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CWNE # 288

When did you first become interested in wireless?

It sort of fell into my lap. I started with Daemon Defense in the summer of 2014. My employer had a few wireless related projects on the go, but the current sub-contractor was lacking in some skills. I was looking to specialize and carve out a name for myself in our area, so wireless was one of the skills I began focusing on. I had some initial mentorship from a very experienced individual who was close to retirement, and it was a great start to my interest in the field. From there I was eager to learn more and more, and away I went!

What certifications do you currently hold?

CWNE 288
Aruba Certified Design Expert (ACDX) - #887
Aruba Certified Clearpass Professional
A+
Linux+
LPIC-1 (Linux Professional Institute - Administrator)

What is your level of industry experience?

I have around 10 years supporting SMB networks in the general IT sense. Since 2014 I began focusing on both 802.11 as well as secure access systems (802.1X/RADIUS) and have more or less transformed those two items into my full time role with Daemon Defense.

Where did you receive your training/education?

I studied for 2 years at SAIT (Southern Alberta Institute of Technology - Calgary, AB) from 2002-2004 in their Network Engineering program. I have also taken a few Aruba training courses either in person or through remote bootcamp. However, the majority of my actual training and education has either come on the job, or through self-study. I have a passion for devouring knowledge and dive head-first into any topic that I get interested in.

Why did you choose the CWNE path?

Our organization strictly provides consulting services, and we deal mostly with project work. We don't sell any hardware, so being vendor agnostic we are always working to provide the best solution for the client. Because the CWNP certifications are also vendor agnostic this was a good place to start. I am a person who enjoys learning, and the challenge of obtaining a CWNE was a fun goal. Being one of the highest certified wireless professionals in my area has given my clients more confidence in my services, and helped me to stand out from the crowd.

What do you hope to accomplish?

Autonomy. The last few years my employer and I have been slowly building my experience and body of work. I've had many amazing clients that have let me cut my teeth and build my chops on their systems, and each experience has left me better prepared for the next. I don't consider myself much of a bleeding edge innovator, but I follow the book and I get dependable results every time because of it. Having achieved my certification goals, my focus now is on building my practice, adding more people, expanding the body of knowledge and service offerings, and continuing to scale up and out.

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

Confidence. In my former years I believed an expert level certification was the holy grail of IT certifications. I personally never foresaw myself ever holding one, let alone two expert level certifications, so the ride so far has exceeded all of my expectations. My clients know that they can trust me when they ask for advice on their wireless LAN. Having the trust of your clients is the most important thing.

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

Partially because of the vendor agnosticism, partially because of other professionals I've seen presenting at the numerous conferences I've been to. They all hold CWNE certifications and they're all extremely knowledgeable in the field. I want to be the best at what I do. If the top pros in the industry hold a CWNE, then that's where I want to be as well.

What aspects to becoming certified do you feel are most important?

For me personally, the knowledge. I really feel as though I have a thorough understanding of the technology and how so many different factors can affect wireless networks. Having the confidence and skillset to approach any design or troubleshooting task has also been extremely valuable.

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

The publishing requirement. I'm not much of a blogger type. I regularly prepare long, thorough documentation pieces as part of my projects so additional writing was a difficult thing to push myself through. Being most interested in writing how-tos, it was hard to find topics that hadn't been already thoroughly covered by others. I tried to think of a few unique topics that you wouldn't think of normally, like troubleshooting using mobile phone tools, etc.

What would you say to anyone considering a CWNE designation?

Good luck! Be patient, study hard, don't take shortcuts, and try to just enjoy the whole learning experience without looking too far ahead.