Why get certified

13 reasons for seeking training and certification

With testimonials from IT networkers who met the challenge

Get started

Why get certified   Certification benefits   Summary

We live in exciting times to be working in technology. While the words "digital transformation" can sometimes seem repetitive, we are indeed in a digital era, where so much of our technology is dramatically changing.

Cloud has evolved from being a virtual non-entity to exerting a significant influence on networking, data center, security, analytics, and virtualization. At the same time, cybersecurity has become critical across all technology sectors and is constantly evolving to counter increasingly sophisticated cyberattacks.

Other transforming technologies include the data center, which now plays a central role in the business landscape. The Internet of Things is now vitally important to our digital lives in its ability to connect a staggering amount of data and devices. And software-defined networking (SDN) has ushered in a sea change in how we can manage networks via automation. But through it all, routing and switching remain the core foundation of knowledge from which IT networking professionals can build their career as they learn to Connect, Secure, and Automate.

These vibrant technological developments culminating all at once can seem overwhelming—you need to be able to catch the wave of change and ride it smoothly. This is precisely why we believe right now is the best time to explore how solid training and certification can keep you focused and help make you a technical superstar in your organization.

2

Pearson VUE surveyed more than 29,000 candidates who prepared for and earned IT certifications during the previous 12 months. Its resulting 2021 Value of IT Certification Report[1] features insights from North America, Latin America, Middle East and Africa (MEA), India, Greater China, Japan and the rest of Asia Pacific (APAC).

Demand for IT certifications is growing, reflected by a 16 percent increase in the number of IT certification exams delivered from the previous year. And since employers were less likely to cover training and certification costs, those who earned a certification did so using their own time, money and effort—a strong indication that the desire to certify holds strong and is on the rise.

Of candidates who earned certifications in 2020, 86 percent plan to pursue additional certifications over the next 12 months.[2]

Cisco can offer you training and certification for all of the hot fields. 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.

ı|ıı|ıı
CISCO

Why get certified | Certification benefits | Summary

Benefit 1 | Knowledge

Benefit 2 | Skill

Benefit 3 | Validation

Benefit 4 | Credibility

Benefit 5 | Responsibility

Benefit 6 | Confidence

Benefit 7 | Value

Benefit 8 | Versatility

Benefit 9 | Opportunity

Benefit 10 | Hireability

Benefit 11 | Advancement

Benefit 12 | Salary

Benefit 13 | Lifelong Learning

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 CyberOps Associate 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.

4

Why get certified

Certification benefits

Summary

52 percent of IT professionals agreed that certification training led to improved work quality.[4]

Benefit 1 | Knowledge

Benefit 2 | Skill

Benefit 3 | Validation

Benefit 4 | Credibility

Benefit 5 | Responsibility

Benefit 6 | Confidence

Benefit 7 | Value

Benefit 8 | Versatility

Benefit 9 | Opportunity

Benefit 10 | Hireability

Benefit 11 | Advancement

Benefit 12 | Salary

Benefit 13 | Lifelong Learning

Skill: A good certification program offers discipline and repeated practice—with the structure to help you deeply ingrain 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 certifications got him up to speed—and now companies continue to call him back for freelance jobs.

"The core knowledge from Cisco helps me expand my knowledge of routing and switching, IP subnetting, IP addressing schemes, firewalls, the Internet of Things, Power over Ethernet, and more. When I run into different problems, I know what to expect, and can give my customers a layout of what's happening on-site."

—Randy Gates, Network Engineer/Systems Engineer

> Learn more about Randy.

5

ıllıılı
CISCO

Why get certified | Certification benefits | Summary

Benefit 1 | Knowledge

Benefit 2 | Skill

Benefit 3 | Validation

Benefit 4 | Credibility

Benefit 5 | Responsibility

Benefit 6 | Confidence

Benefit 7 | Value

Benefit 8 | Versatility

Benefit 9 | Opportunity

Benefit 10 | Hireability

Benefit 11 | Advancement

Benefit 12 | Salary

Benefit 13 | Lifelong Learning

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 CyberOps Associate certification. It was sweet validation of her hard work to be able to answer questions with precision and to get the job.

