# CCIE Security Certification Advances Engineer on Career Path

SUMMARY

JEFF SAXE

INDUSTRY
· Information Services

CHALLENGE
· Advance career track, salary growth, and technical expertise

SOLUTION
· Cisco Learning Center Certification Program

PROFESSIONAL BENEFITS:
· Continued career and technical growth
· Increased job responsibilities
· Significant boost in salary and bonuses

Challenge and Opportunity
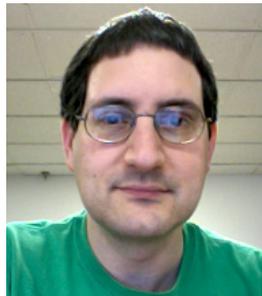
Jeff Saxe, Network Systems Architect, has been on a quest for over ten years: to further his knowledge and expertise in his chosen field of network engineering. Through a career spanning three different companies, Jeff has used the services of the Cisco Learning Network to add to his ever-growing expertise in network systems and increase his value to his employers.

"Shortening the time between encountering an unexpected roadblock and overcoming it, or better yet, foreseeing the roadblock and avoiding hitting it in the first place, will always appeal to project managers and executives," Jeff says. He attributes the Cisco Learning Network with giving him that high level of expertise.

His certification process has allowed him to expand his knowledge of Cisco equipment so he can fix day-to-day problems as well as take on more strategic and advanced responsibilities such as network security. As Jeff notes, "The Cisco courses have helped me make better up-front design choices and to perform operations and troubleshooting tasks more efficiently. They also forced me to learn things which I realized only later were relevant and useful."

Cisco Certifications Valued and Rewarded by Employers

Starting with the Cisco CCNA® certification he earned in 1999, Jeff continued his education as his career took him through two other companies and he progressed through the Cisco CCNP® certification. CCNA certification is designed for individuals beginning their career in network management and focuses on LAN and WAN installation, monitoring, and troubleshooting. CCNP certification validates a network professional's ability to install, configure, and troubleshoot converged local and wide area networks with 100 to 500 or more nodes.

Jeff obtained his CCIE® Routing and Switching certification in 2002 and a CCIE Security certification in 2008. This certification validates expert-level skills required for today's complex converged networks. It is the most popular and highly sought-after Cisco accreditation because of its universal effectiveness. The CCIE Security certification

is a role-based, expert-level certification that includes hands-on experience in designing, configuring, and troubleshooting Cisco security solutions. This globally recognized certification enables Jeff to distinguish himself as an expert in the network security field.

Each of his employers saw the value of his increasing capabilities. "All my employers have supported and encouraged me throughout the entire Cisco education and certification process," says Jeff. "It benefits them to have an employee who knows the gear and its capabilities, who gets things done quickly with the minimum possible impact to employees and customers, and who can both personally find problems and explain to other IT staff how to go about finding and fixing problems."

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> —Jeff Saxe, Network Systems Architect

In fact, his employers demonstrated that they recognized this value by covering his expenses for written and lab exams and by giving him time off to prepare for them. Jeff's career has also noticeably benefited from his continued education through the years, as he has consistently earned promotions with significant salary and bonus increases as his responsibilities have grown.

Cisco Certifications Keep Pace with Industry Trends and Employer Needs

Jeff is now a Systems Architect at SNL Financial, a privately held information services company with over 1700 employees that depend on its worldwide communications network to provide information and analysis to many thousands of customers. Jeff plays an important role in the continuing success of his company. He works on both short-term technical "hard problem" troubleshooting, and medium-to long-term network architecture planning to meet corporate performance, reliability, and accuracy goals.

Moving forward, Jeff sees his role as tracking network technology and computing trends as they develop and integrating them into SNL Financial systems. "Years ago, a company's IT staff could dictate that an employee could check his or her email only after logging into the corporate VPN from a company-issued trusted laptop; those days are long-gone," Jeff explains. "Now, everyone wants to be connected from any device at any time, with complete flexibility." Jeff will be in the forefront in planning and supporting that vision of painless, secure, worldwide connectivity for his company.

As for the future, SNL Financial has just completed the building a new data center. Coincidentally, Cisco has announced a two-year, expert-level Data Center CCIE track that will offer IT professionals, like Jeff, the opportunity to practice and master implementing, operating, monitoring, and troubleshooting complex data center networks from the targeted training.

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