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CWNE # 210

What is your level of industry experience?

Started my IT career while I was in school getting my bachelor's degree. Like in the restaurant business, I started at the bottom with Help Desk. I slowly climbed up the ladder to becoming a Systems Administrator. When I got my hands on networking equipment I knew I wanted to become a network engineer. And then I was exposed to this thing called Wi-Fi. It started with the Cisco 4402 WLCs. I made all the common mistakes anyone who doesn't get proper training in Wi-Fi makes. After I learned about CWNP, it took me a little over a year to pursue my CWNA. It was through Twitter where I learned how crucial planning and design was. I later decided to get more involved with the Wi-Fi community so I can make my way towards doing more Wi-Fi projects which lead me to starting the Clear To Send podcast. It's been a whirlwind of a journey as I migrated to a large university managing, designing, and troubleshooting a Wi-Fi network servicing over 40k concurrent devices. In 2016 I earned my CWNE.

When did you first become interested in wireless?

In 2012 I was tasked with managing a highly dispersed network. There was a lot of wireless connectivity and that's when I found out I needed to understand how wireless really works. I was troubleshooting roaming issues without even knowing how roaming worked! On top of that, I dealt with aesthetic requirements that made Wi-Fi even more difficult.

I got tired of just putting bandaids on Wi-Fi issues and found out the CWNP can help me really understand how Wi-Fi works from a vendor neutral perspective.

What certifications do you currently hold?

The very first certification I ever held was the A+ and Network+, back when they never expired! When I started working on networking equipment I decided to get my CCNA certification. I later let it expire but recently recertified myself.

The only wireless certifications I hold are the CWS, CWNA, CWAP, CWDP, CWSP, and CWNE.

Why did you choose the CWNE path?

I chose the CWNE path because I am committed to being a wireless professional. I set my sights on achieving the goal and made it within 1 year and 2 months. At the work place I wanted to be the wireless subject matter expert so I immersed myself within CWNP. The goal was to understand RF rather than understanding vendor knobs.

How long have you been involved in the CWNP certification process?

I've been involved since early 2015. It took me a while to actually take the CWNA exam and pass. Then I took a break until attempting my next exam, the CWAP. But from that point on I set a goal to become a CWNE before 2017.

What was the hardest part of the whole process and how did you overcome it?

Time management is absolutely critical. Getting certified means sacrificing or balancing other aspects of your life. It's important to let others know what you're pursuing and why. Help them see the value in it and set the right expectations.

What would you say to anyone considering a CWNE designation?

Don't be intimidated by the requirements of becoming a CWNE. Reach out to another CWNE if you have any questions. Many are open to providing guidance or suggestions. Start slow and start learning with the hardware you currently have.

What value will your CWNE provide to you, your clients, and/or your company?

There's maybe just a handful of people at my company who know I have a CWNE haha. But others at my workplace value my expertise. I do leverage my CWNE outside of the workplace when I assist other organizations with improving their wireless. Others recognize you as a wireless expert no matter what vendor equipment is used.

To whom would you recommend the CWNE program?

I'd recommend the CWNE program to any individual who has a passion for wireless. If you want to get a good understanding of how 802.11 works then the CWNE program is perfect.