Having Started Earning Cisco Certifications in His Student Days, He Joins the Best of the Best with His CCIE Routing and Switching Certification

Cisco Career Certifications

Case Study Subject

Taro Oishi, Enterprise SDN Team, Applied Technologies Department, Business Promotion Division, Net One Systems Co., Ltd.

Industry

IT

Challenge

Building foundation skills and knowledge in networking technology

Solutions

· Cisco CCDP (2016)

· Cisco CCIE Routing and Switching (2015)

· Cisco CCNP Routing and Switching (2014)

· Cisco CCNA Routing and Switching (2013)

· Cisco CCENT (2012)

Professional Benefits

Improved ability to solve customer problems and provide better service

Cisco Certifications Are "the Blueprint for Building a Foundation in Networking Technology"

With an interest in networks since the time he started college, Mr. Oishi learned of the existence of Cisco certifications during the course of his own self-study. "I earned my entry-level Cisco CCENT certification when I was in my fourth year of college. After I spent three months researching how I should study, I started exchanging information with students at other universities who were interested in taking the same test. Eventually I tackled it." Along with studying reference books to prepare for the test, he actually installed about a dozen Cisco routers and switches in his own home. Later, in his first year of graduate school, he obtained Cisco CCNA and CCNP Routing and Switching certifications. In his second year, he passed the Cisco CCIE Routing and Switching written exam.

Having earned a number of certifications while in college, Mr. Oishi now feels that the Cisco technician certifications are "the blueprint for building a foundation in networking technology."

"Before, I had been studying by diving into reference books haphazardly, and in any given area, I didn't even know how much I had learned. But because the certification exams gave me something to aim for, I was able to study to a certain skill level and achieve the result of earning a certification. And I think this gave me the motivation to continue studying."

Mr. Oishi also observed that "for a student with no real-world experience, qualifications are a powerful weapon, because they give you an objective way to demonstrate your skill level." When he was taking his company entrance exam, the fact that he had earned Cisco certifications helped him communicate better with his interviewer, he said, further reinforcing for him the value of those certifications.

Repeated Contact with the Equipment Helps Solidify Technical Knowledge

Entering Net One Systems as a network integrator in 2015, Mr. Oishi found his place in the networking industry. In September that year, he passed the CCIE Routing and Switching lab exam on his first try, giving him official CCIE credentials. Although he had passed the written exam in college, Mr. Oishi found the lab exam to be "another dimension of difficulty."

"When I took the CCIE exam, I had a general knowledge of the configuration guides for the equipment used in the exam. Even though I had only run through it once before, my muscle memory already knew how to type in certain commands. Having gone through configurations any number of times made those procedures part of my muscle memory, so when I was taking the exam, I could read a question and instantly react by typing in the command."

For about three months after he began preparing for the CCIE exam in earnest, he studied for four hours in the morning and after work on weekdays and spent 12 hours in focused study on weekends, taking a course offered by a Cisco authorized training partner. Looking back, he said with a laugh, "I was answering questions in my dreams."

Seeing Networks as a Whole Reveals the Breadth of Cisco Products

Today, Mr. Oishi is responsible for Cisco Catalyst products, wireless LAN products, and Cisco Prime Infrastructure products, specifically testing for commercialization and functionality, responding to inquiries, and assisting with projects. Once the decision has been made to handle a new product, commercialization is the process of building a support network throughout the company's departments, including a service organization and inspection organization for that product, and technical and marketing assistance for sales.
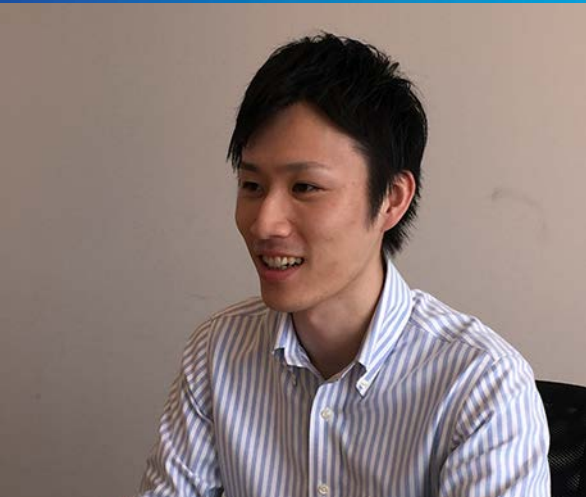
"We have departments providing companywide technical support that are always up on the latest technology and engineers with technical abilities that tower over even the other people in the company, who are generally very experienced. Doing a job in an environment where you constantly need to keep learning is a powerful motivator. It is the best environment for growth as an engineer."

Although he has been at the company for only half a year, having his CCIE certification has enabled Mr. Oishi to take on a broad set of responsibilities, handling everything from proposing inspection procedures to coordinating entire projects. Of working with Cisco products he says, "Because they cover everything—routers, switches, security, management products, wireless LANs—it's hard to imagine networking as a whole without Cisco." The value of studying for the exams has been made tangible to Mr. Oishi, he says, in the way that he can set configurations from memory, without looking at a guide, and find answers right away when he has questions. Still, he wants to push further. "I'm going to keep updating my CCIE certification, because I don't want to let up on myself, and I like being able to use that goal to create an environment where I can put pressure on myself."

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For Engineers, CCIE Certification Can Give a Sharper Focus to Their Lives

After being put in charge of wireless LAN products this year, Mr. Oishi's next goal is to earn CCIE Wireless certification. "I can see taking the exam this year, but there aren't as many reference materials for it as there are for CCIE Routing and Switching, so I'll be studying Cisco's configuration guides and white papers." In the long term, he plans to build on his CCIE Routing and Switching certification by extending his networking knowledge to servers and software, to become the kind of engineer who can see the complete network.

Studying for an exam with a broad scope like the CCIE exams can be like starting a walk on "a road where the end isn't in sight," Mr. Oishi says, but he finds that diligent study of the material that is before him at the beginning brings it into view. He told me that the secret of passing the CCIE exams is ceaseless study until he reaches his goal. "Maybe I'm only saying this because I passed the exams, but I feel that the CCIE certification is a more valuable qualification for all of the time and effort I poured into it." No doubt his experiences are a good motivator for anyone else seeking to earn CCIE certification.

For More Information

To learn more about Cisco CCIE certifications, visit learningnetwork.cisco.com/community/certifications (login required).