Landon Foster

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GDT

CWNE # 317

What is your level of industry experience?

I've worked in everything from WISPs to consulting, and have designed and troubleshot networks across several verticals, including retail and heavy industry.

Where did you receive your training/education?

I self studied through all of my certs, but a large amount of thanks goes to the guys over at CTS Podcast. I spent a lot of time listening to those two wonderful guys in the car while driving site to site. You can self study all the way to CWNE, but be prepared for long nights!

When did you first become interested in wireless?

First working in cellular, I became interested in how the PHY itself actually functioned. I was always asking more questions and moved from working installing and fixing sites to learning how to deploy them as well as troubleshooting on the RF and software level. I moved on to a WISP, where I gained more of an appreciation for Wi-Fi and larger enterprise networks. I was fascinated with the duality of Wi-Fi's complexity and simplicity.

What certifications do you currently hold?

Net/Sec+, CWNA/CWAP/CWDP/CWSP/CWNE

Why did you choose the CWNE path?

The CWNEs in our community were such a large help for me, mentoring me and answering questions, overall being very patient with me. IT inspired me to chase the expert label so I could in turn help other young engineers.It seems like such a lofty goal, but the nearness of the people makes it achievable. I also feel that the board review aspect leads a reliability aspect, as well as credence and prestige to the certification.

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

About Three years, now. Once I found the CWNP Program I had already been in telecom for a couple of years, so I hit the ground running with certs as fast as I physically could. I did CWNA and CWAP the first 6 months, and CWDP and CWSP at the end of that year, then submitted for my CWNE the following December.

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

The hardest part was just studying. Self study puts you at the tyranny of your own mind and schedule. Boot camps and classes I think may be easier for a lot of people, because the time is set aside. When I did CWNA and CWAP, I had four hours at the end of every day, except Sunday, prenegotiated with my wife to study. The point here is that you're going to want to stop, or do something else, or take a break day, or tell yourself this can wait. It can't, It won't, and that "break" will turn into procrastination. You control your own mind, enforce you own will. Get it done!

What would you say to anyone considering a CWNE designation?

Do it, absolutely. 100% GET ENGAGED WITH THE COMMUNITY. A lot of these guys seem like absolute Titans, Keith Parsons, Sam Clements, Devin Akin.... These guys (And Gals!) are just the most welcoming people imaginable. They are busier than you would believe, but they will absolutely take time to help you, talk to you. Get on Twitter, get talking, ask questions, especially the "stupid" ones, and get your head in a book or elearning.

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

CWNE Gives the companies I work for a certain level of comfort with my skills, so the trust can be there BEFORE I have to pull something out of the fire. It also helps in negotiations and interviews- the odds I happen to know one single bit of obscure knowledge and not the wider gamut of wireless is much lower than someone who has not gone through the process.

To whom would you recommend the CWNE program?

CWNE is great for everyone who wants to enhance their expertise, or who is considering a career change.