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MEF-CECP Effectiveness Benchmark Study

March 2016

MEF CECP CARRIER ETHERNET Certified Professional

Independent study measuring how MEF-CECP certification impacts job performance, personal career achievement and company success in the Carrier Ethernet market

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MEF-CECP Effectiveness Benchmark Study

The *MEF-CECP Effectiveness Benchmark Study* is the first to measure how certification impacts job performance, personal career achievement and company success in the Carrier Ethernet market.

- **MEF-CECP certification is widely considered to be a worthwhile achievement**, however no metrics on the program's effectiveness have been publicly available to date.
- This new Vertical Systems Group benchmark study is based on research results from an **independent survey of 330 MEF-CECPs**, employed by 38 companies worldwide.
- Research results in this report provide insight and quantification on these key questions:
  - *How worthwhile is the investment in MEF-CECP certification?*
  - *In what ways does certification help MEF-CECPs and their employing companies?*
  - *How helpful is MEF-CECP training toward becoming a Carrier Ethernet subject matter expert?*
  - *How valuable is MEF-CECP subject matter expertise when communicating with customers, prospects, co-workers and industry colleagues?*
  - *Does MEF-CECP subject matter expertise help improve the Sales Process or Order Processing Flow for Carrier Ethernet products or services? If so, how?*
  - *Which MEF-CECP training features are most valuable?*

Profile of MEF-CECPs Participating in the Survey

330 MEF-CECPs participated in the *MEF-CECP Effectiveness Benchmark Study* survey, representing 38 companies across 6 of the 7 continents. Companies include Service Providers, Equipment Vendors, Software Suppliers and other firms.

- MEF-CECPs participating in the survey reported 30 different primary job responsibilities.

MEF-CECP Respondent Companies

- Adtran
- AT&T
- Bell Canada
- Bluebird Network
- BTI
- Cincinnati Bell
- Cisco
- Coriant (Tellabs)
- CTS Telecom Inc.
- Cyan
- Dobson Technologies
- DRN
- Equinix
- Ericsson
- Frogfoot Networks
- Internet Solutions (Dimension Data)
- Konectra
- Lightpath
- Level 3
- MHO Networks
- Microsemi
- Mid-Rivers Telephone Coop
- Neotel
- PSS Mexico
- Pulsecom
- Ritter Communications
- Rogers
- Saab Grintek Technologies
- Sumitomo
- Syringa Networks
- Telstra
- Time Warner Cable
- Tbaytel
- UfinetTelecom
- US Cellular
- Verizon
- VisionNet
- Windstream

