

Why get certified



12 reasons for seeking training and certification



With testimonials from IT networkers who met the challenge

[Get started](#)

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We live in exciting times to be working in technology. While the words “digital transformation” can sometimes feel overused, we are indeed in a digital era where so much of our technology is dramatically transforming.

Cloud has come from the realm of virtually nonexistent to exerting an influence today upon networking, data center, security, analytics, and virtualization. Cybersecurity, likewise, has become an urgent need in all technology sectors and is constantly evolving in the face of increasingly sophisticated cyberattacks.

And then there’s data center, which has come to play a central role in the business landscape; the Internet of Things, vitally important to our digital lives in its ability

to connect a staggering amount of data and devices; and software-defined networking, which has ushered in a sea change in how networks can be managed via automation. But through it all, routing and switching remains a core foundation of knowledge that IT networking professionals can build from in their career adventure.

These vibrant technological developments all coming at once can seem overwhelming—you need to be able to catch the waves of change and ride them smoothly. It’s precisely why we believe that right now is the best time to explore what solid training and certification can do to focus you and help make you a technical superstar in your organization.

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Check out the [Global Knowledge 2018 IT Skills and Salary Report](#), a survey of more than 16,000 technology professionals, if you need confirmation on the value of technical certifications.

Global Knowledge's 2013 report had touted that 70 percent of those surveyed affirmed that certifications make for more effective staff. In the 2018 report, however, that amount is well over 90 percent.

[Pearson VUE's 2017 Value of IT Certification Survey](#) polled 29,000+ certification exam test takers. A stunning 86 percent said that they would recommend certification to a colleague.

Cisco can offer you [training and certification](#) for all of the hot fields mentioned above and more. But, first, you need more answers to the question of why it matters. With this

eBook, we'd like to share with you our answers—gathered from interactions over the years with Cisco certification holders—to the basic question of “why get certified?”

We interviewed your peers in the certification community about the personal value of Cisco certification to them, and arrived at a dozen great reasons to give training and certification some serious thought.

Have a read through the following pages and be sure to follow the links for the fuller story on the various certification holders we have spotlighted here. We trust that you'll walk away with a sense of what training and certification can do for you in your career.

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69 percent of IT hiring managers say that certifications increase their confidence in an applicant's knowledge of the future direction of IT.¹

Benefit 1 | Knowledge

Benefit 2 | Skill

Benefit 3 | Validation

Benefit 4 | Credibility

Benefit 5 | Responsibility

Benefit 6 | Confidence

Benefit 7 | Value

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Knowledge: The systematic study of your field via a certification program can help you understand it inside and out so that you are more adept at attacking technical and business problems at many levels to arrive at a solution.

Meet Ajet Ibraimoski

Senior Infrastructure/Systems Analyst Ajet Ibraimoski has used Cisco's storehouse of knowledge to help ace his CCNA Cyber Ops certification exam and add to his know-how on the job. Cisco Packet Tracer, online training, prerecorded videos, mentors, simulations, labs, Cisco Press books—Ajet has left no stone unturned in his quest to understand the security field.



"Cisco is the biggest network vendor in the world, so if you want to learn networks, you turn to Cisco—with Cisco certification, you learn all different facets of security. It gives you an edge to design the right solution, right away—a solution that's more secure, available, and scalable."

—Ajet Ibraimoski,
Senior Infrastructure/Systems Analyst

> [Get the full story on Ajet](#)

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70 percent of IT professionals preparing for certification exams in the last year reported improved effectiveness on the job.²

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Skill: A good certification program offers discipline and repeated practice—with the structure to help you deeply engrain a skill set, and perform tasks more effectively and efficiently.

Meet Randy Gates

Randy Gates left the security of a military career for the improved job prospects and flexibility of life as a freelance network engineer. To realize this goal, Randy needed to ramp up his skill level fast. Picking up a couple Cisco Routing and Switching certifications got him up to speed—and now companies continue to call him back for freelance jobs.



“Everything is tied into the network now, so you can’t go wrong with Cisco Routing and Switching certification. Once a person learns how a network operates, they get a tremendous understanding of what goes on in the real world.”

—Randy Gates,
Network Engineer/Systems Engineer

> [Learn more about Randy and listen to him tell his story.](#)

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74 percent of IT leaders agree that certifications validate individuals' knowledge, skills, and abilities.³

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Validation: Think of certification as a recognized badge of honor that the rest of the world accepts and buys into.

Meet Jenny Guay

In search of her first job in the cybersecurity field, Jenny Guay didn't have a lot of experience yet to show her prospective employer in the interview, but there is one thing she did have: her CCNA Cyber Ops certification. It was sweet validation of her hard work to be able to answer questions with precision and to get the job.



"Cisco certification shows an employer that you have time management and project management skills, as well as the ability to complete a project that you start. It looks impressive on a resume that you were able to study for something challenging and then continue on to pass the certification exam."

