

Unique CCDE Certification Showcases Network Design Skills

Summary
TONY BROWN, CCDE Solutions Enterprise Architect Verizon
INDUSTRY Telecommunications
CHALLENGE Reach top tier of his profession
SOLUTION Cisco Learning Network Certification Program
PROFESSIONAL BENEFITS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenging, widely varied job responsibilities• Industry-wide recognition and respect• Promotion to high-level architect role at Dow 30 company, working with many FTSE 100 companies

Challenge and Opportunity



Tony Brown has a job that only a handful of people in the world can do.

A solutions enterprise architect for Verizon, he works with enterprise sales teams from day one to design mission-critical networks for top tier, global multi-nationals with very complex needs and challenges. Technologies, regulations, service levels, country requirements, delivery, support and maintenance in remote locations—these are just a few of the elements that must be considered in his plans. As Tony explains, “We work closely with clients, even before

the RFP stage, to identify opportunities that they may not necessarily be aware of. It’s our job to listen and understand the business strategy and what organizations are trying to achieve before we can determine how best to serve them.”

Tony’s promotion to his present position 18 months ago is due, in part he believes, to his earning the highly esteemed Cisco CCDE® certification. “I received a lot of recognition at Verizon when I achieved the CCDE level; I am among a select group of people in the company with this certification.”

CCDE Latest in an Impressive Career Trajectory

Tony began his Cisco certification quest in the late 1990’s, earning a Cisco CCNA® certification in 1999, following with a Cisco CCNP® certification in 2001 and a Cisco CCIE® certification in Routing & Switching in 2002. His career paralleled his training, beginning with jobs in post-sales support, moving up to operations and implementation, then to technical design for other companies before he joined Verizon.

When he was ready to pursue a high-level design course, Cisco was there for him. Cisco launched its CCDE training in 2008 in response to IT professionals who had been clamoring for this type of certification. As Tony explains, “There are lots of peer technical CCIE tracks, but CCDE was the only one that matched my strategic design role. It is a unique, vendor-neutral course, based on universal design principles and technologies that can be applied to solving comprehensive business needs.” When Tony took the exam, he even met an employee from Juniper taking the Cisco CCDE training.

The CCDE certification program specifically aligns to the actual job roles of network design engineers who:

- Design practical, cost-conscious systems for specific business needs
- Translate complex business strategies into infrastructure requirements
- Apply industry-standard design principles and processes to develop customer solutions

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– Tony Brown, Solutions Enterprise Architect, Verizon

The rigorous self-paced training process took Tony over a year to complete. During that time he read everything on the recommended reading list and more, studied a raft of [Cisco Validated Designs](#) and attended Cisco Live sessions. He felt he was then ready to take the eight-hour scenario-based practical exam that tested his ability to identify, manage, and create advanced infrastructure design solutions for large-scale networks.

Advanced Cisco Certifications Convey Skill to Employers, Confidence to Customers

CCDE certification holders are recognized throughout the IT world as top-tier professionals who can design some of the most complex and advanced networks in the world, which is why Tony believed that the certification would be invaluable to his career.

Tony is also a registered Chartered Engineer, a prestigious, internationally known professional accreditation awarded by the UK Engineering Council. The title is only granted to engineers who graduate from an accredited institution, demonstrate they have years of relevant professional experience and who are nominated by two member Chartered Engineers. In acknowledgment of its valuable professional education role, it is worth noting that Cisco CCIE and CCDE certifications have counted towards Chartered Engineer education requirements for many years.

Verizon certainly values Cisco certifications as an integral part of its enterprise solutions business. The company is a Cisco Multinational Certified Partner, and to maintain that special relationship level, Verizon employs many CCIE-certified engineers in sales and support roles. Verizon demonstrated that it also recognized the value of the CCDE training by covering Tony's expenses for the exams and by promoting his achievement throughout the company.

Tony feels that the CCDE certification has been a good investment for him in several ways. He explains, “You realize along the way that you do have valuable knowledge and expertise. It's not just the piece of paper that is important, it's the work done in the process; you learn things in a lot of areas that you may never have considered before, and that makes you feel a bit wiser.”

Verizon clients can be assured that the sales team that Tony is a member of not only possesses the technical know-how but also the design experience, discipline and business savvy to comprehend their business needs and solve network challenges. That clearly demonstrable level of professionalism ultimately leads to higher customer satisfaction, and more customer wins, a major measure of Tony's success at Verizon.

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Next-Step Recommendations for IT Professionals

Tony notes that most people like him who have had CCIE certifications for many years move on to more strategic pre-sales and design roles. He says, “For those looking for new challenges in their career and have earned CCIEs in technical arenas but looking for a less hands-on and more strategic role, CCDE certification training can be an excellent vehicle for advancement.”

For More Information

The Cisco Learning Network is a social learning community focused on the IT industry. Its mission is to provide learning tools, training resources, and industry guidance to those interested in building an IT career through Cisco certifications. To find out more, go to: <https://learningnetwork.cisco.com/index.jspa>