Top MEF-CECP Job Responsibilities

In rank order

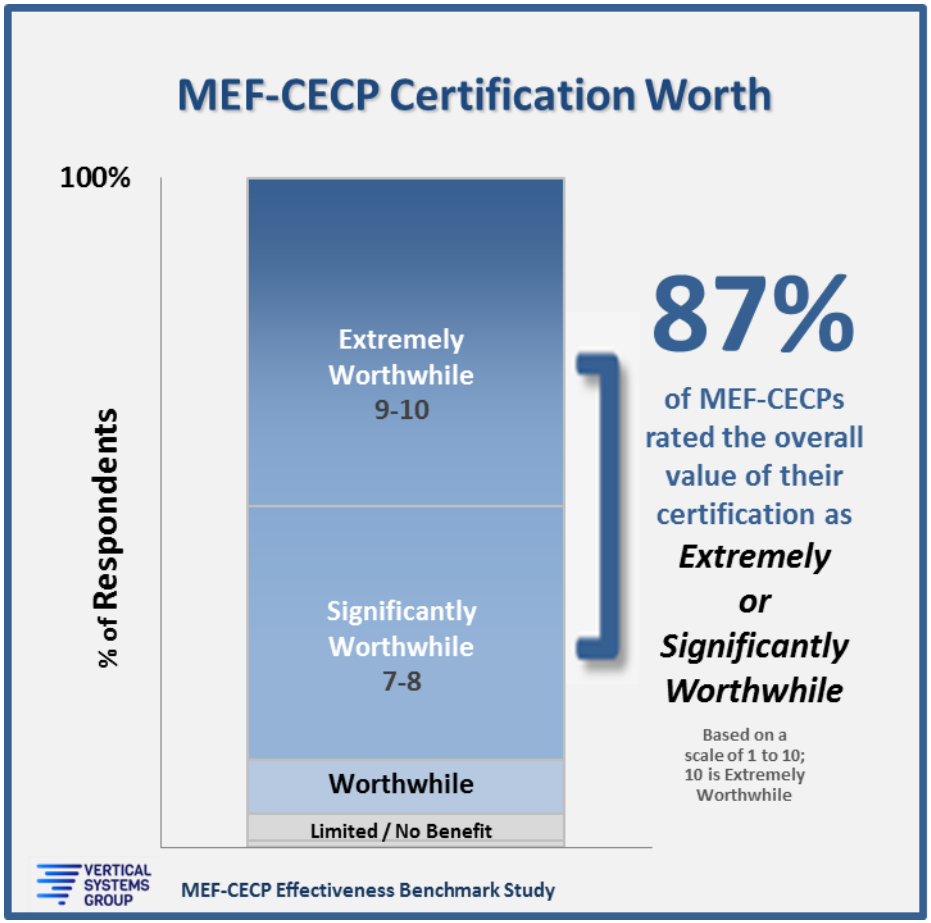
- **Sales Engineering**
- **Network Engineering**
- **Network Operations**

] **72%** Of All Respondents

- **Product Management**
- **Technical Support**
- **Network Architecture**
- **Network Design**
- **Test Engineering**
- **Training**
- **Product Development**
- **Sales**
- **Solutions Architect**

How Worthwhile Is MEF-CECP Certification?

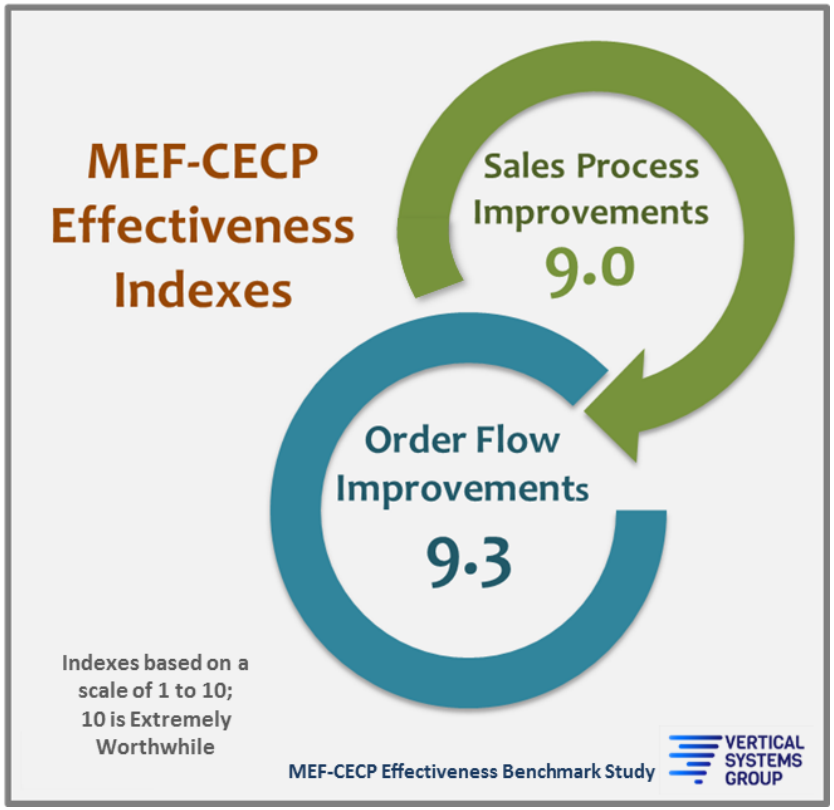
MEF-CECPs responded overwhelmingly that they value the worth of their certification.



