for success in the entire talent development profession. It measures a professional’s knowledge and skill application across the spectrum of talent development capabilities as defined by the Talent Development Capability Model.

Supporting TD professionals in their quest for a certification will add value to your organization. Certificants will expand their knowledge base, increase their confidence and credibility, increase the value and proficiency that they bring to the organization, approach their work more strategically and holistically, and increase their impact on organizational outcomes.

**Help your employees** gain cutting-edge knowledge and skills.

Learn more at [td.org/TeamSupport](https://td.org/TeamSupport).

