



Joel Crane

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CWNE # 233

What is your level of industry experience?

My first job in the industry was front-line support at MetaGeek, a software company that makes spectrum analyzers, Wi-Fi scanners, and packet analysis tools. I answered the phone, answered questions on the forums, and of course, took care of support tickets. Within a year or so of that, I gradually started handling technical trainer tasks. Making videos, writing knowledgebase articles, writing training content, and teaching entry-level classes became my focus. I was also able to participate in customer research, product design, and even some sales engineering. Today, I'm a sales engineer at Ekahau Wireless Design, where I get to demo our product to customers, answer questions, and help new Ekahau users get started with our product.

Throughout my support, technical training, and sales engineering jobs, I've gotten involved with as many wireless projects as possible, because hands-on is by far the best way to learn. Fortunately for me, there's always a non-profit that needs help with their network, so I've been able to troubleshoot quite a few small networks, and even design a few on the SMB scale.

What are some highlights from your resume?

From November 2012 to November 2017, I worked in a variety of roles at MetaGeek, functioning as Front-Line Technical Support, Technical Trainer, Customer Researcher, Sales Engineer, and many other odd jobs within the company. One time, I even assembled a few boxes of Wi-Spy DBx's.

In November of 2017, I've joined Ekahau Wireless Design as a Technical Solutions Architect, which so far has been a nice mixture of Sales Engineering and Technical Training.

Where did you receive your training/education?

Much of my information education came from social media. Listening to conversations on Twitter has taught me a ton about wireless. Of course, hands-on learning is essential: I get involved with wireless projects whenever possible, and my customer-facing jobs were also great learning experiences. There's also no better way to solidify a concept in your mind than to stand up in front of 80 people and teach it.

As for official training, I've attended boot camps by Robert Bartz for CWNA and CWAP, but he's been a great coach every step of the way to CWNE. The CWNA was a great start, and the CWAP really helped me understand 802.11 at a deeper level, moving beyond the "best practices" I'd learned on social media and into the nuts and bolts of how things actually work. If you're interested in getting a CWNP certification, I can't recommend Robert enough.

I've also received a lot of guidance from mentors, such as Trent Cutler, Glenn Cate, Jake Snyder, and too many others to name.

Why did you choose the CWNE path?

Earning CWNE is the best way to become recognized as a wireless networking professional, and the certification track gave me a ton of opportunities to learn. For example, I don't just have my CWSP certification; I can actually explain what a 4-way handshake is, and how it works.

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

At a wireless tools company, being a CWNE gives the company credibility, and it shows their involvement with the wireless community. It also gives me credibility when working with customers. Of course, the knowledge that you gain during the certification process is incredibly valuable, because it helps you solve issues quickly and confidently.

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

The most difficult part of becoming CWNE, for me, was getting real-world experience. Working in the software and tools industry, I don't spend every day troubleshooting, designing, and deploying like most CWNE's do, so I had to get creative to get experience and generate projects. For me, the projects consisted of writing Wi-Fi training programs and pro-bono wireless designs and deployments.

It was also difficult to just do it! It was hard to imagine myself as a CWNE, so pushing through the last certification and writing essays for my wireless projects was not easy. The final push I needed was when a member of the CWNE Board of Advisors said, "I expect to see your CWNE application soon." That was the final push that I needed to know that I should submit my application as soon as possible.

What would you say to anyone considering a CWNE designation?

If you're considering going for CWNE... just do it. Get started, right now. It's not easy, but it will push you to achieve, and you will learn a ton about wireless on the way.