- MEF-CECP survey participants were asked, ***'Overall, how worthwhile was your investment in MEF-CECP certification/training?'***
- Nearly half (49%) of all MEF-CECPs rated their overall investment as ***Extremely Worthwhile*** and another 38% rated their certification as ***Significantly Worthwhile***.
- In response to a separate question, more than 85% of all MEF-CECPs say they either plan to or would consider re-certifying. MEF-CECP certifications are valid for three years.

MEF-CECPs Help Improve the Sales Process and Order Flow

MEF-CECP expertise has proven particularly effective in improving the typical Carrier Ethernet Sales Process and Order Processing Flow.



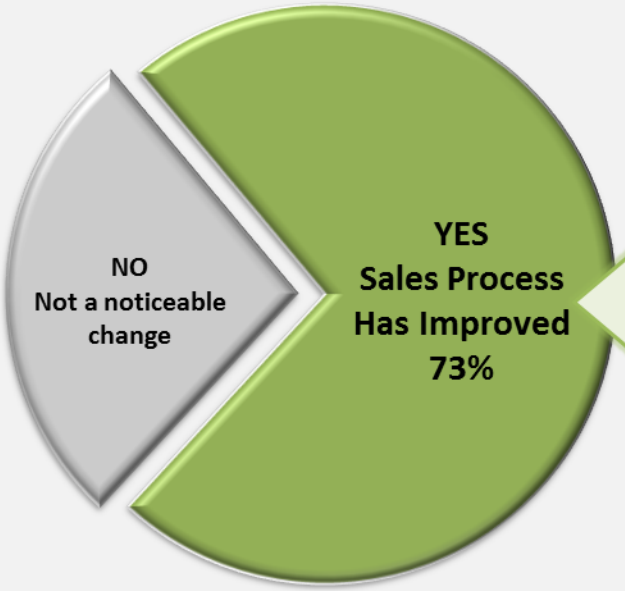
- **Sales Process Improvements**
  9.0 MEF-CECP Effectiveness Index
  Certification Worth rating average of MEF-CECPs involved in selling Carrier Ethernet products or services who say that their expertise has ***significantly or noticeably improved the typical Sales Process*** within their companies.

- **Order Flow Improvements**
  9.3 MEF-CECP Effectiveness Index
  Certification Worth rating average of MEF-CECPs involved in order processing for Carrier Ethernet products or services who say that their expertise has ***significantly or noticeably improved the typical Order Flow*** within their companies.

How MEF-CECP Expertise Improves the Sales Process

Nearly three-quarters of MEF-CECPs involved in selling Carrier Ethernet products or services say that their expertise has helped improve the Sales Process.

Do you think that your MEF-CECP subject matter expertise has helped improve your company's typical process for selling Carrier Ethernet products and services?



If so, how?

Sales Process Improvements Top 5 Reasons Cited

1. Less technical miscommunication when interacting with customers
2. Better able to present our Carrier Ethernet solutions to customers and prospects
3. Less time needed to understand a customer's requirements
4. More skillful design of the right product or service solution for a customer's needs
5. Better able to explain the advantages of our products as compared to competitive offerings

