

‘Train for the job that you want’

Workers are going beyond degrees and investing in the future with microcredentials

HEIDI SCHEDLER, KC, CIC.C, HAS BEEN A LAWYER FOR 25 YEARS. But she was looking to take her career to the next level.

“I was at a point in my career where I was enjoying my work, but I also wanted to go a little bit further than practising law,” she says. “I really wanted to be at the table with executives in that kind of leadership role.”

She had considered PhD programs but, for her, a microcredential program “really fit the bill.”

Increasingly, to remain competitive, workers are going beyond degrees by investing in their future with postsecondary microcredentials. These programs are often developed as partnerships between universities and industry to align educational offerings with specific needs in the labour market, bridging theoretical knowledge with in-demand skills.

In the legal industry, for example, the Business Leadership Program for In-House Counsel is the first microcredential program of its kind – the result of a partnership between the Canadian Bar Association In-House Lawyers (CBA In-House) and the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto. With the successful completion of all three phases of the program, graduates earn a designation of Certified In-House Counsel – Canada (CIC.C).

“There’s the old saying that you should dress for the job that you want and, I think almost in an analogous way, you can train for the job that you want,” says Brian Silverman, academic



Last July, Heidi Schedler was hired as general counsel and corporate secretary of the Halifax Port Authority – a job that allows her to use skills she learned in a microcredential program.

director of the Business Leadership Program for In-House at Rotman.

Microcredentials can help workers stay competitive, particularly when their industry is experiencing disruption – as many are, with the rapid evolution of generative AI.

For example, participants in the Business Leadership Program for In-House Counsel explore the unique challenges of effective leadership in today’s complex organizational environment and develop the perspectives and skills to become effective leaders in their own right – from business strategy and risk management to managing teams, cultural fluency and financial acumen.

The program has three modules, including two in-person sessions (both are three days, from Friday through Sunday), as well as six half-day online sessions. “At the very end, there’s a short written deliverable and short



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oral deliverable designed to demonstrate sufficient grasp of the material,” Silverman says. Those who pass receive the CIC.C credential.

“The time commitment was completely manageable; the financial commitment was completely manageable,” says Schedler, who graduated from the program in 2025. “The

program and what was being offered was just spot on.”

The skills she learned in the program helped her navigate the job interview process. “It helped me present things in a much more coherent and persuasive way,” she said. “And it was, in my view, the clinching factor that helped me get it over the line.”

In July, Schedler was hired as general counsel and corporate secretary of the Halifax Port Authority – a job that gives her the opportunity to put her new leadership and business strategy skills to work.

Schedler says she used to be “that person” who didn’t think it mattered if you had letters after your name. “But now that I’ve gone through it, I can say with absolute confidence that there is a difference,” she says. “And it’s not just about those letters after the name – it really is about what you take from the course that you’re capable of applying on a day-to-day basis.”