



A getting started guide to

# Planning & Launching Your Digital Badging Initiative



# What are Digital Credentials?

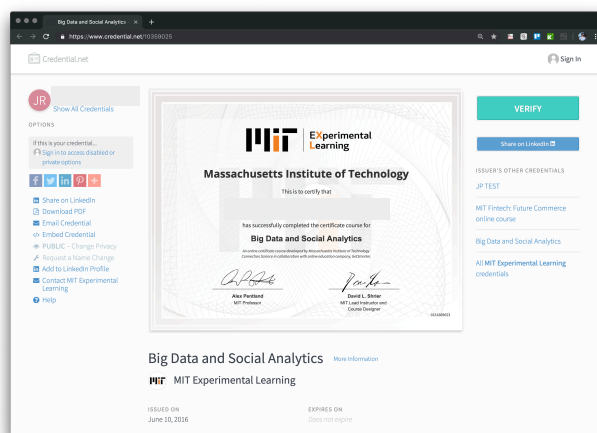
## What are digital badges and digital certificates?

Digital badges and digital certificates are online credentials that can be viewed & verified by visiting their unique URL, for example: [credential.net/10000005](https://credential.net/10000005)

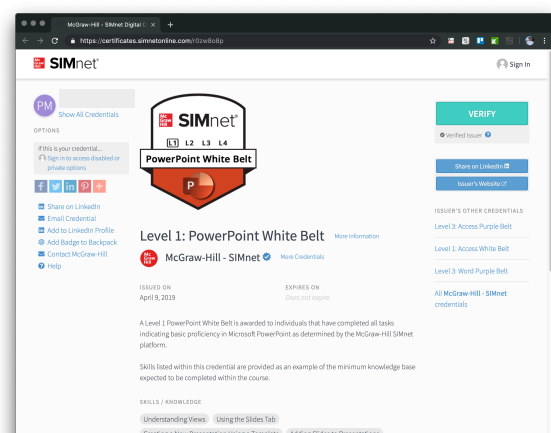
Many organizations are now launching digital badging or digital certificate programs in order to recognize achievements, from passing a class to completing a training course.

Digital credentials are **delivered instantly** via email upon completion and can be **shared** easily on LinkedIn and other social networks, helping you foster a sense of community and increase brand recognition.

They can be set to **expire**, **renew** or be **revoked** anytime, in order to help you encourage further upskilling. They can also be **verified** instantly by third-parties—emphasizing your credibility as an organization.



*A digital certificate*



*A digital badge*



Digital badges are simplified, iconified versions of digital certificates. Other than their appearance, they function almost identically to each other. The decision for when to use a badge versus a certificate is entirely yours as the issuer.

# The Benefits of Launching a Digital Credential Initiative

## What are the benefits to using digital badges and certificates?

Organizations in different sectors will have unique motivations for implementing a digital credentialing initiative. In the end, they help you improve engagement, increase credibility and empower your people to further develop skills and knowledge. Here are just some of the core benefits of using Accredible:

Brand exposure through social media sharing

Having more control over expired or revoked credentials

Create a sense of community for your people

Saving time & money on printing & mailing certificates

Improve employee retention, internal training & recruitment

Fast delivery of credentials, especially internationally

Fraud prevention & security

Establishing searchable professional directories

Digital transformation initiatives

Centralizing credential data in one place

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“We found Accredible to be great collaborators, very proactive, and perfect in their execution. We see great potential with the solution and have been very pleased with how easily our certified users have utilized the opportunity to share their achievements through Google Cloud with the public.”

# The Five High-Level Steps to Success

When planning a new badging or certification program, there are five major stages to focus on. Having a clear plan for each stage will set your program up for success before, during, and after launch.

1 Defining Aims & Timelines

2 Planning

3 Implementation & Launch

4 Measuring

5 Reviewing

In the following section we'll explore each stage in detail and we'll end with some tips and best practices to set you up for success.

# The Five High-Level Steps to Success

## 1

### Defining Aims & Timelines

The first step in a successful program launch is to define your main success criteria. What are your goals? What do you want to achieve? Here are some ideas:

#### **Retention: Higher retention or renewal of certifications.**

By using automatic certificate expiration and automatic renewal reminder emails, you're able to increase the number of renewals and minimize churn.

#### **Increased referrals and brand exposure.**

By encouraging certificate recipients to share their achievement on their LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and other social profiles, as well as in their email signatures or websites, they can spread the word about your certifications to their friends and colleagues; people who are very likely to also be in your target demographic.

#### **Lowering candidate certificate delivery times.**

Sending your certificates via email allows for instant certificate delivery, regardless of the country your recipients are in.

