



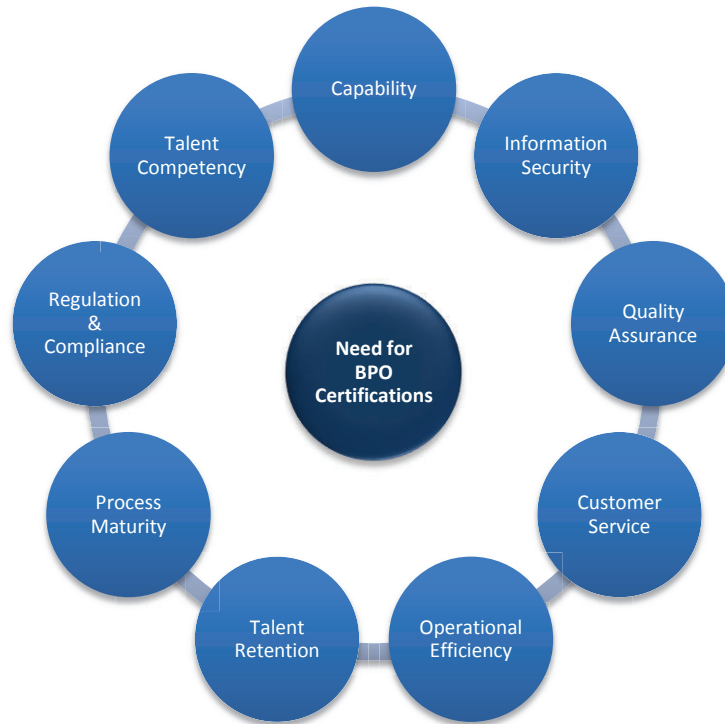
Essential Certifications for Call Centers and BPOs

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This paper outlines the essential certifications for Business Process Outsourcing companies with details on the Organizational Certifications, Individual Certifications, Industry Specific Certifications, and key Compliance Laws of the client nations.

Introduction

With the growing repertoire of service providers in emerging geographies providing BPO and Call Center services, clients are spoilt for choice. In this world of increased financial system volatilities and geopolitical risks, clients are trading ever more cautiously in selection of the right service provider. The cardinal factors that decide their choice are shown diagrammatically as follows:



To reap true benefits of globalization, setting standards thus becomes imperative for clients as well as service providers. The objective of this whitepaper is to (1) assist BPO and Call-Center service providers decide which certifications are necessary in order to demonstrate capabilities that are recognized and accepted globally (2) assist clients in their evaluation of service providers and (3) provide agents with necessary skills that can enable growth in their career. Further, it also classifies the BPO certifications into mandatory and desirable. Desirable certifications although not imperative enhance the competitiveness of BPO and Call Center service providers.

Organizational Certifications

- **ISO 9000:** International Organization for Standardization (“ISO”) 9000 series is an international set of documents on quality assurance, written by members of a worldwide delegation known as the ISO/Technical Committee 176.

The ISO 9000 series consists of five documents; three core quality system documents, that are models of quality assurance, namely ISO 9001 - model for quality assurance in design / development, production, installation and servicing; ISO 9002 - model for quality production and installation; ISO 9003 - model for quality assurance in final inspection and test; and two supporting guidelines documents, namely ISO 9000 and ISO 9004.

- **COPC 2000:** stands for Customer Operations Performance Centre. The COPC-2000® Standard was written in 1995 by a core group of users of call center services and associated distribution fulfillment operations, including representatives from American Express, Dell Computer Corp., Microsoft, Novell, L.L.Bean. COPC is the world's leading authority on customer contact centre operations. COPC is used to improve customer service.

The (COPCSM) mission is to develop and drive initiatives that support superior performance in customer-touch intensive environments, as measured by the criteria of customer service, customer satisfaction, and operation efficiency. These initiatives are developed and implemented in collaborative, consortium environment, which includes practitioners from both external and internal Customer Service Providers (CSPs), clients, industry suppliers, and other industry experts.

