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NEWS FROM THE IPC

IPC Launches New Certified Standards Expert Certification for Six IPC Standards

Responding to industry demand and member feedback, IPC created a new certification for company subject matter experts on IPC Standards. Companies need staff that understand IPC Standards at a deep level. The Certified Standards Expert (CSE) will possess a high level of expertise and serve as an in-house expert on IPC Standards. A CSE is **not** required to train, unlike a Certified IPC Trainer (CIT) who is required to train to maintain their certification.

Candidates may pursue CSE certification for six IPC Standards: IPC-J-STD-001, IPC-A-600, IPC-A-610, IPC-6012, IPC-7711/21 and IPC/WHMA-A-620. Upon certification, CSEs are able to navigate the IPC standard efficiently; identify relevant sections of the standard to address specific questions; act as a subject matter expert on all matters related to the standard; and apply the standard to specific company needs. Certification is valid for two years and is available through IPC's Licensed Training Centers.

David Hernandez, IPC vice president of education said, "After talking to IPC members and looking at internal data, we realized the need for the CSE level of certification. In the past, if you needed a higher-level of expertise than a Certified IPC Specialist (CIS) you became a Certified IPC Trainer (CIT) even if you didn't train anyone. Now we offer a comparable certification to the CIT without the training component. A CSE is not required to train."

IPC has also shifted the training materials to online-only delivery streamlining the registration and fulfillment processes. “The feedback we received from our beta-testing has been very positive and we continue to look for better ways to serve our customers,” added Hernandez.

For more information on the new Certified Standards Expert certification, visit <http://www.ipc.org/CSE>

IPC Pulse Survey Shows Positive Industry Outlook Continues but varies by Region

First-quarter 2019 results from IPC’s Pulse of the Electronics Industry global data service shows an electronics industry that is still riding the crest of the current growth cycle, despite cooling enthusiasm in some regions and industry segments.

The 167 participating companies worldwide reported average quarterly sales growth of 8.4 percent in the fourth quarter of 2018. Their average forecast for first-quarter 2019 sales growth was a bullish 9.8 percent worldwide.

The industry’s outlook on the current direction of the business environment worldwide rebounded in the first quarter of 2019 after scores edged downward in the last three quarters of 2018, although they remained positive all year. Most participating companies reported the current direction for sales, orders, order backlogs and profit margins as moving in a positive direction. Increasing labor and materials costs and recruiting challenges were the main factors negatively affecting the current-state score.

The companies' outlook for the next six months also strengthened in the first quarter of 2019. Growth in sales, production, number of full-time employees, markets, capital investment and exports contributed to the strong six-month outlook. The 12-month business outlook also strengthened in the first quarter, with 88 percent of responding companies indicating a positive outlook.

The strong current-state score and six-month outlook were driven by results from companies in the Americas and global businesses. Asia and Europe had negative current-state scores. Their six-month outlook was positive, but weaker than the outlook for companies in the Americas and global businesses. Among the industry segments, the current-state score was strongest for OEMs and weakest for materials suppliers, although all industry segments indicated positive current-state scores in the first quarter of 2019.

Respondents comment every quarter on the trends or conditions that are driving or limiting their business growth. The comments reveal that component shortages have begun to ease, while there is growing concern about the shortage of qualified workers as the major factor limiting growth. Workforce issues now appear to be the biggest concern in all regions and segments of the industry, followed by tariffs and trade disruptions.

The second-quarter 2019 survey is now online with a deadline of April 19. Electronics industry executives with knowledge of their companies' performance are eligible to participate. The confidential IPCPulseQ22019 survey is brief and easy for company management to answer, and there is no cost to participate. All eligible participants who complete the survey by April 19 will receive a report on the findings.