COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Chris Avants

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CWNE #164

⋙ Why are you interested in wireless?

I love the freedom of mobility that wireless provides to us and it is interesting to know the things working behind the scene.

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

Originally when I started studying for a CCIE Wireless, I picked up the CWNP books thinking it would be complementary training and I might pick up a "thing or two" I didn't already know from other material. When I dove in to CWAP, and CWSP, I was amazed at the level of depth the material provided, and ended up learning a lot from the series, even with over a decade of prior experience as a Sr. Field Engineer, and teaching wireless subject matter for a couple years. The best way I can describe it is to say I was provided a fresh look, and new prospective at wireless lifecycle technologies and that's exactly what I had hoped to accomplish when I decided to go for the CWNE.

⋙ List of certifications currently held?

I currently hold 30 industry-leading certifications including multiple Expert level certifications from Cisco Systems (CCIE), CWNP (CWNE) and is a Certified Cisco Systems Instructor.

⋙ What motivated you to become certified?

Certifications have always been a big part of my career, beginning with some Microsoft and Cisco certification at the age of 18.

What parts of becoming certified do you feel are most important?

It is not the piece of paper or the number; it's the modern learning experience that IT training provides in a challenging and rewarding field. The journey that comes from learning new things is highly addictive to me. Even as an instructor, I am always on a quest to learn more.

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

On becoming a CWNE, the entire process was challenging in its own right. With me it is always time management. Like most people in IT, I have a very busy schedule, and just became a father too. It is always tough to make hard choices on what deserves the time we all have a limited supply of. The best way for me to overcome time challenges is to remember the bigger picture I have for my family, and that my success is what gets us there.

How has this journey impacted your life?

I have built my entire career around engineering since a very early age, and maintained leadership roles thanks to programs like CWNE. I love engineering, teaching engineering, and get to wake up and do things I love every day, it truly is a blessing.

Who would you suggest the CWNE program to?

CWNE is one of the few expert credentials in the Wireless industry, which has historically been a pretty small, tight-knit community. Wireless industry has proliferated rapidly all over the world in the past decade. If you want to truly set yourself apart in the industry and enjoy wireless networking, meeting a lot of great like-minded people who aren't afraid of sharing ideas, opinions, experiences, earning a CWNE is a great way to go!

I will add that the CWNE is a certification recognizing a proven history of professional engineering work in the wireless arena. CWNE is an elite status that very few even dare to attempt in the first place. Also it shows your expertise has been thoroughly verified through one of the longest and most thorough committee review processes I have seen. Even with that the application process can be extremely thorough "which is a good thing" so enjoy the journey. I truly believe everyone can reach their goals if they put their mind to it.

BIO

Chris Avants began his career with GE Capital IT Solutions at the age of 17, quickly gained several professional-level certifications from Cisco and Microsoft. Chris spent the next decade as a Sr. Network Engineer designing and deploying advanced technology solutions from Cisco Systems, Microsoft, Acme Packet, and VMARE specializing in Wireless, Security, and Unified Communications solutions.

Chris Avants brings to the classroom over 15 years of experience in previous leadership roles including EVP, Director of Engineering, SME - Subject Matter Expert, and Field Engineer. He became one of only a handful of people worldwide to earn two expert credentials in the wireless arena after becoming CWNE #164.

He is currently working as a Sr. Cisco Instructor at Fast Lane, USA with specializing in Wireless, Security, and Collaboration technologies from Cisco Systems. Chris has thousands of hours in the classroom as a Sr. Network Instructor, helping students from all of the world to learn advanced networking concepts.