The COPC-2000® CSP Standard certification is a framework that ensures a company's utmost performance in service, quality and costs in contact center environments. Today, COPC audits organizations for compliance to the COPC2000® standard; conducts benchmark reviews of call centers and fulfillment centers, using the standard as the organizing methodology for the data collected during the course of the review; consults with call centers and fulfillment centers on operational performance improvement; consults with purchasers of call center and fulfillment services on strategic alternatives for outsourcing, including how best to select and manage service providers; provide industry-wide forums, such as conferences, workshops, and facilitated user groups, to foster an atmosphere supportive of high levels of customer service.

- **e-SCM:** (e-Services Capability Model) World's first capacity model to cater the unique requirements of ITES / BPO services. The model has been developed by ITSqc group at CMU Serwiz partnered with Carnegie Mellon University, (founders of the SEICMM, used by the Software industry) to develop this capability model and associated assessment methods at the Department of Computer Science. The model focuses on assisting customers to measure the capability of service providers on assisting customers to establish and manage continually improving outsourcing relationships. It initiates and guides service providers through the process of continuous improvement by specifying practices to be implemented and institutionalized. It aims to become the preferred resource for best practices and appraisal of BPO capabilities. The e-SCM will assess the capabilities of service providers to service customers in the IT enabled BPO business sector.

The e-SCM-SP v2 comprises of 84 practices, which are considered “best practices” for a successful sourcing relationship. Each practice is disseminated along the following three dimensions:

- Sourcing Life-cycle
 - Capability Area
 - Capability
- **ISO 27000 Series (27001 and 27002) and BS7799:**

ISO 27001 ISO/IEC 27001, part of the growing ISO/IEC 27000 family of standards, is an Information Security Management System (ISMS) standard published in October 2005 by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electro-technical Commission (IEC). ISO 27001 provides the framework for a technology neutral, vendor-neutral management system that enables an organization to assure itself that its information security measures are effective. This includes the continued accessibility, confidentiality and integrity of its own information and that of its stakeholders as well as legal compliance.

ISO 27000 is largely based upon the previously adopted BS 7799 used commonly since 1995 for managing information security. BS 7799 was broken into 2 parts - The first part, containing the best practices for Information Security Management, was revised in 1998; was eventually adopted by ISO as ISO/IEC 17799, "Information Technology - Code of practice for information security management". In 2000, ISO/IEC 17799 was then revised in June 2005 and finally incorporated in the ISO 27000 series of standards as ISO/IEC 27002 in July 2007.

The second part to BS7799 also known as BS 7799 Part 2, titled "Information Security Management Systems - Specification with guidance for use." BS 7799-2 focused on how to implement an Information security management system (ISMS), which later became ISO/IEC 27001. The 2002 version of BS 7799-2 introduced the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) (Deming quality assurance model), aligning it with quality standards such as ISO 9000. BS 7799 Part 2 was adopted by ISO as ISO/IEC 27001 in 2005

ISO/IEC 27001 requires that management:

- Systematically examine the organization's information security risks, taking account of the threats, vulnerabilities and impacts;
- Design and implement a coherent and comprehensive suite of information security controls and/or other forms of risk treatment (such as risk avoidance or risk transfer) to address those risks that are deemed unacceptable; and

- Adopt an overarching management process to ensure that the information security controls continue to meet the organization's information security needs on an ongoing basis.
- **PCMM®:** or People Capability Maturity Model. This provides guidance for organizations in crucial areas such as attracting, developing, motivating, deploying and training the talent needed to steadily improve the organization's software development capability.
- **Support Center Practices (SCP) Certification:** program was designed to address issues that affect the rapidly growing **technology support industry**. SCP Certification quantifies the effectiveness of customer support based upon a stringent set of performance standards and represents best practices in the industry.
- **Six Sigma:** A methodology that provides business with the tools to improve the capability of their business processes. This increase in performance and decrease in process variation leads to defect reduction and vast improvement in profits, employee morale and quality of product.

