



GO WIDE OR DEEP?

It's a timeless question within IT circles: should IT pros go wide or deep when it comes to building their skill sets and earning certifications? There's no easy answer; it's usually both. Here are some thoughts to consider about going wide versus going deep.

Discover Your Passion.

Starting wide can help IT pros explore different areas and determine what they're passionate about, which then allows them to specialize, and eventually become an expert. Keep in mind that someone who is passionate about what they are doing typically will be a strong employee.

Cover Your Bases.

For small IT teams especially, it might make more sense for team members go wide and become familiar with a lot of technologies. Often within smaller organizations, IT pros are asked to be a jack-of-all trades. Coworkers and customers will be turning to your team to solve a wide variety of issues, so your team members need to be able to solve problems quickly and efficiently, from plugging in a cable to setting up a network.

Find Your Depth.

Technology and IT are always evolving. As a result, a strong case can be made for going both wide and deep. Think of it this way: many pools these days are built shallow at the ends and deep in the middle. Choose a technology or two that you want to specialize in and concentrate a lot of your effort there (it takes more work to swim in deeper waters, right?). Meanwhile, obtain a working knowledge of 3-5 more technologies (Like dipping your toes into shallow ends, get it?). That way your team will be more well-rounded.

Must-Know Technologies.

What are some popular technologies that every IT pro should add to their skill set, even if it's not their expertise? VoIP, Data Center, virtualization, and cloud-based services are hot right now. IT pros can never go wrong learning networking and security fundamentals. And of course, your team members should be encouraged to learn any technologies that interest them!

Get Inspired.

Keep in mind that integration is increasingly common; more technologies integrate and "talk" with each other. So, for example, an IT pro with considerable expertise in storage technology can become an even greater asset by learning cloud technologies.

So what's the final verdict? You can't go wrong having an IT team made up of learners who know a bit of this and that and have expertise in particular technologies. A team of IT pros who are diverse, passionate, and committed to learning will make your life as a manager a lot easier.