



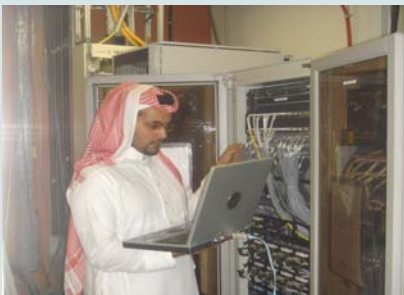
SPARE-TIME STUDY HELPS MOHAMMED LAND DREAM JOB

CISCO NETWORKING ACADEMY PROGRAM

SUCCESS STORY

Saudi Arabia

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Mohammed Al-Kady

"It's thanks to the Cisco Networking Academy Program that I acquired the knowledge, skills and also the confidence that I needed to prove myself in my new position as Deputy Manager. The Program has given me the chance to improve myself and aim for a better future."

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After a slow start to his career, an ambitious young man from Saudi Arabia has found that the Cisco Networking Academy Program was exactly what he needed to get on the fast track.

In just over two years Mohammed Al-Kady has made the leap from directory enquiries operator to Network Engineer at the Saudi Telecommunications Company (STC). He considers that the Cisco Networking Academy Program played a major part in securing his ideal job, although he had already acquired a degree in IT before joining the Program. He says, "It's thanks to the Academy Program that I've become self-reliant in working with the latest technologies and equipment, and able to solve technical problems fast."

At a personal level, Mohammed is delighted with the upward turn his career has taken. "Working as an operator was very routine and monotonous. Within the Networks Department, I face new challenges and learn new things every day."

Leading a Double Life

Mohammed, now aged 30, is a highly motivated individual who has never been afraid of hard work - even in double doses. In 1997, he began work as a directory enquiries operator with STC, answering client phone calls and providing them with the information that they required. "I was overqualified for the work, but this was the kind of job that was available to me as a high school graduate."

At around the same time, he enrolled for a Computer Science degree at the King Abdul Aziz University. For the next five years, Mohammed studied for his degree in the morning and worked at his job for eight hours each evening. "It is quite common here to work and study at the same time, but it is certainly tiring. I was determined to do it because I was very interested in computing and had noticed that the career prospects in I.T. were good."

Networks did not form a major part of his degree studies, but as he did his directory enquiries job, Mohammed began to develop a consuming interest in networking technology. "Sometimes when we had a problem with the call centre network I used to come into contact with the technical support team, including the network engineers. I was struck by the innovative and creative approaches they took to problem-solving, and I decided then that that was the job for me."

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“Without Cisco Networking Academy Program, I’m certain that Mohammed could not do his current job as efficiently as he does. The training has increased both his knowledge and efficiency.

Faisal H. Al-Otaibi - STC

Once Mohammed had completed his degree in computer science, he was fortunate enough to land a technical support job within STC’s I.T. Department in Jeddah. There his interest in networks strengthened, particularly as he had the opportunity to work alongside colleagues who were qualified network engineers. "My new job showed me just how important networks are to the working environment, especially in a big company like STC. I also realised that networks are one of the most important factors in recent I.T. progress."

Cisco Networking Academy Program Delivers Fast Results

In order to pursue his growing interest in networks, Mohammed realised that he would need to supplement his degree with more specialised training. When he heard from a colleague that a Cisco Networking Academy was about to open at the Jeddah International Computer Centre (JICC), he saw that this could be the answer. So in January 2003, Mohammed joined the Cisco Networking Academy Program, with the full encouragement of STC management.

The course fully met his expectations. "The Program provided me with knowledge of the networking environment, its operation and a variety of relevant equipment. I also discovered how LAN and WAN systems could be used to create a better work environment." He completed the Cisco Certified Networking Associate™ (CCNA) course in seven months and then passed the CCNA exam on his first attempt.

Some months after completing his studies, Mohammed moved to a new job as an engineer within the Networks Department - a change with which he was delighted. In this role, he began to share responsibility for looking after the important networks that enable STC's business. "I had a great deal of independence in my new job, and was facing new challenges daily. I was learning to be flexible and to take bold decisions." Even before he had completed the CCNA course, Mohammed discovered he could apply material from the Academy Program to his daily work. "Everything I learned was relevant to the real-life situations I was meeting in my job."

Mohammed believes it's as a result of his Cisco studies that he has recently been asked to act as Deputy Manager of STC's Networks Department - a job that he very much enjoys. "I now have even more opportunity to put what I've learned on the Program into practice. My current job is all about solving network problems. Every day I encounter different issues, which may be at the level of the user, department, or an entire LAN or WAN. I also monitor network performance and use software tools to pinpoint the locations where problems are occurring."

Faisal Al-Otaibi emphasises the value of Mohammed's work to STC. "His job is essential to our department's daily business of network planning, implementation and maintenance. The skills and knowledge he has gained from his training have a strong positive influence on our daily work. They are saving us time and helping us to achieve better accuracy and reliability."

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Studying For a Better Future

Mohammed would like to progress to the role of departmental manager for STC's western region, and ultimately aims to become an expert in the networking field, whether he specialises in implementation, design or maintenance. He sees further study as an essential enabler of those ambitions. He is currently studying for the Cisco Certified Networking Professional™ (CCNP) qualification and hopes that a formal course will open in Jeddah soon. After that he has ambitions to become a Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert™ (CCIE).

Mohammed unreservedly recommends the Cisco Networking Academy Program to anyone interested in working with networks. "The combination of technical knowledge with practical skills is your gateway to the wide world of networking." As regards his own career, he is in no doubt about the part that the Program has played. "It's thanks to the Cisco Networking Academy Program that I acquired the knowledge, skills and also the self-confidence that I needed to prove myself in my new position as Deputy Manager. The Program has given me the chance to improve myself and aim for a better future."