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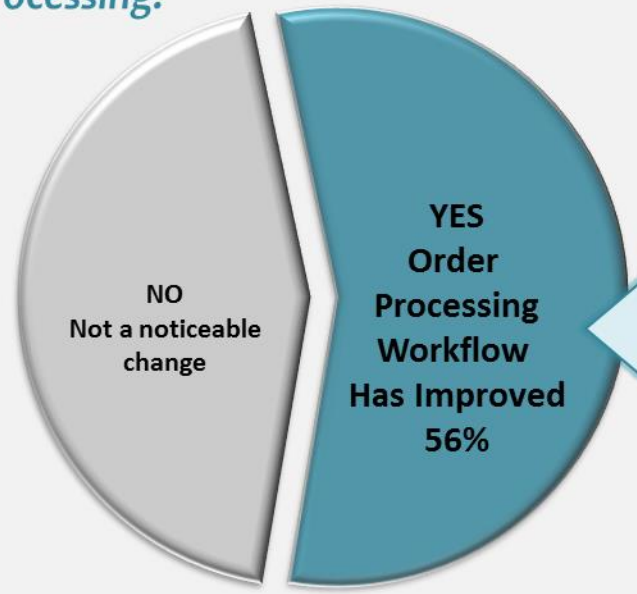
How MEF-CECP Expertise Improves Order Flow

More than half of MEF-CECPs involved in order processing for Carrier Ethernet products or services say that their expertise has helped to improve Order Flow.

Do you think that your MEF-CECP subject matter expertise has helped to improve the work flow for Carrier Ethernet order processing?



If so, how?

Order Flow Improvements
Top 5 Reasons Cited

1. More skillful design of the right product or service solution to fit a customer's needs
2. Less time needed to understand and qualify a customer's order
3. More accurate provisioning of customer orders
4. Certification validates my expertise for handling customer orders
5. More skillful response to product installation or service turn up problems

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MEF-CECPs Are Carrier Ethernet Subject Matter Experts

MEF-CECPs say that certification/training has helped make them Carrier Ethernet subject matter experts on a wide range of important topics.

How much did MEF-CECP certification/training help make you a Carrier Ethernet subject matter expert on these topics?	% MEF-CECPs Rating Topic Extremely or Significantly Helpful
Carrier Ethernet Service Definitions	87%
MEF Acronyms and Terms	85%
Detailed Carrier Ethernet Service Attributes	84%
Carrier Ethernet General Concepts	80%
In-class discussions with other colleagues from my company about our Carrier Ethernet products and services	72%
Understanding how Carrier Ethernet services are delivered over networking infrastructure	71%
Applying the Carrier Ethernet theory in the Practical Exercises	66%
Applying Carrier Ethernet theory in real world situations	63%
Understanding S-OAM (Service Operations, Administration and Maintenance)	62%
Learning about applications for Carrier Ethernet Services (e.g., Mobile Backhaul, Business or Cloud services, etc.)	60%
How Carrier Ethernet services compare to legacy services like Frame Relay, IP/MPLS & TDM services	54%

