



Jason Hintersteiner

Director of Business Development
LigoWave Networks Inc.

CWNE # 171

What is your level of industry experience?

I've been in the Wi-Fi industry for over a decade. I started out working as the VP of Technology for a startup WISP (Wireless Internet Service Provider) deploying Wi-Fi in apartment buildings, hotels, and student housing properties. My role here was to scale the business, and it was clear that the startup had little grasp on how Wi-Fi actually worked. Over my six year tenure, I standardized our Wi-Fi deployments on a few key configurations and helped quintuple the number of sites under management. I then did some private consulting work, and have now worked for two AP equipment vendors in both an engineering sales and technical marketing capacity.

Where did you receive your training/education?

I hold a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and a Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering, both from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). I also received my Masters of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Connecticut.

When did you first become interested in wireless?

In college, I worked on a home-based telemedicine project where patients would have biometric monitors at home and communicate with their doctors over the Internet. This was in the mid 1990's, before IEEE 802.11 was even a published standard, and it was clear then that something like Wi-Fi would be necessary for such applications. When I started working for the WISP startup company, I needed to do a deep dive into understanding how Wi-Fi actually worked in order to ensure the deployments went smoothly.

Why did you choose the CWNE path?

After receiving my CWNA, I was doing some private consulting and thought that the CWDP would be a good addition to my professional portfolio. I then attended the first CWNP conference in 2014, where I first really got to meet the larger CWNP community, and also learned how much I still had to learn about how Wi-Fi actually works, and that the community was very supportive of education and learning. After that conference, I started to dive into the CWAP, where I really got a feel for what is happening within the protocol. After that experience, it was clear that I was really becoming an "expert" in Wi-Fi and should become a CWNE to publicly reinforce my level of knowledge and experience.

Why did you choose CWNP and its certifications over other industry designations?

Most other Wi-Fi certifications were vendor-specific, and spent a lot of their effort teaching you the specifics of how to program and configure their specific devices without getting into the "why" of how things are done. Most vendor certifications are really gigantic marketing exercises designed to keep the certified engineer hooked on using that product. Having come from a WISP where we needed to use APs from several different vendors for different applications, I felt it was important to not get too engrossed in one specific vendor, but to gain a true understanding of the technology in a vendor-neutral context.

Even now, working for AP vendors, having the vendor-neutral understanding of the technology allows me to cut through a lot of the "internal hype" and focus on solutions, not fancy features.

What certifications do you currently hold?

CWNE, including the CWNA, CWDP, CWAP, and CWSP. I also have been certified in CWS and CWT, and am a certified wireless network trainer (CWNT).

I hold a Network+ and Security+ certification from CompTIA. I've also in the past been certified on Control4, Ruckus WiSE, and TE Connectivity DAS Installation and Commissioning.

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

I've been involved in the whole process for about 5 years. I started working on my CWNA during the autumn of 2013, passing the exam in December 2013. I received my CWNE two years later in December 2015. I've also been extremely active at the CWNP conferences, presenting at all but the first conference. I've also had the opportunity to write and teach numerous vendor-specific certification courses, and have been a big believer in incorporating the knowledge of the basics (which are vendor neutral) into such training to help other people understand how the technology works.

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

The CWNE has already proven invaluable in working with customers when they have challenging and unusual Wi-Fi deployments that they need assistance with deploying properly. Understanding how the technology actually works has allowed me to adapt it to many different types of verticals and applications.

The CWNE also helps in internal discussions with product engineers, as it helps me maintain focus on what products and features are needed in the marketplace, and not just products and features we could add because they are potentially interesting but not widely viable in the marketplace.

What would you say to anyone considering a CWNE designation?

Take your time with the certification process, and make sure you want it for the right reasons. It is a marathon, not a sprint, so it is important to pace yourself and devote an appropriate amount of time towards learning the material. Do not be afraid to ask questions in the community to help reinforce your understanding or to help clarify particular topics.

A CWNE is more than about reading review books and passing exams. It requires a way of thinking and approaching problems, based on a fundamental understanding of how Wi-Fi works. It is good to divorce your knowledge-base from your vendor of choice and ensure you truly understand the underlying technology. A CWNE is a "master of the craft", and that requires independent study, real-world experience, and a passion for learning and understanding.