Trend Brief

Alpine Thought Leader Exchange

6-7 August 2019

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Trends Impacting Professional Credentialing

We continuously monitor a wide variety of information and data sources to identify and track trends in the categories presented below. After analyzing the potential impacts of these trends on professional credentialing, we identify a select group of trends to feature each year in our Future of Certification workshops, webinars, and presentations.

- **SOCIETAL (demographic, consumer, tech, education & learning)**
- **HOW WORK IS DONE**
- **CREDENTIALING TRENDS**
- **INDUSTRY TRENDS**
- **INDUSTRY WORKFORCE**
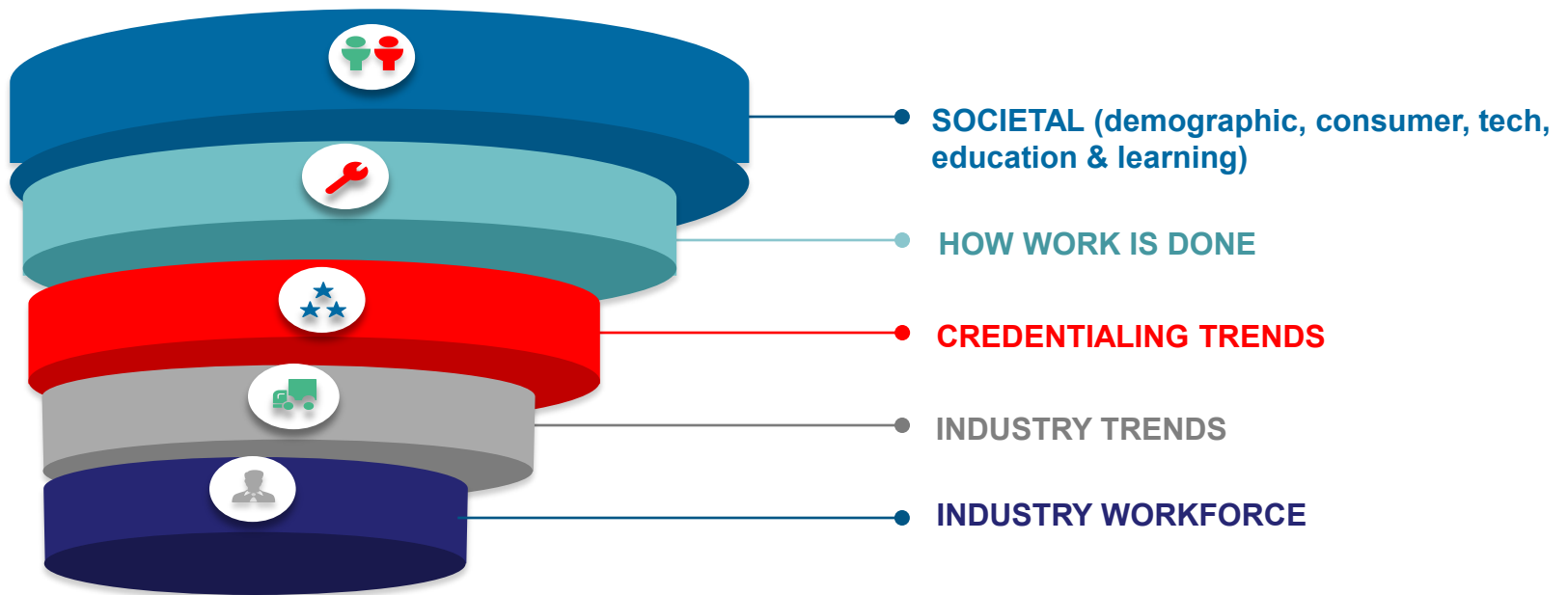
Trends Impacting Professional Credentialing

During the trend session at the **2019 Alpine TLX**, we will be focusing on **five** of the trends curated for 2019. These trends are:

- Personalization

- Robotization, Machine Learning & Artificial Intelligence

- Side Hustles & Gigs

- The Non-Linear Career Journey

- Stealth & Game-Based Assessment

Please take 5 minutes to review this trend brief prior to attending the session. You will need this information to participate in the activities planned for the session.

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Personalization

"My choices are like my fingerprints, they make me unique."

Deepika Padukone

Named by Time Magazine in 2018 as one of the 100 most influential people in the world

It's who I am

Personalization is the current evolution of a trend which began as "mass customization" in the late 1980s. Mass customization enabled customers to more finely tune manufactured products to their needs and preferences (e.g., selecting the colors for each component of their Nike sneakers).

Today's customers desire personalization of products not just to finely tune these items to their needs, but also to satisfy their desire to present to the public what makes them unique.

The products that customers design and purchase serve as reflections of their identities and their personal brands.

Why it Matters

Consumer trends frame expectations for all products/services, including professional credentials, and personalization has become a consumer expectation. It's easy to imagine why prospective candidates might desire a personalized certification that would permit them to depict to employers, colleagues, and others the unique constellation of knowledge and skills which they possess and which differentiates them from others. The problem: certification is a standardized, one-size-fits-all product.