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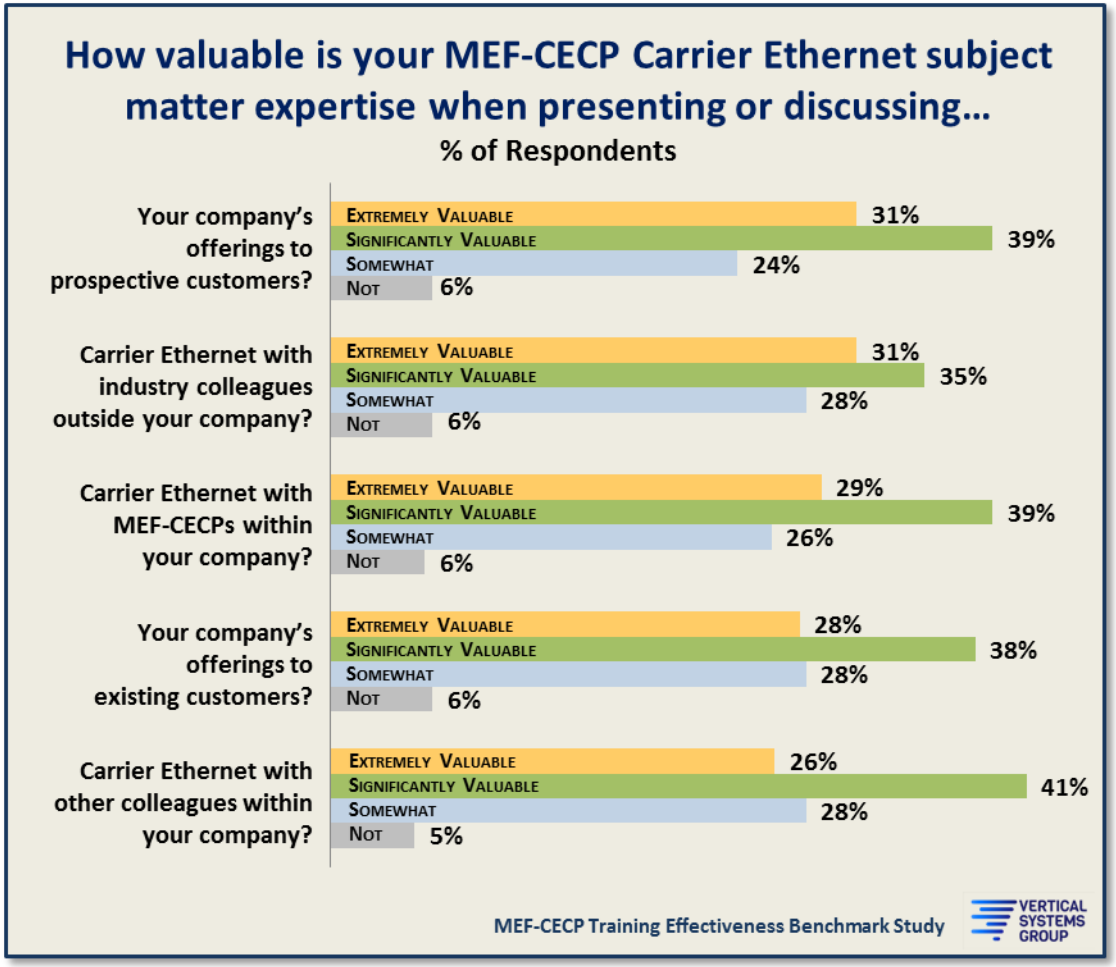
- **More than 80% of MEF-CECPs rated training on each of the following Carrier Ethernet topics as *Extremely or Significantly Helpful*** - Carrier Ethernet (CE) Service Definitions, MEF Acronyms and Terms, Detailed CE Service Attributes and CE General Concepts.
- 72% of MEF-CECPs found it similarly helpful to have **in-class discussions about their own company's Carrier Ethernet products or services** during training.
- Additionally, for each of these subject matter topics in the survey, 5% or fewer MEF-CECPs responded that they '*Already had understanding of this topic*'.

MEF-CECP Certification Improves Communications

MEF-CECP subject matter expertise is valuable for communications with sales prospects, customers, co-workers and industry colleagues.

- **70% of MEF-CECPs say that their expertise is *Extremely Valuable* (31%) or *Significantly Valuable* (39%) for communicating with prospective customers.**
- Two-thirds of MEF-CECPs similarly consider their expertise valuable for presenting their company's offerings to existing customers.
- Survey results also indicate that MEF-CECPs value their ability to better communicate with industry colleagues and their co-workers about Carrier Ethernet.



What Are the Personal Benefits of Certification?

"*I gained significant technical knowledge*" was the most important personal benefit overall for more than two-thirds of MEF-CECPs.

