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CWNE # 321

What is your level of industry experience?

I'm a senior engineer that has fallen into the world of healthcare over the years.

Where did you receive your training/education?

Unfortunately, my education started at DeVry university which ended up being a huge waste of time and LOTS of money. To get some real knowledge, I later enrolled in the Cisco Academy at Gwinnett Technical college. One of the best courses I've ever taken. Highly recommended.

When did you first become interested in wireless?

I didn't honestly. I was thrown into it because of my first position in IT. I was hired by a company called LXE in 2007 to QC and configure all the warehouse terminals that had been sent in for repair. Warehouses are huge, so they were all wireless. It was a great job and I had a lot of fun there. Moved to tech support towards the end of my stint and then headed over to the VAR.

What certifications do you currently hold?

Currently I have my CWNE, Aruba Edge Professional (Mobility, Design, and Clearpass), and Net+ certifications.

Why did you choose the CWNE path?

I saw designs being done in Visio and knew that there had to be more to this mysterious thing called wifi. After creating a Twitter account at the prompting of an Ekahau blog, I quickly learned about the who's who in the wireless community. I think CWNE count was up to the 160's by then and I followed everyone I could. The conversations that would happen over twitter were amazing. I learned so much in a short period, and all these guys had one foundation...CWNP.

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

I first heard about CWNP in 2013. My employer at the time didn't really have an interest in the program so I just learn stuff off Twitter. When I got hired at the hospital, they had recently taken an Ekahau course taught by Keith Parsons and one of the guys was already studying for CWNA. My first week there was hanging out with Devin Akin for a week and just absorbing everything I could. With the support of my employer, I was able to get my CWNA that same year.

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

For me the CWSP was the hardest part. For a long time I would run out of the room when anybody started talking about security. It's the one professional exam I failed once before passing. To get past it, instead of trying to read the whole book and glazing over again, I chose a topic and branched out from there. For me, it was EAP types. I studied the chart and then branched out based on what I needed to know for each type.

What would you say to anyone considering a CWNE designation?

Get started and quit wasting time! You'll get through the books in no time if you just set aside 2 hours a week to actually read and learn. Don't be like me! Mine took way too long!

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

The value is in the education. CWNE teaches topics that are rarely taught by anyone else. It's nice to see the change in the past few years of leading corporations seeking out and hiring CWNE professionals to help lead their wireless designs and installations. Hopefully we'll get to a point soon where the problem is never "the wireless"!

To whom would you recommend the CWNE program?

Anyone in network engineering. Most of us have to get certs anyway to get employment, promotions, and to help our companies grow. Might as well start with a good foundation.