

Cisco CCIE: Supporting 20 Years of Knowledge Growth and a Thriving Career

Cisco Career Certifications
Learning Network Case Study

Summary

KS GANESAN, CCIE

Vice President and CTO of Cognizant Infrastructure Services

INDUSTRY

Information technology, consulting, and business process outsourcing services

CHALLENGE

Keeping pace with technology changes to better serve Cognizant's customers and support career growth

SOLUTION

Cisco Network Certification Programs

PROFESSIONAL BENEFITS:

- Challenging, ever-evolving job responsibilities
- Global, industry-wide recognition and respect
- Opportunity to build on a solid knowledge base

Challenge and Opportunity



KS Ganesan is a perpetual student—in the best sense of the term. KSG, as he is called by customers and colleagues alike, is vice president and CTO of Infrastructure Services at Cognizant, the US\$10 billion provider of IT, consulting, and business process outsourcing services. In his view, this client-facing position requires him to function as both technologist and manager. Adding value to customer engagements is always top of mind. “I am a great believer in history and in Darwin’s theory of evolution,” he says. “The smartest do not always survive. Those who adapt to change, continue to learn, and provide superior services do.”

KSG’s experience with Cisco certifications began some 20 years ago when he obtained a Cisco® Certified Internetwork Expert (CCIE) certification in routing and switching. In fact, KSG was CCIE #1750, the first technologist in India to receive this coveted designation. In doing so, he joined a highly respected group and set the tone for his work life going forward. He has since continued to broaden and deepen his areas of expertise, recertifying regularly. He notes that the CCIE program has enabled him to build on his knowledge base—learning cloud design and software defined networking (SDN), for example—and to help customers achieve their business and technology goals.

Certifications Directly Related to Job Role

KSG has recently completed the Cisco CCIE Security certification. This credential recognizes those who have the knowledge and skills to implement, maintain, and support Cisco’s extensive network security solutions with the latest industry best practices and technologies.

“Public and private cloud-based infrastructure services are an integral part of Cognizant’s offerings,” says KSG, “with security linking all technology stacks together. My Cisco CCIE Security certification helps Cognizant and our clients. Building the cloud requires mastery of the security space, and having a Cisco CCIE Security certification helps me add value to the cloud infrastructures I’ve designed. It is highly relevant to what I do every day, and, on a personal level, it is important in my efforts toward mastering technology.”

A Personal and Professional ROI

From the beginning, KSG’s desire to attain more and better knowledge has been his prime professional value driver. As he puts it, “I began my career 27 years ago as a research assistant. Later on, the CCIE helped me advance while I was a network engineer at Microland Limited. With it, I gained instant acceptance from peers and people who didn’t know me.”

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Being an effective management professional and also a technical expert have always been twin goals for KSG. He sees these skill sets as complementary and believes it is important for a manager to function credibly as a technologist in areas such as big data and mobility.

KSG speaks with admiration of the Japanese model of technical and managerial competence. “A manager on the shop floor, for example, is technically competent,” he says. “Increasingly, clients demand this dual focus, and many Cisco certifications are as much about solving business problems as they are about skillful technology implementation.”

During a four-year tenure at IBM, KSG served as chief architect of the company’s global technology solutions (GTS), leading a team of infrastructure and solution architects. “Being in a situation like that puts a lot of pressure on you to grow. It fueled my passion for learning and helped me to prove myself to myself.” From IBM, his impressive knowledge base, real-world experience, and thirst for learning brought him to Cognizant as its CTO of the infrastructure services division.

Preparing for Certification

From long experience, KSG can attest to the need for careful and continuous preparation for Cisco certification. He comments that the work he does daily for clients is part of the task. The second piece of the puzzle is structured, incremental learning that starts four to six months before the final exam. This learning is accompanied by work in his lab at Cognizant.

“Preparation for exams is part of my professional life,” he laughs. “You are always preparing, and I envision that this will continue throughout my career. I was brought onboard at Cognizant for my knowledge and my ability to apply it in the real world. My question to myself regarding my career will always be “What next?”

Taking the Next Step: Advice for Fellow Professionals

KSG notes that Cognizant hires a good many Cisco-certified professionals, and that many are involved in strategically significant, large-scale projects in the U.S., Europe, and India.

He believes that continuous adaptation is network and security professionals’ mandate. Like a baby learning to walk, it is important to take professional development in steps. “It is important to embrace the process of change,” he says. “Otherwise, you will be left behind.”

KSG sees many benefits in Cognizant’s relationship with Cisco. The company is a Cisco customer, and Cisco, in turn, uses Cognizant’s services. “We have formed an ecosystem that provides solutions and tremendous value to a wide range of markets. Our relationship is truly a win-win for everyone. Cisco certifications are part of that whole picture.”

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– KS GANESAN, CCIE
Vice President and CTO
of Cognizant Infrastructure
Services

For More Information

The Cisco Learning Network is a social learning community focused on the IT industry. Its mission is to provide learning tools, training resources, and industry guidance to those interested in building an IT career through Cisco certifications.

- To find out more go to:
<https://learningnetwork.cisco.com/index.jspa>
- To find out more about Cisco CCIE certifications, go to:
www.cisco.com/web/learning/certifications/expert/index.html