#### **Saving time and money.**

Using either API automation or spreadsheet mail-merge tools you will be able to save significant time on the production of your existing credentials.

#### **Faster or easier third-party verification of credentials.**

One-click verification on the digital credentials themselves can often save the labor involved in email, phone, or mail verifications.

After deciding which metrics you are aiming to improve with digital credentials, using Accredible's [analytics dashboard](#) will keep you on track and on target.

# The Five High-Level Steps to Success

## 2

## Planning

### **What credentials do you want to issue and what will they look like?**

Which activities, skills, or qualifications do you want to issue badges or certificates for? Will you differentiate them? Will you have only badges, only certificates or a mixture of both?

### **What does your credentialing program look like?**

There are many options when it comes to building your digital credentialing program. You must establish what you want your program to look like. How often will learners need to renew? Will you be creating an online [searchable directory](#)? Where do credentials fit into the overall learning journey with your organization (i.e. Will they be part of your employee onboarding or formal reviews? Will they be part of your new customer onboarding)?

### **What are the requirements of your digital credentialing program?**

What does the recipient need to achieve in order to get it? Does it expire?

### **What do your credentials or badges represent?**

Which skills, knowledge, achievements, behaviors or experience are you celebrating with your digital credentialing program?

### **How does someone earn a credential or badge?**

What evidence, deliverables or results are required to prove the requirements have been met?

### **Who will identify when the requirements are met?**

Will a human do the evaluation, or would you like it to be automated?

\* [Accredible](#) offers a white-labeled directory product that integrates automatically with your badges & certificates.

# The Five High-Level Steps to Success

## **What does the recipient gain by achieving the badge or credential?**

Praise during a performance review? New responsibilities? Advancement? Social benefits?

## **What makes someone motivated to earn a badge or credential?**

What does success feel like for the learner and why do they want to achieve it?

## **Is this a standalone credential or does it belong to a group of others?**

Is it a linear progression towards a final certificate or badge? Could it be stacked with other credentials to form a greater qualification? Is it part of a learning pathway towards a greater area of knowledge, skill, or career goal?

With these answers under your belt, you'll be well-prepared for a successful implementation!

### 3

## Implementation & Launch

A good credentialing platform will be able to guide you through the first two stages, as well as with the actual implementation and launch of your badging or certification initiative.

### **The key tasks required for launch are usually:**

- Design your badges and certificates to match your brand.
- Design and write your automated delivery emails, as well as any other emails you wish to send (like reminders to share their achievements on LinkedIn).

## The Five High-Level Steps to Success

- ✓ Import your recipient data into your platform, such as their names, email addresses, and credential data (e.g. grades, dates, credit hours or evidence portfolios). This can either be done automatically through an API, a plugin, or via spreadsheet uploads.
- ✓ Organize your credentials and recipients into groups for easy metrics tracking or editing of live credentials in the future.
- ✓ Publish your credentials!

You're now ready to monitor the engagement analytics of your badges and certificates.

### 4

#### Measure Success

For each goal that you identified earlier, determine which metrics will help you to measure whether you are seeing desired results.

Different aims will require different timelines for success. For example, brand exposure and recipient sharing of credentials may see measurable effects within a quarter, whereas an improvement in certificate renewals or reduction in customer churn may take longer.

Use Accredible's analytics dashboard to measure carefully and regularly to determine how well each of your goals is tracking toward success.

In addition to quantitative data from, you may also want to use qualitative data like surveys and polls to improve results.



# The Five High-Level Steps to Success

5

## Reviewing

### Did you achieve what you set out to achieve?

If so, do you want to expand into other areas and offer more certifications? Do you want to create more granular, easily stackable credentials to compound the positive effects even further? Do you want to launch a directory to make the finding of people with your credentials easier and faster?

If not, can you improve the results by trying alternative methods? For example, if recipient share numbers are not what you hoped for, can you encourage sharing by sending an automatic reminder to put their credentials on LinkedIn, Twitter, or Facebook for those that haven't already after a week?

A good credentialing platform will be able to diagnose any issues you face and work with you to come up with and implement ideas for improvements.

