Thoroughly Prepared for Networking: Martin Brown, Morrisons

Summary

MARTIN BROWN, CCENT, CCNA, CCNP, CCNP Security, CCDA
Network Engineer, Morrisons

INDUSTRY
Supermarket chain

CHALLENGE
Felt stuck in his job and inadequately prepared to answer networking questions

SOLUTION
Earned multiple Cisco certifications

PROFESSIONAL BENEFITS:
- Better able to address network issues at work
- Moved to more senior job

Challenging Day Leads to Career Decision

Martin Brown sat in a Brussels hotel room pondering the challenging day he just had on a support call as a product specialist for security systems for a firm based in the United Kingdom. The customer had raised network questions, and Martin had again felt inadequately prepared to answer them. He felt stuck in his job as well, and unable to progress. But an idea had been forming in his mind. As he sat there, he found himself writing "CCENT" and "CCNA" on the hotel stationery.

That was in 2009. Four years later, Martin has earned Cisco CCENT®, CCNA®, CCNP®, CCNP Security, and CCDA® certifications. He has also passed the CCIE® written exam, and is currently studying for the lab exam.

Publications and Videos Start Process

For Martin, the road to this achievement began with poring over Cisco Press books and watching video tutorials during the evenings and over weekends. By the time he earned his CCNA certification, he was getting better at helping out with network issues on the job. "Every time I helped out a customer with a network issue, it was a little bit more experience, a little bit more of a learning process," he says.

Even so, Martin realized that if he wanted to move to a more senior level, he would need a CCNP certification. Because he was in a security role already, he earned his CCNP Security certification first, but then moved on to the CCNP certification in routing and switching as he began to see the value that companies place on those skills. In between the two CCNP certifications, Martin decided to go after his CCDA certification for network design, and was successful on the first try.

It was on a business call in Gdansk with a networking colleague that Martin got excited about the prospect of achieving CCIE certification. Says Martin, "A colleague saw me reading my Cisco Press book in my extra time and said, 'You're really dedicated. Why don't you go all the way for the CCIE?' That made me even more inspired, even more driven. It was just the way he said it, him believing in me that I could go so much further."

Good Career Move

While Martin was initially going to stay at his job until after earning his CCIE certification, he decided to circulate his resume and, early in 2013, landed his current job as a network engineer with Morrisons, a major U.K. supermarket chain of 520 stores. He is very much enjoying his new role. "The network behind Morrisons is just amazing," Martin says. "I have access to around 10,000 switches. Right now I'm working on a network integration project, taking out the network they've got, which is all HP stuff, and installing Cisco."

"Thorough preparation makes a huge difference when you start a job and begin to use that certification, because you're absolutely confident that you know the subject."

– Martin Brown, Network Engineer, Morrisons

Advice for Others

Martin advises others interested in a similar certification journey to immerse themselves in everything they can, and to do their very best in studying. Martin continues practicing what he preaches by preparing for his CCIE lab exam on a full CCIE rack set up in his hallway at home. "Thorough preparation," he says, "makes a huge difference when you start a job and begin to use that certification, because you're absolutely confident that you know the subject."

For More Information

To learn more about how Cisco certifications can prepare you for the next step in your career, visit www.cisco.com/go/nextlevel.

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