"Cisco certifications 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.

‹ 6 ›

| Why get certified | Certification benefits | Summary |

65 percent say certification enhances the ability to guide and mentor others.[6]

Benefit 1 | Knowledge

Benefit 2 | Skill

Benefit 3 | Validation

Benefit 4 | Credibility

Benefit 5 | Responsibility

Benefit 6 | Confidence

Benefit 7 | Value

Benefit 8 | Versatility

Benefit 9 | Opportunity

Benefit 10 | Hireability

Benefit 11 | Advancement

Benefit 12 | Salary

Benefit 13 | Lifelong Learning

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 Jose Bogarin

While studying electrical engineering at his university, he learned about Cisco certifications. Jose is now the proud holder of 24 Cisco certifications, a member of DevNet 500 and the DevNet Class of 2020. Jose founded his own IT services company that employs 60 professionals throughout Costa Rica and was named the Grand Prize winner of Cisco's Platform Innovation Challenge. Jose continues to put customers first by developing innovative IT technology.

"You prepare, learn new concepts, take a tough but fair exam; then use the certification to validate that you're ready to tackle all of the challenges a particular technology can throw at you."

—Jose Bogarin, Chief Innovation Officer

> Explore Jose's path to success.

< 7 >

Why get certified	Certification benefits	Summary

74 percent of candidates reported greater work autonomy and
independence after certification.[7]

Benefit 1 | Knowledge

Benefit 2 | Skill

Benefit 3 | Validation

Benefit 4 | Credibility

Benefit 5 | Responsibility

Benefit 6 | Confidence

Benefit 7 | Value

Benefit 8 | Versatility

Benefit 9 | Opportunity

Benefit 10 | Hireability

Benefit 11 | Advancement

Benefit 12 | Salary

Benefit 13 | Lifelong Learning

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 DevonPatrick Adkins

When Devon was introduced to Cisco switches and wireless controllers, it was love at first touch. He realized
that all the super intelligent L2 and L3 engineers were Cisco certified and knew someday he would earn
his certifications. After earning his CCENT certification, he became the go-to guy for all things Cisco at his
company. And after receiving his CCNA certification, job offers started pouring in from around the world.

"Cisco really changed my life and opened up a new world for me. The
certifications have helped me grow academically, mentally, and professionally.
I now see myself achieving quite a number of things in my life."

—DevonPatrick Adkins, Network Engineer L2

> Read on for more details about DevonPatrick.

‹ 8 ›

| Why get certified | Certification benefits | Summary |

> 91 percent of candidates experienced increased confidence in their abilities after certification.[8]

Benefit 1 | Knowledge

Benefit 2 | Skill

Benefit 3 | Validation

Benefit 4 | Credibility

Benefit 5 | Responsibility

Benefit 6 | Confidence

Benefit 7 | Value

Benefit 8 | Versatility

Benefit 9 | Opportunity

Benefit 10 | Hireability

Benefit 11 | Advancement

Benefit 12 | Salary

Benefit 13 | Lifelong Learning

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 João Muniz

Cisco certifications helped João build confidence to work in a real network with real issues. In addition, it gave João's employer trust that he was well-trained for the job and had a strong work ethic and passion for the profession.

"Cisco certifications give you the confidence that you know what needs to be done in a real-world job. And knowing you are Cisco certified, employers are confident that you will be successful on the job. They also know you have a strong work ethic and are up for challenges, as they understand it's not easy to get certified."

—**João Muniz, Edge Data Center Project Engineer**

> Get the full story on João Muniz.

9

ıılıılı
CISCO

| Why get certified | Certification benefits | Summary |

94 percent of decision-makers worldwide say that certified team members provide added value above and beyond the cost of certification.[9]

Benefit 1 | Knowledge

Benefit 2 | Skill

Benefit 3 | Validation

Benefit 4 | Credibility

Benefit 5 | Responsibility

Benefit 6 | Confidence

Benefit 7 | Value

Benefit 8 | Versatility

Benefit 9 | Opportunity

Benefit 10 | Hireability

Benefit 11 | Advancement

Benefit 12 | Salary

Benefit 13 | Lifelong Learning

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 Kent Freeman

Originally an electrician, Kent Freeman's true talent was in solving technology problems. So he transformed his career, climbed the ladder, and ultimately launched his own IT services business. Kent has his CCNA, his CCNP in the works, and his sights set on a CCIE—a direct reflection of his desire to push himself as well as his business to continue evolving.