—Jenny Guay,
Security Operations Center (SOC) Operator

> [Learn more about Jenny and listen to her tell her story.](#)

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70 percent of IT leaders believe certifications are an indicator of applicants' qualifications.⁴

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Credibility: With validation goes credibility. Achievement via a strong certification program helps to establish with peers, managers, and customers that you know what you're doing.

Meet Sharon March

Sharon March is a manager of field technical consultants at Avnet, one of the world's largest business-to-business distributors. It is a company requirement that she and her staff have CCNP Data Center certification in order to engage with customers around Cisco data center products and solutions. It's vital expertise, she says, for establishing credibility.



"Out in the field with the VARs, our field technical consultants are talking to engineers who know their stuff. Those engineers are going out and selling UCS data center solutions. To gain their confidence, you'd better have a Professional-level certification attached to your name."

—Sharon March,
Manager, Cisco Technical Team at Avnet

> [Explore further Sharon's path to success.](#)

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Certified IT pros are more than five times more influential in IT decision making.⁵

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Responsibility: We don't mean responsibility as in "obligation"—we mean the ability to take on added responsibility from your employer that will help you grow in your career.

Meet Brian Nelson

Still early in his career as a Junior Network Engineer, Brian Nelson has dug in to earn his CCENT and CCNA Routing and Switching certifications. He found himself becoming a better engineer as a result of all the preparation. His boss noticed too and rewarded him with more projects. When his boss went on paternity leave, Brian was able to shine further.



"I'm a strong advocate of Cisco certifications. They gave me a competitive advantage and helped establish me as a standout performer. In fact, I was made the second point of contact for network issues for our team."

—Brian Nelson,
Junior Network Engineer

> [Read on for more details about Brian.](#)

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65 percent of those who took a certification exam last year reported a positive impact on their professional image.⁶

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Confidence: With the knowledge and increased skill gained from certification, and the rewards that accrue to that, comes increased confidence to do the job, which can build even further progress and self-assurance.

Meet Travis Reiling

Travis Reiling was feeling anything but confident in his job at a call center—yelled at by someone every day, and never thanked for his efforts. He turned things around by earning CCNA Routing and Switching, promptly getting a better job, and then garnering two more CCNA certifications. Travis is now a Network Engineer and enjoying the increased self-esteem.



“With multiple Cisco certifications, I can bring employers best practices. One employer had problems with their VLANs, and I applied what I learned from my CCNA to make things work and implement it into their network. It gives me a big sense of pride; I can prove that I know it and it’s not all talk.”

—Travis Reiling,
Network Engineer

> [Get the full story on Travis.](#)

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95 percent of IT decision makers believe certification provides added value to their organization.⁷

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Value: All those good things like knowledge, skill, validation, ability to take on added responsibility, and confidence translate to your increased value as a successful performer in the eyes of employers and customers.

Meet Ismael Aguayo

A self-proclaimed “cert junkie,” Ismael Aguayo has a testing lab in his garage, spends Saturdays studying, and tutors his buddies twice a week on Cisco technology. Ismael has earned three Cisco certifications, and he’s seen how they have elevated his value in the eyes of employers, as evidenced by promotion and multiple job offers.



“With CCNA I saw much more of the spectrum of networking and became a lot more comfortable taking projects. It’s where I went from being just another engineer on the team to someone who was getting even more serious and who people could come to with questions.”

–Ismael Aguayo,
Network Engineer

> [Explore further Ismael’s path to success.](#)

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76 percent of IT leaders believe that IT certifications help accelerate addition of new capabilities.⁸

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Versatility: A robust certification portfolio allows you to make forays into different technology arenas, using those added skills to enhance your current strengths and discover new interests.

Meet Shane Werlinger

Shane Werlinger has a love of learning that keeps him moving forward. The former home remodeler moved into a helpdesk role at an engineering firm, where it was suggested he improve his networking knowledge to be a backup. To get there, he earned his CCENT and CCNA Routing and Switching certifications and now has a nice position in IT Infrastructure Support. Next stop: CCNA Cyber Ops.



“People call me no matter what the problem is, even if it’s something I don’t normally deal with, like servers. I learned so much about the world of networking through the Cisco training courses. Before, I didn’t know much more than the basics. The courses prepared me to work with routers and switches, go from our data center to a remote office, and more. My certifications give our team more flexibility.”

–Shane Werlinger, IT Infrastructure Support

> [Read on for more details about Shane.](#)

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Networking, cloud, and security are the top three areas of interest to IT professionals who intend to take training in 2018.⁹

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Opportunity: Those who certify and gain new skills and knowledge in the process stand a greater chance of breaking out of possible job silos, taking advantage of cross-functional team roles, and being in better position for exciting career change.

Meet Ronald Boestfleisch, Jr.

Eight years as a helpdesk rep had brought Ronald Boestfleisch's career to a standstill. But he was inspired to become a network engineer and used a bachelor's degree and four Cisco certifications to propel himself into his chosen field. It was a lot of hard work, but opportunity has knocked as a result. Ronald has now positioned himself for a Senior Network Engineer position.