What are the most important benefits of MEF-CECP certification/training for you personally? (% of Respondents)
1. I gained significant technical knowledge (69%)
2. Helps me be more proficient in my job (59%)
3. Distinguishes me as an industry expert (58%)
4. An advantage for my career advancement (54%)

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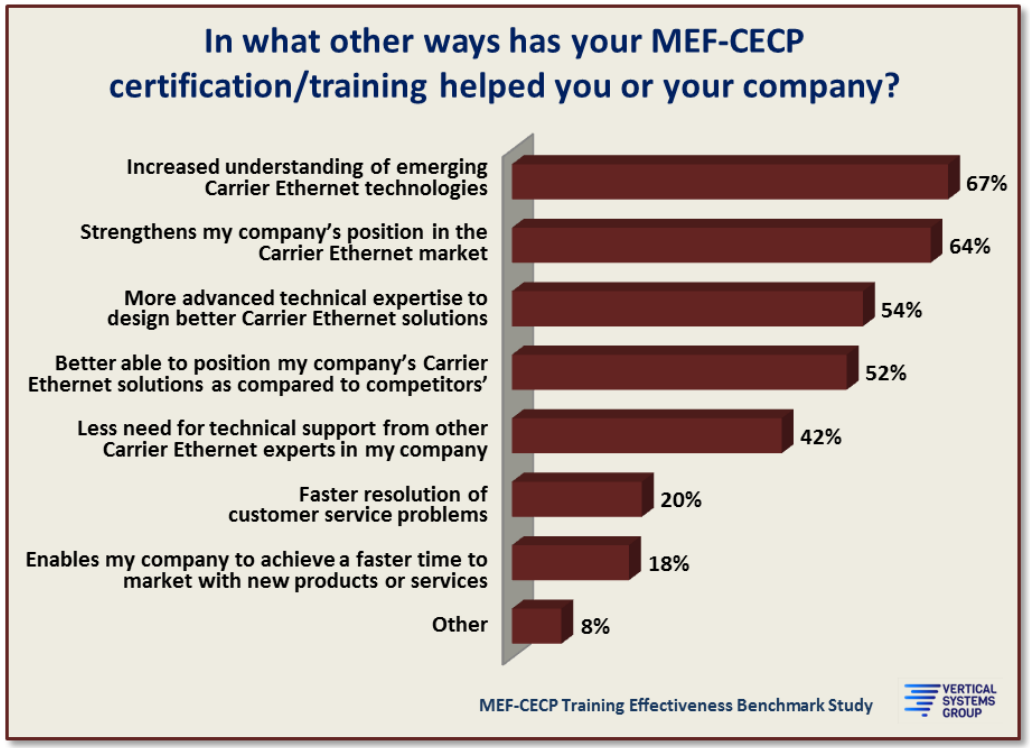
Other Personal Benefits Cited

- ✓ *Knowledge of MEF terms so I can speak the same language with other Carrier Ethernet vendors*
- ✓ *Helpful with high level discussions*
- ✓ *Lends credibility with prospective customers*
- ✓ *Allows me to serve our customers more quickly and with better understanding*
- ✓ *Helps me stand out from other Carrier Ethernet sales professionals*
- ✓ *MEF-CECP is recognizable in the industry and helps me with sales and professional networking*
- ✓ *I met my year end sales MBO*

Additional Benefits of Certification

Certification has additional benefits for MEF-CECPs and their companies.

- 67% of MEF-CECPs **gained increased understanding of emerging Carrier Ethernet technologies.**
- 64% say certification **strengthens my company's position in the Carrier Ethernet market.**