"You're never too experienced to learn, to grow, to become better. And you're never too old to get certified. Technology is a rapidly moving industry. Getting certified keeps you both relevant and competitive in the workforce."

—Kent Freeman, Senior Collaboration Engineer

> **Explore Kent's path to success.**

10

| Why get certified | Certification benefits | Summary |

Benefit 1 | Knowledge

Benefit 2 | Skill

Benefit 3 | Validation

Benefit 4 | Credibility

Benefit 5 | Responsibility

Benefit 6 | Confidence

Benefit 7 | Value

Benefit 8 | Versatility

Benefit 9 | Opportunity

Benefit 10 | Hireability

Benefit 11 | Advancement

Benefit 12 | Salary

Benefit 13 | Lifelong Learning

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 Keisha Richardson

At first, Keisha got certified because obtaining your certifications was required as part of the program she joined. Once she got her first taste, however, she proceeded to study up and earn several additional certifications. She likes the fact that certifications are a stamp of approval. While she may not have extensive experience that others have, her certifications ensure she has the knowledge to discuss topics and tackle solutions.

"The time and effort that you put into earning a certification says more about you as a professional than the certification itself."

−Keisha Richardson, Technical Solutions Specialist

> Read on for more details about Keisha.

| Why get certified | Certification benefits | Summary |

There are almost a million networking job openings
in the US alone.[11]

Benefit 1 | Knowledge

Benefit 2 | Skill

Benefit 3 | Validation

Benefit 4 | Credibility

Benefit 5 | Responsibility

Benefit 6 | Confidence

Benefit 7 | Value

Benefit 8 | Versatility

Benefit 9 | Opportunity

Benefit 10 | Hireability

Benefit 11 | Advancement

Benefit 12 | Salary

Benefit 13 | Lifelong Learning

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 an exciting career change.

Meet Ronald Boestfleisch, Jr.

Eight years as a help desk 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 senior network engineering roles.

Employment of software developers is projected to grow 22 percent from 2019 to 2029.[12]

"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.

12

ılıılı
CISCO

Why get certified   Certification benefits   Summary

66 percent of IT managers felt that candidates with IT certifications had a better chance of being selected for interviews.[13]

Benefit 1 | Knowledge

Benefit 2 | Skill

Benefit 3 | Validation

Benefit 4 | Credibility

Benefit 5 | Responsibility

Benefit 6 | Confidence

Benefit 7 | Value

Benefit 8 | Versatility

Benefit 9 | Opportunity

Benefit 10 | Hireability

Benefit 11 | Advancement

Benefit 12 | Salary

Benefit 13 | Lifelong Learning

Hireability: Time and time 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 John Warren

Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) in 2014, John struggles with an inconsistent memory, hand spasms, delayed nerve responses and frequent debilitating exhaustion. Against all odds, Cisco certifications played a key role in helping him become the guy a multinational behavioral healthcare provider relies on at night to ensure their critical networks stay running.

"I live with Multiple Sclerosis which is a very debilitating disease, however I have overcome all adversity to achieve my dreams."

—John Warren, Service Desk Analyst II

> Read on for more details about John.

13

Why get certified	Certification benefits	Summary

56 percent of candidates earned IT certifications to increase their chances of advancing and being promoted in their current roles, by acquiring new skills and knowledge.[14]

Benefit 1 | Knowledge

Benefit 2 | Skill

Benefit 3 | Validation

Benefit 4 | Credibility

Benefit 5 | Responsibility

Benefit 6 | Confidence

Benefit 7 | Value

Benefit 8 | Versatility

Benefit 9 | Opportunity

Benefit 10 | Hireability

Benefit 11 | Advancement

Benefit 12 | Salary

Benefit 13 | Lifelong Learning

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

Meet Aaron Dubin

Early on, Aaron knew that he wanted to expand his skills. But he didn't have any mentors to guide him along, telling him what to study and how to prepare. Through the certification process, he was able to get expert advice on how to apply his particular interests, and where he should focus his time. He learned how to avoid going down rabbit holes, and what type of preparation would ultimately help him the most in his career in technology.