Robotization, Machine Learning & Artificial Intelligence
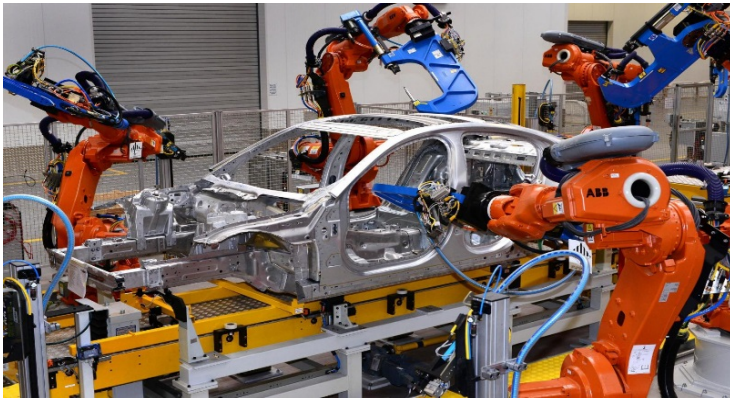
Technology meets human

Technology is transforming not just *how* we work (e.g., with mobile devices) but also what we *do* in the workplace. Job tasks formerly performed by humans are being automated.

Some estimate that for 60% of the occupations that exist today, at least 30% of the work activities comprising these occupations will be automated.

As AI continues to evolve, machines will take over not just routine human functions, but also more complex cognitive functions.

Why it Matters

As intelligent machines take over work activities, those jobs which remain will be restructured. This restructuring may require that job incumbents possess different sets of competencies than they do now. A key question will be whether incumbents can acquire these competencies or whether workers with different backgrounds (e.g., data scientists) will be needed to fill these roles. As more work is ceded to machines, certification programs ultimately may need to focus solely on competencies that are uniquely human (e.g., thinking strategically).

Side Hustles & Gigs

From www.medium.com

Working to a different beat

For purposes of this brief, a "side hustle" is defined as a means of making money outside of one's regular "day job" and the main source of income. By contrast, a "gig" is freelance work that serves as the main source of income.

For both side hustles and gigs, workers are performing multiple job roles, often concurrently. These jobs may be in different fields and work settings and may require different competency sets.

The Freelancers Union estimates that there are currently 57 million gig workers in the U.S. (35% of the workforce) and that 61% are engaged in this type of work by choice (as opposed to being unable to find full-time work as an employee).

Why it Matters

Different certifications may be needed for one's day job and side hustle or different gigs. It's possible that in the future, workers will hold more certifications because of these multiple roles. The fluidity of side hustles and gigs may require that new competencies be acquired and verified on an as needed, on-demand basis and perhaps, in a non-traditional sequence. Less comprehensive credentials, such as micro-credentials, may better meet the needs of these workers.

The Non-Linear Career Journey

The long and winding road

In the past, there was a standard sequence of education and work experience through which one progressed to enter and advance in a given career. But times have changed.

The traditional, linear career "path" has become a career "journey" with many twists and turns along the way.

The journey is not always a straight trajectory up the career ladder. Workers are purposefully making lateral moves to gain new experience and skills and to avoid being "type cast" in a particular job or work function. The journey also may not be limited to a single career.

Why it Matters

Individuals taking non-traditional routes into a job role need products/services that help them get up to speed quickly, enabling them to acquire competencies specific to their new job role and to receive recognition for these accomplishments. On the other hand, they could be *more* accomplished in some domains than traditional candidates, depending on what path they've taken. Like other experienced professionals, they may be less inclined to pursue certification if they already have a proven track record in the workplace.

Stealth & Game-Based Assessment
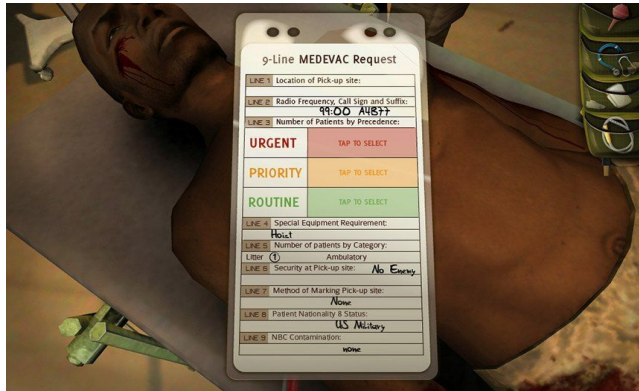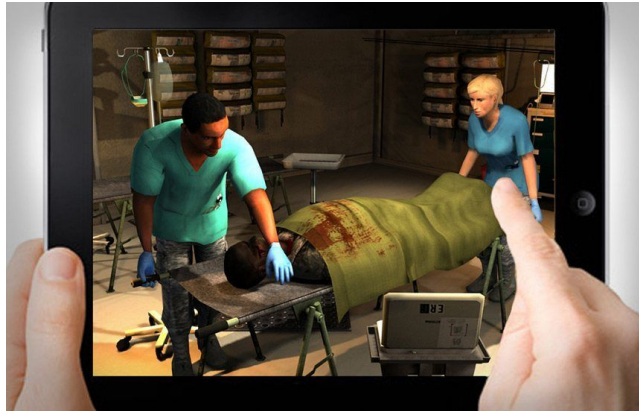
Invisible assessment

"Stealth assessment" is the process of embedding assessment into the learning experience such that it is essentially invisible and does not disrupt learning and engagement. There is no "stop and test" moment.

Embedded assessments which leverage computer technology and gaming theory (game-based assessments) permit the measurement of abilities not easily evaluated through other means (e.g., problem-solving, teamwork).

A particular advantage of game-based assessment is that playing games requires a series of choices. Consequently, data is collected not just on the outcome achieved, but also the path taken to arrive at the outcome, thus providing a more multidimensional picture of the test taker.

Why it Matters

These approaches have the potential to improve assessment capabilities, enabling certifiers to assess competencies and attributes that have proven to be the most challenging to evaluate and which are the most important to employers and the workplace. And these competencies may become of even greater importance in the more fluid work environment of the future.