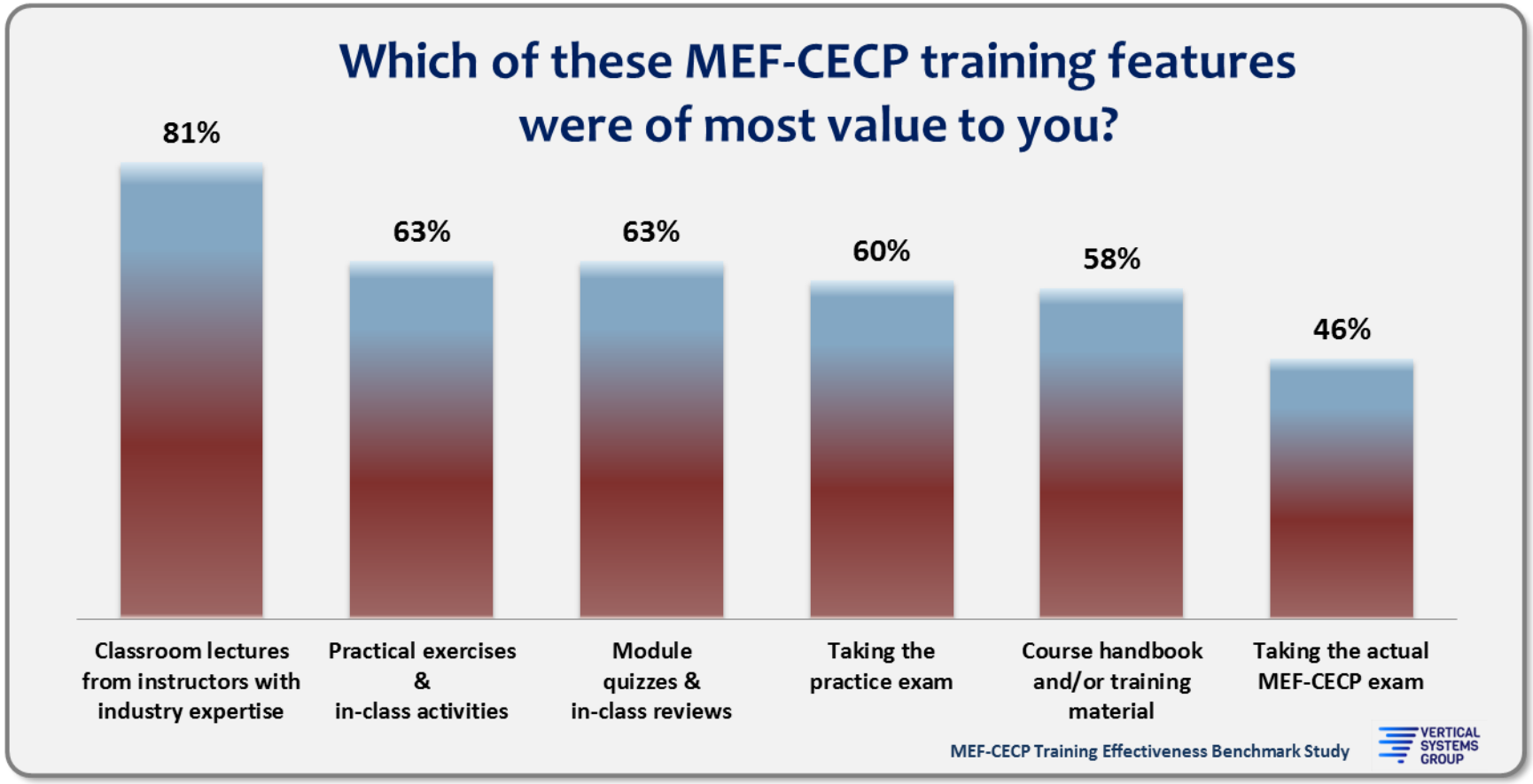


Other Benefits Cited

- ✓ *Instant credibility*
- ✓ *Standardization of industry terms*
- ✓ *More trust from customers*
- ✓ *Because we had participation from so many organizations within our company, it has helped us speak the same language and establish a better foundation of knowledge*
- ✓ *Helped the legacy side of the company better understand Carrier Ethernet since it is our go-forward access and service solution*
- ✓ *Helped me train our techs when discussing our Carrier Ethernet product*

Which MEF-CECP Training Features are Most Valuable?

81% of MEF-CECP survey participants who attended Carrier Ethernet Academy's MEF-CECP Boot Camp say that "*Classroom lectures from instructors with industry expertise*" was the most valuable feature of their training experience.



MEF-CECP Certification is Worthwhile & Effective

The *MEF-CECP Effectiveness Benchmark Study* results show that MEF-CECPs and their companies have experienced highly worthwhile benefits from certification and training.