Six Sigma is a rigorous and a systematic methodology that utilizes information (management by facts) and statistical analysis to measure and improve a company's operational performance, practice and systems by identifying and preventing 'defects' in manufacturing and service related processes in order to anticipate and exceed expectations of all stakeholders to accomplish effectiveness.

- **Help Desk Institute: (HDI)** is the world's largest membership association for the service and support industry. Founded in 1989, HDI's mission is to lead and promote the customer service and technical support industry by empowering its members through access to timely and valuable industry information, including reports and publications; encouraging member collaboration through events and online forums; and establishing internationally recognized, standards-based industry certification and training programs. HDI teaches the customer service skills and service management processes required to provide quality IT service and support. Each HDI Certification reflects the level of knowledge required for specific roles, ranging from Customer Service Representative to Support Center Director. HDI helps support center organizations with help desk operations to improve efficiencies, increases the quality of service, and advances service and support through professional development.
- **SPOT:** SPOT certification process is the path to establishing a World Class Quality Call Center. The SPOT Certification process is unique and concentrates on top performance standards for a center without the usual lengthy process that other certification processes require. Spot certification process has tailored a sophisticated time-efficient certification process that will target a center's top-quality performance in three simple steps to a guarantee of being certified as an elite world-class service provider which is essential for a center's daily productivity.

The SPOT Performance Maturity Model acts as both a self-assessment tool and compliance certification process to provide a roadmap for contact centers, business process outsourcing operations and other service operations to map their operational performance along a spectrum ranging from "just getting started" to "demonstrated high performance over time." The model provides a roadmap to improved revenue and profitability through improved performance in revenue generation, cost management, faster cycle times and improved customer satisfaction.

One of the prime concerns and responsibilities for contact center executive management is usage of appropriate technology. In addition to having an impact on costs, service levels, staff morale, and end-user satisfaction, the appropriate information technology and communication infrastructure must be in place and managed to support the contact center's business processes and services. Spot certification process has tailored a refined, resourceful certification process that will shed light on your contact center technology used.

Individual Certifications

- **BPO Certification Institute** - BCI offers the largest, pan-domain and the world's only range of role-calibrated Credentialing and Certification programs for BPO professionals – based on the first, most comprehensive and the only dedicated-to-BPO Human Competence Master Standards (HCMS Release 3.1) in the world. ***These credentials have been approved and are controlled by the BPO Professional Certification Council (BPCC)*** through its various charters. BCI offers certification and credentialing services in three key dimensions – human competence for professionals and service delivery quality & talent management quality for BPO enterprises.

Covering all critical BPO/ KPO domains like Customer Service, Transaction Processing, Back-office services, Finance & Accounting and Technical Support, BCI's CCIP® (Customer Interaction), CBPA® (Business Processes), CFPA® (Financial Processes), CTSA® (Technical Support), certifications straddle the entire BPO service provider space.

- **CIAC (Call Center Industry Advisory Council):** CIAC Certification is the process by which the competence of individuals is assessed, validated, and recognized in specific areas of expertise based on the requirements of their job role, as determined by leading practitioners in the call center industry. It allows individuals to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of call centers, comprehensive knowledge of the essential aspects of their job function, and to demonstrate skills and behaviors identified as essential for success.

Achieving CIAC Certification indicates that an individual:

- Has demonstrated mastery of industry-established knowledge, skill, and behavioral requirements

- Is committed to their career and ongoing professional development.
- **Project Management Professional (PMP)** - Project Management Institute's Project Management Professional (PMP)[®] credential is the most important industry-recognized certification for project managers. Globally recognized and demanded, the PMP[®] demonstrates that you have the experience, education and competency to successfully lead and direct projects. In areas of transition, it would be key to have a PMP to run projects efficiently
 - Project Management Professional (PMP)[®]
 - Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM)[®]
 - Program Management Professional (PgMP)[®]
 - PMI Scheduling Professional (PMI-SP)[®]
 - PMI Risk Management Professional (PMI-RMP)[®]

Industry Specific Certifications

- **Trustwave's TrustKeeper[®]**: Compliance Validation Service to meet the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS). TrustKeeper Compliance Validation Service has been accredited by all the major card associations' data security programs including:
 - VISA USA - (CISP - Cardholder Information Security Program)
 - VISA International - (AIS - Account Information Security)
 - MasterCard Worldwide - (SDP- Site Data Protection)
 - American Express - (DSOP -Data Security Operating Policy)
 - Discover Network - (DISC - Discover Information Security and Compliance)
 - JCB - Fully supports the PCI DSS mandate and TrustKeeper in support of that mandate

Key Compliance Requirements

Apart from certifications, Call Center and BPO service providers will need to adhere to key compliance laws of client nations.