"Many employers offer incentives to employees who want to better themselves by getting certifications. That way, they gain employees who have more knowledge and skills, and really know what they're doing. When I say I'm certified, employers' ears perk up. It really helps with marketability and is a benchmark for a career."

—Ronald Boestfleisch, Jr.,
Network Engineer 2, Managed Services Operations, Ops Control

> [Get the full story on Ronald.](#)

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Cisco skills are included more frequently in hiring requirements than 97 percent of all skills requested.¹⁰

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Hireability: Time and again, we hear that certification is one of those assets that employers automatically look for when it comes time to seek out new talent.

Meet Franklin Morillo Montas

Franklin Morillo Montas has wasted no time following his love of networking. He earned his CCNA Routing and Switching certification before graduating high school and achieved CCNP Routing and Switching while still in college. With those two certifications under his belt, Franklin became immediately hireable and was picked up by an IT firm, where he is now an Associate Network Engineer.



“During my first interview at an IT firm, when they found out I was certified, that was the key to them hiring me. Without certification, I wouldn’t be in my present role. Companies are looking for people who are certified. It proves that you know the equipment, and can do the job.”

–Franklin Morillo Montas,
Associate Network Engineer

> [Read on for more details about Franklin.](#)

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7 out of 10 organizations look for IT certifications when hiring or promoting.¹¹

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Advancement: Being certified gets you noticed by your employer, who is more likely to remember your initiative when making decisions about promotion.

Meet Julio Hernandez

“Stressful,” is how Julio Hernandez describes his first IT role working in a call center. Because he didn’t have any further job experience, he found himself being passed up for better opportunities. Julio let his boss know that he was going after his CCENT certification and then followed that up with CCNA Routing and Switching. Now he’s climbing through the ranks as a Network Security Administrator.



“The more training I get, the better I look. I won’t be passed up for opportunities anymore. My certifications have helped me move from being a Tier 1 employee to Tier 3 and 4. It’s also benefitted my employer, since the more knowledge and responsibilities I gain, the less outside help they need.”

—Julio Hernandez,
Network Security Administrator

> [Learn more about Julio](#) and [listen to him tell his story](#).

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In North America, the difference between salaries of certified and noncertified IT staff is 22 percent. In Asia-Pacific, the difference is 45 percent.¹²

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Salary: As this list demonstrates, there is much more to certification than a fatter paycheck, but with advancement and career progression, more money can follow.

Meet Shane Woolf

Shane Woolf has a lot happening on the home front—he and his wife have built a blended family of two biological children and six foster children. A good salary has helped him with that commitment, and he credits his CCNA Routing and Switching and CCNA Collaboration certifications as helping to pay dividends and get him to his current level as a Senior Unified Communications Systems Engineer.



“Cisco certifications helped me springboard my career to senior level—with more responsibilities, a title, and a salary increase. And it helped my employer, too, by giving them one more person to do the function they’re requesting.”

—Shane Woolf,
Senior Unified Communications Systems Engineer

> [Explore further Shane’s path to success.](#)

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Whether you're thinking about your first certification or are re-exploring the possibility of an additional credential, we hope that you have found some goal-setting inspiration in the stories of those who have gone the distance and gotten trained and certified.

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References

1. IDC Future of IT Survey, December 2017.
2. Global Knowledge, 2018 IT Skills and Salary Report.
3. IDC Future of IT Survey, December 2017.
4. IDC InfoBrief, "20 Most Significant IT Roles You Should Consider," March 2018.
5. IDC InfoBrief, "3 Ways IT Certification Helps Improve Your IT Operations," May 2018.
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Summary

We trust that at least some of the 12 reasons to get certified have resonated with you.

Our digital era—with all of its excitement and change—dares us to keep up with it. As many of the individuals highlighted in this book have discovered, the pace of innovation in today's technology arenas makes it difficult to earn just a single certification and then rest on one's laurels. Just as businesses must always stay innovative and one step ahead of the curve to thrive, so must you.

For many of us, the pace is motivating. Often the conquering of one certification challenge fires us up for the next one—part of a lifelong learning journey to be the best at what we do.

If you're ready to learn more, we have some ideas for you:

- [Read our white papers](#) to learn more about specific subject areas.
- [Listen in on our training videos and webinars](#) for further immersion in the latest technological developments and solutions.
- Get some expert career development guidance with our ["Create Your Career" toolkit, videos, and webinars](#).
- Join a [study group](#) if you are ready to take the plunge.
- Dig into the [Study Material Master List](#) we have compiled on the Cisco Learning Network.

- Explore a few avenues for funding your certification pursuit with our eBook ["Becoming an IT Professional: Tips and Resources for Paying for Cisco CCNA Certification and More."](#)

Ask any of the certification holders highlighted in this eBook, and they'll tell you that training and certification transformed their careers. Their incomes. And their skill sets.

But beyond that, training and certification transformed their lives. They gained the self-confidence that comes from setting goals, then accomplishing them. And that self-confidence continues to empower them on their career paths, as they build their knowledge base—and reach new levels of growth and mastery.

We hope that training and certification empowers—and transforms—your career too.

