

STACKING CREDENTIALS: ADVANCING CAREERS AND HIGHLIGHTING PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE WITH ASCP BOC CREDENTIALS

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BACKGROUND

The medical laboratory profession is at a critical juncture, facing increasing global workforce shortages in laboratory medicine and pathology laboratories. Laboratory professional credentials attained through the ASCP Board of Certification (ASCP BOC) play a pivotal role in addressing this challenge. By standardizing and enhancing the professional skills of laboratory professionals, ASCP BOC credentials open new avenues for recruitment, retention, and professional development.

Stacking credentials, such as pairing Medical Laboratory Scientist, MLS(ASCP) with Specialist in Blood Banking, SBB(ASCP) or other patient-centric credentials, has emerged as a significant pathway for career growth, skill enhancement, and clear career progression. This study explores how credential stacking enhances individual expertise, supports career advancement, and contributes to creating a skilled and satisfied workforce, ultimately addressing operational challenges and workforce shortages in laboratory settings.

METHODS

This study utilized a comprehensive analysis of ASCP BOC's credentialing data, focusing on individuals with multiple credentials. Data were segmented by degree (e.g., Bachelor's, Master's, PhD), credential count (ranging from 2 to 10), and professional demographics (see Figure A). The analysis also included geographical distribution across the U.S. and internationally to identify patterns and growth trends (see Figure B). Metrics analyzed included the number of professionals holding multiple credentials, time elapsed between the attainment of the first and subsequent credentials and associated professional outcomes. In addition to credentialing data, insights from health and business literature were reviewed to contextualize the findings and explore intentional workforce strategies.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

- Wheeler S. Stackable credentials can open doors to new career opportunities. Brookings. Published June 2, 2022. Accessed February 14, 2025. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/stackable-credentials-can-open-doors-to-new-career-opportunities/>
- University of Virginia. Researchers shed light on the rewards of credential stacking. Published online. Accessed February 14, 2025. <https://education.virginia.edu/news-stories/researchers-shed-light-rewards-credential-stacking>
- National Healthcareer Association (NHA). Why allied health workers are stacking credentials. NHA Now. Published online. Accessed February 14, 2025. <https://info.nhanow.com/blog/why-allied-health-workers-are-stacking-credentials>
- Jesuthasan R, Boudreau JW. Work Without Jobs: How to Reboot Your Organization's Work Operating System. 2023:54

Figure A: Education Volumes for Stacked Credential Holders

Credential Holders w>=2 Credentials	Average Years from 1st to 2nd Credential		Average Adjusted Age			Mean Scaled Score	Median Scaled Score	Standard Deviation Scaled Score		
56,312	8		31			478	460	118		
	High School/Vocational School	Diploma/Certificate	Accredited Program	Associate's Degree	Other Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Certification	Master's Degree	PhD	Medical Doctor
Credential Holders w>=2 Credentials	499	525	14,530	6,009	432	12,001	1,655	1,631	551	202
% of Stacked Credential Holders	0.9%	0.9%	25.8%	10.7%	0.8%	21.3%	2.9%	2.9%	1.0%	0.4%

Education data is self reported and may not reflect total volumes or status of current stacked credential holders.

