# Use Cisco Certifications to Tap into a Networking Salary Boom
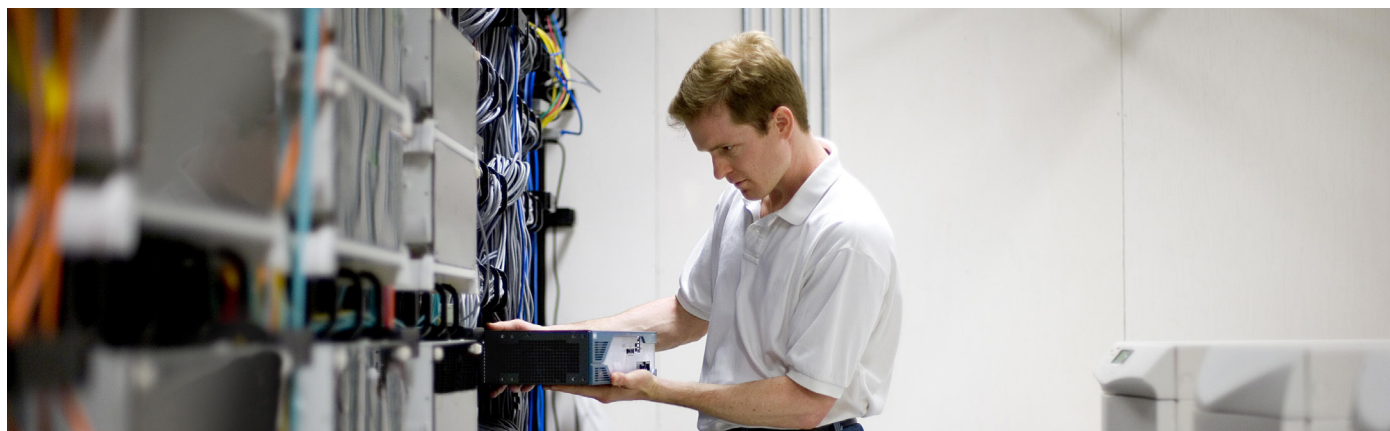


If you are looking to get ahead in the networking field, or considering the potential of a career in networking, you will find motivation in a Robert Half Technology (RHT) survey (as reported by Network World) regarding the 15 IT job titles most expected to see an increase in starting salaries between 2012 and 2013. Of the 15 jobs listed by RHT, five of them land squarely within the realm of networking:

- Wireless network engineer: projected 7.9 percent increase; 2013 estimated starting salary range of $85,500 to $117,000

- Network engineer: an increase of 7.8 percent; salary range of $80,750 to $116,250

- Network architect: an increase of 7 percent; salary range of $102,250 to $146,500

- Network manager: an increase of 7 percent; salary range of $88,500 to $122,500

- Network administrator: an increase of 6.8 percent; salary range of $62,750 to $93,250

This positive news comes at a time when there is a continuing need, especially in the United States, to plug technical gaps in the work force. According to a 2012 Talent Shortage Survey conducted by ManpowerGroup, "49 percent of U.S. employers struggle to fill mission-critical positions." In addition, the survey notes, "skilled trades, engineering, and IT positions continue to rank among the top 10 hardest jobs to fill, year after year."

It's a supply-and-demand challenge that will likely persist well into the future, given Cisco's projection that the world will hold 50 billion network devices (seven per person) by 2020. But Cisco has been steadily rising to meet that challenge with its ever-evolving certifications program.

Aspiring networkers—and those already in the field looking for a bigger piece of the pie—would do well to consider networking certification. Employers increasingly expect to see it on a resume, and they need freshly trained individuals in the face of rapidly changing technology.

Do an online search for top networking certifications and you will invariably find Cisco certifications populating the lists. Certifications at the associate level (Cisco CCNA® or Cisco CCDA®) can help launch you into roles such as the network engineer and network administrator titles mentioned in the RHT salary survey. A certification at the professional level (Cisco CCNP® or Cisco CCDP®) could serve you well in a senior network engineer or network manager position, and an expert-level certification (Cisco CCIE®) would be something to aim for in pursuit of a network architect berth.

Within each of the Cisco certification levels, there are concentrations and specializations, so it is important to study your options well, and think about the aspects of networking that stimulate you the most. With the ability of the Cisco Certifications program to allow you to focus in areas as far-ranging as routing and switching, data center, security, voice, wireless, service provider, and video, it pays to get informed. A great place to start your learning odyssey is the Training & Events section of Cisco.com.

The complete Robert Half Technology 2013 Salary Guide is available for free as a download on the RHT site.

CISCO