**Tips & best practices on the next page!**

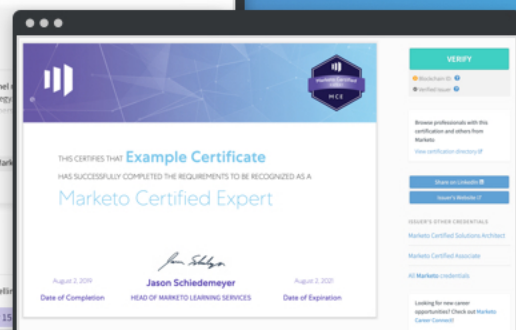
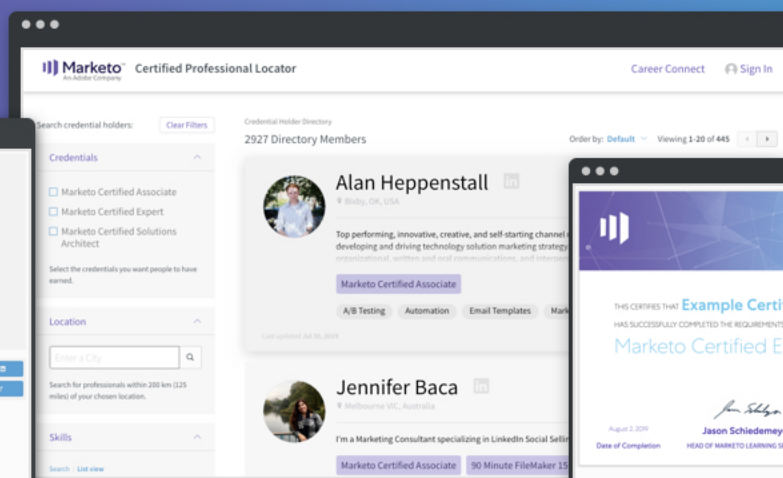
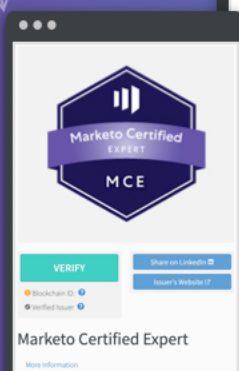
Accredible

BOOK A SALES DEMO

Badges

Directories

Certificates



# Tips & Best Practices For Launching Your Credentialing Program with Accredible

To wrap up, we'll leave you with some high-level tips that are critical to launching a successful program:

- 1 Keep it simple.**  
Start small—select only a small number of skills or competencies to celebrate with a badge or certificate and scale up from there once you've found success.
- 2 Tie badges to real-world benefits and rewards.**  
In order to increase engagement and motivation, tie your credentialing program to real-world achievements.
- 3 Create obvious pathways or stacked credentials**  
After getting their first badge, your learners are more likely to want to get a second! Consider offering different stages e.g. “Level 1, 2, 3” or “Bronze, Silver, Gold” for certain types of badges so that the next aim is obvious once one has been achieved.
- 4 Draw out pathways of different badges.**  
Allow your learners to choose their own adventure when it comes to achieving their goals. Show them the journey and what the outcomes are at the end of each one. Accredible offers a “[Pathways](#)”<sup>\*</sup> product that shows diagrams of how credentials stack together in various views.

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# Tips & Best Practices When Launching a Credentialing Initiative

- 5** **Ensure that your credentials look and feel prestigious.**  
Think about how your different types of badges should look and feel. Make them polished, and on brand to improve your overall credibility.
  
- 6** **Promote your program.**  
Develop a solid marketing plan to promote your credentialing program. If engagement and sharing on social media is important, issuing the badges immediately after completion is important to getting them shared in that moment of pride.
  
- 7** **Consider privacy & control.**  
Determine whether you need the ability for recipients to opt-out of receiving badges or certificates or if they should have the ability to keep them private. Accredible has audience privacy models to make this easy.  
  
You should also consider whether recipients will want their credentials appearing in search engine results (e.g. when someone Google's them) and on Social media profiles. You can easily adapt this in Accredible to suit your organization.
  
- 8** **Consider verification & security.**  
Will you offer built-in verification of your credentials for third parties? If not, what will the process of verification look like? Will you incorporate your badges or certifications into a verification directory or member directory? Will any of your badges expire?\*

\* Accredible has simple and robust settings toggles for each of these.



Digital Dedges, Certificates, & Professional Directories

# Join the credentialing platform that's helping

Google, McGraw Hill, GMAC, Harvard University, Intel, UC Berkeley, Cambridge University, the Institution of Chemical Engineers, the International Association of Privacy Professionals

*and hundreds more*

to issue millions of credentials and engage their membership with modern, secure, and sharable digital certificates and badges.



**BOOK A SALES DEMO**



“Literally everyone I have ever dealt with at Accredible have been amazing. The way their business deals with their customers and everyone's attitudes - it's just incredible.”



**Trudy Collins**

Registration & Certification Officer at the Digital Marketing Institute