Compliance Law	Impact
Sarbanes Oxley Act (SOX)	<p>It is mandatory for all US public companies to adhere to the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX). It involves defining processes, documentation of all business activities, mapping and identifying risks and controls. Service Providers delivering services to clients in the US are also expected to comply to SOX requirements</p>
Gramm Leach Bliley Act (GLBA) <i>Specific to Financial Services firms</i>	<p>Outsourcing service providers to financial institutions in USA need to comply to GLBA customer data protection guidelines/obligations to respect customer privacy and protect customer personal information against reasonably foreseeable internal or external threats to its security, confidentiality, and integrity</p>
Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) <i>Specific to the Health-care Industry</i>	<p>With focus on the healthcare industry, HIPAA focuses on administrative simplification, unique health identifiers, privacy & security. HIPAA Privacy Rule, applies to "business associate" contracts, where any vendor which receives or utilizes protected health information from, or for, the covered entity needs to ultimately ensure the integrity and security of health care information</p>
Data Protection Act (DPA) - UK	<p>When a business uses an outsourced entity to process personal information on its behalf, it retains liability for the security and accuracy of information and full control over how it is used. This means the business remains liable for any breaches of the Data Protection Act, even if the outsourced company is based abroad.</p> <p>Hence during selection of a service provider, clients ensure that all regulations complying to the DPA are met and breach of any contract is enforceable, checking for security, and auditing that provider periodically for compliance</p>

Certifications such as ISO and BS 7799 will help providers comply with some of these regulations.

Summary Table of Various Certifications and their Degree of Importance

● Mandatory
 ● Desirable

Certification	Impact	Nature of Certification	Need
ISO 9000	Enterprise-Wide	Generic certification on processes to ensure delivery of quality output. Though this certification is not mandatory, it is desirable that the operating processes comply to this model.	●
COPC 2000	Enterprise-Wide	Specific to contact center environments ensuring utmost performance in service, quality and costs.	●
e-SCM	Enterprise-Wide	Helps assisting customers to measure the capability of service providers specially if the service is in the area of supply chain management	●
ISO 270001 and 27002	Enterprise-Wide	Mandatory for Call Centers to implement information security standards	●
PCMM	Enterprise-Wide	Guidance for organizations in attracting, and deploying talent. Most large call centers in India have this certification.	●
Six Sigma	Enterprise-Wide	Applies to all processes and ensures lean processing with minimal defects. Genpact, Wipro etc comply to six sigma.	●
Support Center Practices (SCP) Certification	Enterprise-Wide	Quantifies the effectiveness of customer support based upon a stringent set of performance standards and best practices	●
Help Desk Institute (HDI)	Enterprise-Wide	Certification for organizations operating helpdesks specifically	●
SPOT	Enterprise-Wide	Similar to COPC, aims at improving Call Center efficiency. This is an alternate to COPC, though not as popular.	●



About Avasant

With its global headquarters in Los Angeles, California, Avasant is a top management consulting, research, and events firm servicing global clients across the public, private, and non-profit sectors. Our talented team of consultants, lawyers and technologists average over 20 years of industry-honed experience and have conducted 1,000+ engagements in over 40 countries worldwide. Avasant drives customer value through the use of our proprietary consulting and advisory methods, which have been refined over decades of 'real-world' transaction and engagement experience. The combination of our world-class resources allows Avasant to yield superior business outcomes in three primary domains: Strategic Sourcing, Technology Optimization and Globalization Consulting.

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