Company Benefits

- ✓ Strengthened Carrier Ethernet market position
- ✓ More proficient Carrier Ethernet subject matter expertise
- ✓ Improved presentation of company solutions to customers and prospects - including better explanation of competitive advantages
- ✓ More precise design of solutions that fit customer application requirements
- ✓ More timely and more accurate provisioning of customer orders
- ✓ More skillful response to customer installation and service issues
- ✓ Improved technical communication among MEF-CECP co-workers and company colleagues

MEF-CECP Personal Benefits

- ✓ Gained significant technical knowledge about Carrier Ethernet terminology, service attributes and applications
- ✓ Increased understanding of emerging Carrier Ethernet technologies
- ✓ Increased job proficiency
- ✓ Validation as an industry expert
- ✓ Increased credibility with customers and prospects
- ✓ Improved technical communication with customers, prospects and co-workers
- ✓ Reduced need to rely on technical support from other Carrier Ethernet experts
- ✓ Recognized advantage for career advancement

Benchmark Study Methodology

The *MEF-CECP Effectiveness Benchmark Study* focuses on measuring the worth of the MEF-CECP certification program for participants and their employers.

- This study was sponsored by The Carrier Ethernet Academy (CEA), the Accredited Training Provider (ATP) with the largest number of trained MEF-CECP alumni of its MEF-CECP Boot Camp to date.
- Vertical Systems Group, an independent research and consulting firm, conducted the study and is responsible for the content of this report.
  - The primary research methodology for the study was a web-based survey developed by Vertical, with input from CEA. The survey sample is comprised of MEF-CECPs who have attended the CEA MEF-CECP Boot Camp training over the past four years.
  - The survey was distributed to MEF-CECPs worldwide beginning in November 2015. All survey responses were anonymous, with the exception of company name, which was used for verification. Vertical Systems Group collected all response data, analyzed the results and has developed reports on the study findings.
  - Full study results are based on survey responses from 330 MEF-CECPs from 38 different companies throughout the world.
- **For permission to cite study results or for questions about this research**, please contact either Rosemary Cochran, Principal, Vertical Systems Group (rcochran@verticalsystems.com), or Marlene Kovac, Carrier Ethernet Academy, marlene@cea2.com.

About MEF-CECP Certification

The Carrier Ethernet Certified Professional (MEF-CECP) program was developed by MEF to promote a common industry understanding of Carrier Ethernet service definitions, technical specifications and applications.

- MEF-CECP certification is geared for Carrier Ethernet professionals employed by network operators, equipment suppliers and other firms. Job functions of the program participants include sales engineering, network engineering, network design, product management, product development, marketing and others.
- Certification requires that participants pass (i.e., 64% or higher) an 80-question standardized exam. The MEF-CECP exam fee is $350. Certifications are valid for three years.
- Preparatory training for the MEF-CECP exam is provided by a network of MEF Accredited Training Providers (ATPs), including The Carrier Ethernet Academy, which has been an ATP since the inception of the MEF-CECP program in 2011.
- ATPs are audited by the MEF to ensure that their courseware covers the material required for certification. ATP programs vary by length of program (i.e., 3 to 5 days), training methods and cost.

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About Vertical Systems Group

Vertical Systems Group is recognized worldwide as a leading market research and strategic consulting firm specializing in defensible quantification of the networking industry. The company provides syndicated research, custom studies and advisory support to equipment suppliers, service providers, large enterprises, financial entities and industry organizations.
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CARRIER ETHERNET ACADEMY

About The Carrier Ethernet Academy

The Carrier Ethernet Academy (CEA) is a MEF Accredited Training Provider, and the only training academy focused exclusively on Carrier Ethernet Services and the work of the MEF. The company has trained nearly two-thirds of the 3,900+ individuals worldwide who have successfully attained MEF-CECP certification.
www.carrierethernetacademy.com