Figure B: Stacked Credential Holder Demographics

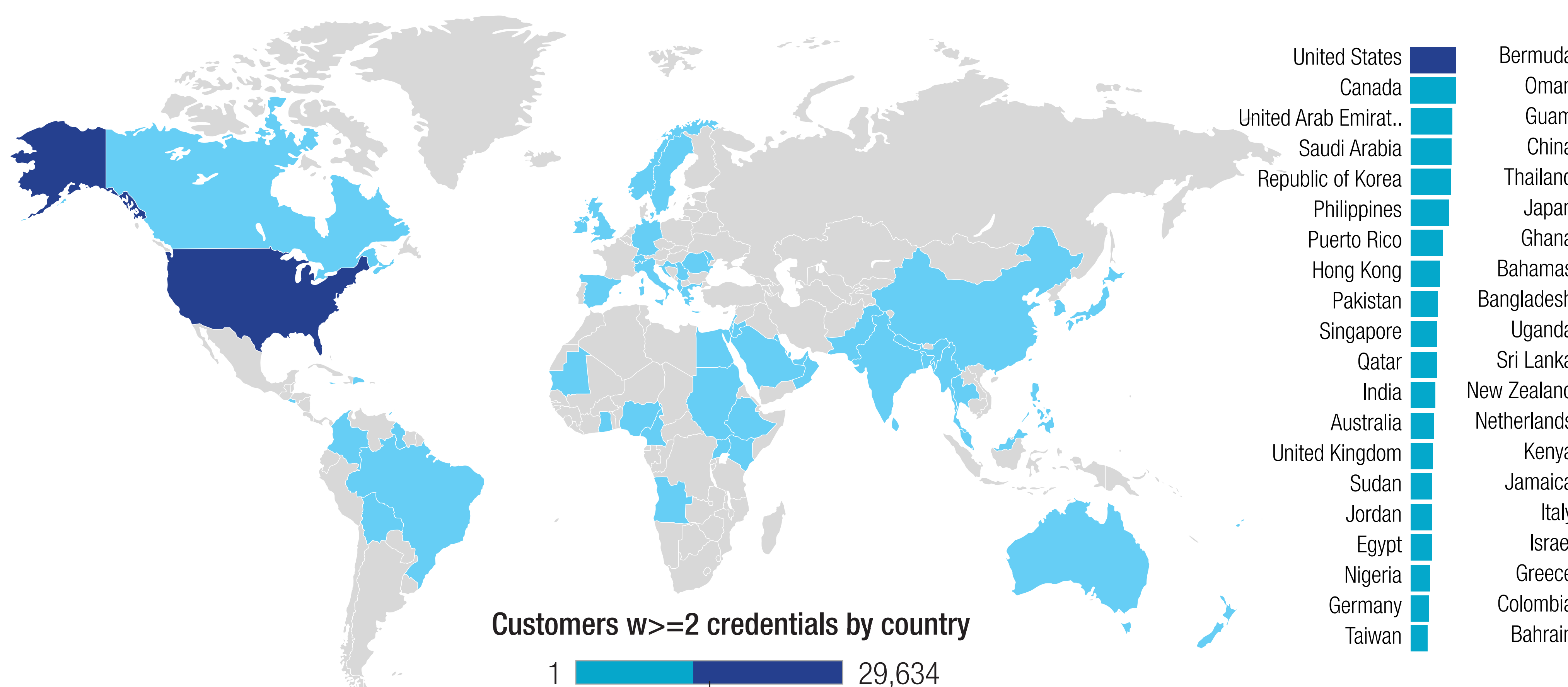
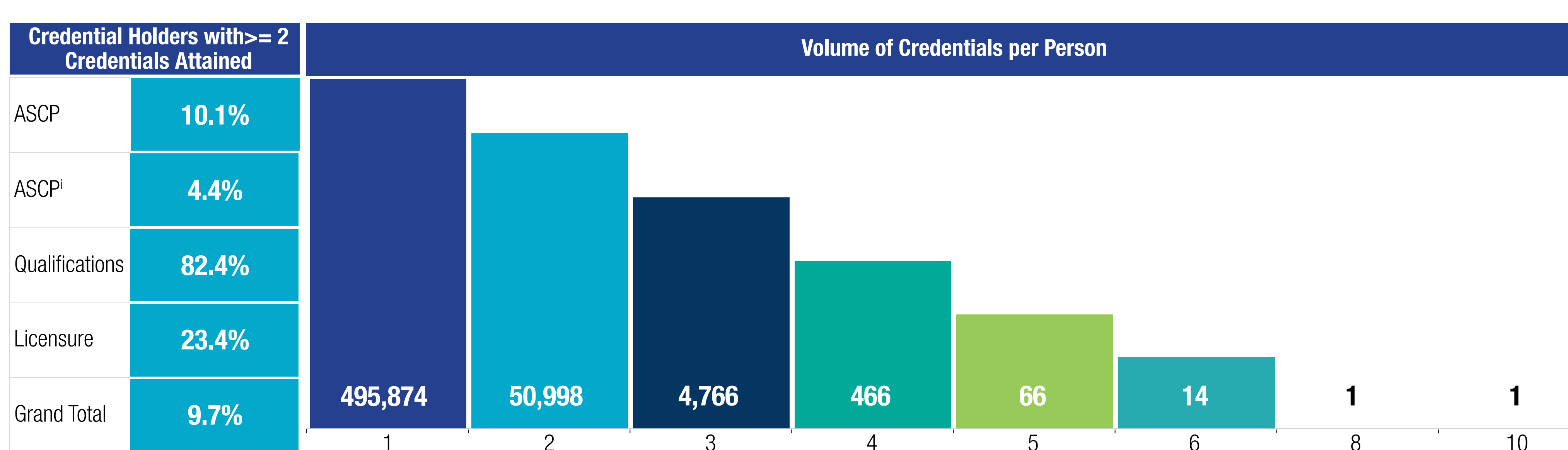


Figure C: ASCP BOC Credential Holders with Stacked Credentials



641,000+ credentials attained worldwide since 1928

56,000+ credential holders with >= 2 credentials attained

RESULTS

The data revealed that approximately 9.7% of ASCP BOC credential holders now possess two or more credentials (see Figure A). Credential stacking demonstrates measurable benefits for professionals and employers alike, supporting continuous professional development and specialization.¹ The breakdown of stacked credentials by degree shows a higher propensity among individuals with advanced degrees, who are more likely to pursue multiple credentials (see Figure C).

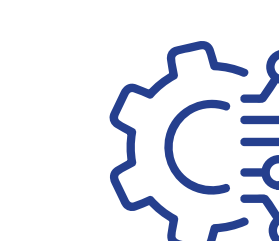
Key findings include:



EARNING POTENTIAL: Research has shown stacked credential holders may see as much as a 9% return on average in their salaries.²



WORKFORCE STRATEGIES: Credential stacking supports clear career progression pathways and continuous professional development, which help attract new talent and retain skilled staff. These strategies foster a positive workplace culture, promote work-life balance, and contribute to greater employee satisfaction.³



PROFESSIONAL SKILLS ENHANCEMENT: Credential holders with stacked credentials demonstrated consistent scaled score performance (mean = 475), reflecting sustained professional excellence (see Figure D).



OPERATIONAL IMPACT: Employers noted increased versatility, leadership readiness, and adaptability among multi-credentialed professionals, particularly in specialized laboratory roles.⁴

CONCLUSION

Stacking ASCP BOC credentials is a vital strategy for addressing workforce shortages in laboratory medicine and pathology laboratories worldwide. By enhancing professional skills, providing clear career progression pathways, and fostering workplace satisfaction, multi-credentialing supports recruitment and retention efforts while promoting continuous professional development. These strategies align with patient-centric expectations and contribute to a more sustainable and effective laboratory professional workforce.



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