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Wireless Network Engineer
Structured Communication Systems, Inc.
CWNE #280

What is your level of industry experience?

I have been working as a wireless network engineer for roughly 4 years in my current position. Before that I was a systems engineer with the managed services practice working with all aspects of technology with a special interest in wireless networking. Total industry experience is roughly 7 years. Prior to that I held an entry level position as a computer technician which is the first job in the technology industry that I held. From the start I have been hungry for knowledge and a desire to better myself as an engineer.

When did you first become interested in wireless?

I became interested in wireless networking during my college courses at ITT Tech. It was the class I enjoyed the most and was fascinated by how elegant and resilient a wireless network can be. It wasn't until my position as a systems engineer at Structured Communication Systems that I had the opportunity to continue my education and obtain practical hands on experience with enterprise grade wireless products which furthered my interest in the wireless network industry. From here, I took every opportunity I could get to learn more about specific vendor products like Aruba and Ruckus. During my initial exprience I knew that I needed to know more about
how 802.11 really works at an in-depth level and so began my pursuit of the CWNP certifications. It took me a while to complete all of the CWNP self study material and obtain the certifications but I enjoyed the journey and learned a lot!

What certifications do you currently hold?

- Certified Wireless Network Expert
- Aruba Certified Design Expert
- Aruba Certified Switching Associate
- Ruckus SmartZone SE, Cloudpath SE, and ICX Implementer
- Cisco Meraki Networking Associate
- Fortinet NSE 3

Why did you choose the CWNE path?

I chose the CWNE path because I knew that the certification is held in high regard. I also knew that it was a difficult certification to obtain and would ultimately help me in my career. After studying the CWNA and passing that exam, I knew that I wanted to continue the journey of this certification path because of how much I learned. I took the CWNE journey a little out of order by taking the CWNA, CWDP, CWAP, and then the CWSP. The CWAP was by far the most in-depth certification about the inter-workings of 802.11 technology and was by far the most difficult exam. I ended up reading the book 3 times and having to take the exam twice. Once I completed three out of the four per-requirement certifications for the CWNE, I read about what was next required for the CWNE and felt overwhelmed. It took some encouragement from my colleagues for me to continue pursuing the CWNE and I eventually completed the CWSP, all of the essays, blogs, and endorsements to finally apply. It is a daunting journey but well worth it!

I started the process in March of 2016 and achieved the CWNA in April 2016. At this point I was very motivated to obtain the CWNE and obtained my CWDP in May 2016 and then the CWAP in October of 2016. The CWAP was very tough and so I took some time off before attempting the CWSP which I obtained in March of 2018. I then obtained my CWNE in May of 2018.

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

The hardest part of the process, for me, was overcoming the daunting requirements of the CWNE. I have never kept a blog or written a book and seeing these items as a requirement made me second guess myself. In order to overcome this I spoke with a few CWNE's that have already gone through process and also spoke with my colleagues. They encouraged me to continue and so I started writing my blog articles. I came up with a handful of topics and just began to write. I had my colleagues review my first article and their feed back was great! It made me feel more confident and I was able to get all of the requirements completed rather quickly.

What would you say to anyone considering a CWNE designation?

Go for it! You learn a lot through the process and become a more confident wireless network engineer. Don't allow the per-requirements to deter you from trying. It is well worth the work involved.

To whom would you recommend the CWNE program?

I believe that any network engineer who deals with wireless networks on a regular basis should consider the CWNE program. Even if you don't obtain the CWNE, the CWNP certifications are very beneficial on their own and will significantly improve your understanding of how 802.11 works. I can speak from experience, after every self study guide I read and certification I obtained, I felt more confident in my ability and my quality of work improved significantly.

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