

Why Do I Need NPDP Certification?

NEW PRODUCT INNOVATION
No. 5 IN A SERIES OF PAPERS

Global NP Solutions, LLC

Reference Paper
Teresa Jurgens-Kowal
PhD, PE, NPDP

Global NP Solutions, LLC
2323 Clear Lake City Blvd., #180
Suite 177
Houston, TX 77062

For More Information

Phone: 281-280-8717

Fax: 281-280-8986

e-mail: info@globalnpsolutions.com



Your Strategic Innovation Partner

Why Do I Need NPDP Certification?

WHAT IS NPDP?

First things first – What Is **NPDP Certification** and Why Do I Need it? New Product Development Professionals (NPDP) are rapidly becoming the *most sought after employees* in companies to **lead new product and service development projects** in a variety of industries around the globe. Certification in your chosen field of expertise can lead to better visibility, more opportunities for career advancement, and can open the door for new jobs. In today's increasingly complex and highly-specialized economy, credentials are everything. Sure, **YOU** know you've got the *skills to do the job* and to *lead the project*, but how do you convince potential customers and employers? For many career-minded professionals, certification is often the answer to benefit both the individual and the company.



Opening the doors to new and exciting business opportunities, as well as solidifying your company's position as a *premier provider* of research and marketing technologies, **NPDP Certification** demonstrates your proficiency in three important areas.

- **Education**
- **Expertise**
- **Knowledge**

For most people, meeting the criteria for these areas is simple and straightforward. We'll discuss more about the application and certification process later.

Upon earning your New Product Development Professional Certification, you will join a network of over 600 individuals around the globe who share a passion for the



field and are currently working on NPD efforts in a variety of industries. Administered by the Product Development and Management Association (PDMA), NPDP Certification confirms **mastery of new product development principles** and **best practices**, enabling continual improvement in NPD job performance.

WHAT DO LEADING ORGANIZATIONS SAY ABOUT NPDP CERTIFICATION?

Meeting Customer Needs through Innovation at First Data Corporation

First Data Corporation, a leading provider of electronic payment solutions to financial institutions, has over 50 NPDP Certified professionals and is in the process to certify over 130 employees on their Product and Business Development Teams⁽¹⁾. Jamie Henry, the Director of Product Management at First Data, emphasizes that innovation is very important.

Our customers are viewing our products as a means of gaining a competitive advantage in their business, so we need to continue to innovate to meet their evolving needs. We recognize the value of having everyone – both inside and outside of the product development group – understand the new product development terminology and strategies.

NPDP Certification provides a common, fundamental skill set and will allow us to continue building and improving the skills of our team⁽¹⁾.

Growth through Innovation at FedEx

With over \$22 Billion in revenue, another company experiencing substantial growth through its recent acquisition of Kinko's, Federal Express (FedEx) places high value on

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innovation. Fred Smith, founder and CEO of FedEx firmly believes “**Innovation drives corporate value** ⁽²⁾.” Playing a pivotal role at the company, *innovation fuels growth*. Donald Comer, Director of New Product Development at FedEx, notes that NPDP Certification creates a common ground, resulting in high performing teams.

As Director of New Product Development at FedEx, I am tasked with providing the structure and discipline necessary to bring the highest quality products and services to market in the shortest amount of time. This can be challenging.

To us, the NPDP Certification seemed like a logical tool to gauge the level of understanding of the key tenets of innovation and New Product Development as well as to identify bright individuals committed to the craft. I discovered a new passion and desire for the higher level of excellence ⁽²⁾.

Expanding Product Development and Marketing at Capital One and CPC

Service companies, too, are ramping up their product development efforts. Karen Kardian, Manager of Product Management at Capital One **recommends NPDP Certification for Product Managers in all industries** to promote communication and best practices specific to managing a portfolio of products.

As a result of this certification, I am a better practitioner in the New Product Development and Marketing arena.

It defines a career path and provides validation of skills. Learning more about NPD is one way to succeed in the industry and pursue development goals. Certification also distinguishes you from your peers....a differentiating factor when exploring new opportunities ⁽³⁾.

Finally, at the China Productivity Center (CPC) in Taipei, executives are being certified in New Product Development. CPC’s Robert Tsai indicates that:

Establishing new competencies such as NPD knowledge is becoming more and more important since we can no longer rely simply on manufacturing for economic growth in Taiwan ⁽⁴⁾.

BENEFITS OF NPDP CERTIFICATION

As these product development professionals from top innovation companies have demonstrated, the benefits of NPDP Certification for the individual are numerous.

