

Title:

Your Information Technology Career: Certification vs. Experience

Word Count:

440

Summary:

Whether you're starting or jumpstarting your IT career, the "certification vs. experience" question is going to come up. Chris Bryant, CCIE #12933, tells you how to get the best of both worlds.

Keywords:

ccna, ccnp, cisco, mcse, certification, exam, pass, free, a+, network+, networking, computer

Article Body:

Whether you're just starting your Information Technology career, or wanting to get further ahead in your current IT career, you have probably thought about earning one of the many popular computer certifications such as the Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) certification, or the MCSE (Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer) cert.

A major point of frustration for individuals pursuing one of these certifications is a possible lack of experience with these technologies. Many future CCNAs or MCSEs simply stop trying to earn their certification, feeling that their lack of experience will hold them back.

Adding to this are those in IT who will stop everything they're doing at the drop of a hat to stomp on the dreams of others. I recently saw a post by an IT newcomer on a popular website where he declared his intention of earning his CCNA. Within minutes, several naysayers popped up and told him that he shouldn't bother, it wouldn't do any good due to his lack of experience, etc. (Did you ever notice that people who bash certifications generally don't have any themselves?)

I am in no way discounting the importance of experience. What I am saying is that every single one of us was a beginner at one point, and a lot of IT professionals forget this. None of us was born knowing everything we know today, and we shouldn't spend any time dismissing the goals of others in the IT field, or those just breaking in.

I am speaking from experience on this point. I had a tough time breaking into

the IT field, and made a lot of calls and knocked on a lot of doors before I got in. I found out later that the reason I got that entry-level job is that I had a professional certification where the other candidates did not.

The pursuit of certification is the pursuit of knowledge, and in our field, you can never have too much knowledge. If your work is strictly on the Local Area Network side, don't let that stop you from pursuing a CCNA. If you work exclusively on the WAN side, don't let that stop you from going after your MCSE. If you're just breaking into Information Technology, don't let a lack of experience prevent you from studying for your A+, Network+, or even your MCSE or CCNA.

Because one day, opportunity is going to knock - and the more you know, the readier you'll be to answer that knock! Use your long-range vision to envision the day when you will have both experience and certification - an unbeatable combination.