***Information security expert’ career advice***

I got my start as a security engineer first working doing basic IT work helping users reset passwords building networks and then security always came in as a part of the design or a part of the patch management and repair. So just kind of getting that experience really launched me into the field but then working with firewalls over a decade ago and then getting certifications like ComptIA security plus help kind of launch it into a full-time career.

As an information security professional there really isn't a typical day at work. There's so much happening in the media and in the field that's changing and evolving whether products are having new vulnerabilities or researchers are coming out with really interesting ways to circumvent the controls. So it's something that we just keep up with all the time but the day to day work it's actually a lot of fun and it's rewarding because when you're helping people stay compliant protect their data. That's really valuable and that's why I enjoy what I do.

So for someone looking to get into the field of information security the best advice that I can give them is to do a lot of reading. Really learn technology, learn operating systems, learn Hardware, learn networking, learn mobile devices. And then as you've learned that stuff always keep security in the back of your mind as well as the forefront as a practitioner and then go out there and do stuff with it, get certified, go out there and share with the community information that you've learned. So this way as you're kind of blossoming in your career you always feel like there's something going on it's never stagnant.

Industry certifications have helped a lot in my career. I believe having that certification has opened up doors for me in other areas where if here's somebody has a lot of experience just like myself but I've proven that I can pass the baseline exams and have that common body of knowledge like with the ComptIA is like Security+ or network plus or even the CISSP therefore that actually gives me the better chance to interview versus being screened.

A degree has helped me in my career by opening up a lot of doors. So if I didn't have a degree then when I would be going out and trying to apply for position in an organization. That degree helped me further along in the screening process it's also when you're in information security field it's a very hands-on field so you need that hands-on experience as well when you do have that combination of the experience and the degree it certainly does help you move up within organizations a lot more rapidly. While I was working on my degree I was thinking of making certain kinds of investments and I can make an investment on an organization and not have much control in the fate of what's going to happen with that organization but betting on myself, getting that degree was a lifetime investment so knowing that I'll be able to use that degree going forward for anything I want to do in my career certainly helped definitely return on that investment.