- Confirms **mastery of best practices** and the NPD principles.
- Enables **better job performance**.
- Enhances career and **promotion opportunities**.
- Recognizes **professional growth** and competency in NPD.
- **Increases recognition** by peers, employers, and recruiters.
- Sets you apart as an **expert in your field**.

For many companies, a strong innovation strategy is critical to the business success plan. Using NPDP Certified professionals to lead their new product programs, top firm realize benefits to the bottom line, including the following.



- **Identifies those who have the knowledge and experience** to move into Leadership positions.
- **Differentiates** between hiring candidates.
- Offers **the right big picture**, baseline, and areas of focus.
- Top performing companies understand that properly training employees leads to **direct, measurable bottom-line results**.

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BUT, CERTIFICATION SOUNDS DIFFICULT!

NPDP Certification is simple! Most individuals working in New Product Development, whether as a Research Engineer, Market Planner, or NPD Team Leader, already meet many of the qualifications for the application process¹.

Education Requirement

Hold a Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) from an accredited institution.

Experience Requirement

Accrued at least two years of professional-level experience working in New Product Development during the prior four years.

Knowledge Requirement

Achieve a passing score on the NPDP Certification Exam.

For many individuals, the Certification Exam may prove to be the most challenging part of the application process. The 3.5 hour exam is offered throughout the world at testing centers



using a computer based assessment with immediate feedback upon completion of the examination. A passing score requires correct responses to 150 of 200 questions in the following areas:

- Strategy (15% of all questions),
- Portfolio Management (10%),
- New Products Process (20%),
- Teams, People, and Organizational Issues (20%),
- Market Research (15%), and
- Tools and Metrics (20%).

References, reading lists, study workshops, on-line quizzes, and various other exam preparations are available for those wishing to pursue NPDP Certification.

Be sure to check our website (www.globalnpsolutions.com) for the current schedule for NPDP Certification workshops. Even if you are not pursuing certification, these workshops provide a basis in New Product Development principles during an intense two-day course.

SO, WHY WAIT?

For companies such as First Data, FedEx, Capital One and CPC, NPDP Certification is already delivering value as a key instrument in the New Product Development Processes. In the words of Jamie Henry at First Data Corporation, with company-wide NPDP certifications, Senior Leadership Teams, as well as the Product Managers and Researchers, are able to “*follow a much more strategic perspective in their innovation efforts*”.

If your company is trying to help meet customer needs, grow through innovation, and expand product development, maybe it is time to look at **NPDP Certification** for your organization.

WORKS CITED

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2. *PDMA News: FedEx uses NPDP Certification to Achieve Greater NPD Success*. Westray, Ken.: PDMA, April 2006, *Visions Magazine*, p. 28.
3. *PDMA News: Capital One Practitioner Talks about the Value of PDMA's NPDP Certification Program*. Newman, David. PDMA, June 2008, *Visions Magazine*, p. 32.
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¹ Alternate qualifications include holding a high school diploma, accruing five years of professional-level experience working in New Product Development during the prior eight years, and achieving a passing score on the NPDP Certification Exam. For more information, consult PDMA at www.pdma.org.

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About the Author



Teresa is President of Global NP Solutions, LLC, a strategic innovation provider. She is an accomplished visionary and results-oriented professional with extensive industry experience from creative research to effective portfolio management through stream-lined new product development processes.

Prior to founding Global NP Solutions, Dr. Jurgens-Kowal acquired over 12 years of experience in leadership and management positions with ExxonMobil Chemical Company and a total of 16 years as a practicing Chemical Engineer. Her corporate career encompassed various functions, including New Product Development, Portfolio Management, Licensing, Marketing, Logistics and Supply Chain, Manufacturing, Project Management and Research Technology.

Teresa has extensive experience leading successful teams, managing the product development life cycle, and defining the portfolio strategy. Her deep expertise in intellectual property management, product and process licensing, portfolio planning, customer service and various business processes make her an ideal teacher and trusted advisor who knows both the theory and practices of New Product Development.

Dr. Jurgens-Kowal earned a B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho and a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington. She is a licensed Professional Engineer in the State of Louisiana since 1998. Teresa is a certified New Product Development Professional (NPDP) by the Product Development Management Association (PDMA) and Global NP Solutions, LLC, is a Registered Education Provider (REP) with PDMA.

Teresa holds chemical process and catalyst patents, and is published in the Journal of the American Chemical Society and Journal of Physical Chemistry.

Currently, Dr. Jurgens-Kowal is working on founding a Gulf Coast Chapter of the PDMA organization. She has an office in Houston, Texas.



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