"The value in certification is not in the piece of paper on your wall. It's in the skills and the confidence you need to take on new challenges or take that next step in your career."

–Aaron Dubin, Systems Engineer

> Learn more about Aaron.

< 14 >

Why get certified   Certification benefits   Summary

28 percent received a salary or wage increase after earning a certification.[15]

Benefit 1 | Knowledge

Benefit 2 | Skill

Benefit 3 | Validation

Benefit 4 | Credibility

Benefit 5 | Responsibility

Benefit 6 | Confidence

Benefit 7 | Value

Benefit 8 | Versatility

Benefit 9 | Opportunity

Benefit 10 | Hireability

Benefit 11 | Advancement

Benefit 12 | Salary

Benefit 13 | Lifelong Learning

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.

15

Why get certified   Certification benefits   Summary

86 percent of candidates are likely to recertify in the next 12 months.[16]

Benefit 1 | Knowledge

Benefit 2 | Skill

Benefit 3 | Validation

Benefit 4 | Credibility

Benefit 5 | Responsibility

Benefit 6 | Confidence

Benefit 7 | Value

Benefit 8 | Versatility

Benefit 9 | Opportunity

Benefit 10 | Hireability

Benefit 11 | Advancement

Benefit 12 | Salary

Benefit 13 | Lifelong Learning

Lifelong Learning: Since technology and innovation evolve so quickly, it's important that you stay ahead of the latest advances and keep your skills up to date. In the digital world, you can never automatically assume that you're completely caught up and know everything—what's new today can become outdated in seconds.

Each of the Cisco students we profiled has a different story, but they all have one thing in common: the will to take that important first step toward advancing their career. That first step was earning a Cisco certification. With this single act, they broadened their knowledge and skillset. They improved their understanding of networking. They earned more respect from their peers. And they became more marketable.

Stake your claim to the future of technology—and the future you want to build for yourself—with Cisco certifications. Your Cisco certification shows the world you have what it takes to work on today's most advanced networks.

Yet as technology evolves, so must the skills required to keep pace and maintain active certification. We call this the journey of lifelong learning.

To learn more, visit Cisco Recertification Policy and Cisco Continuing Education.

The 2020 IT Skills and Salary Report from Global Knowledge concludes that achieving a new certification, on average, leads to a $13,000 salary increase.

< 16 >

Why get certified	Certification benefits	Summary

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.

References

1. 2021 Value of IT Certification Candidate Report, Pearson VUE

2. 2021 Value of IT Certification Candidate Report, Pearson VUE

3. 2021 Value of IT Certification Candidate Report, Pearson VUE

4. 2020 IT Skills and Salary Report, Global Knowledge

5. 2021 Value of IT Certification Employer Report, Pearson VUE

6. 2021 Value of IT Certification Employer Report, Pearson VUE

7. 2021 Value of IT Certification Candidate Report, Pearson VUE

8. 2021 Value of IT Certification Candidate Report, Pearson VUE

9. 2020 IT Skills and Salary Report, Global Knowledge

10. 2021 Value of IT Certification Candidate Report, Pearson VUE

11. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook (Updated: March 2021)

12. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Software Developers (Updated: September 2021)

13. 2021 Value of IT Certification Employer Report, Pearson VUE

14. 2021 Value of IT Certification Candidate Report, Pearson VUE

15. 2021 Value of IT Certification Candidate Report, Pearson VUE

16. 2021 Value of IT Certification Candidate Report, Pearson VUE

Summary

We trust that at least some of the 13 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 Five Tips to Get DevNet Certified Now

- Get an overview of our certifications, register for these webinar series:
  - CCNA Essentials
  - DevNet Associate Essentials
  - CyberOps Associate Essentials

- Learn about Guided Study Groups

- Join our communities on Cisco Learning Network and DevNet

- Amp your self-study plan with these programs:
  - CCNA Prep
  - DevNet Associate Prep
  - CyberOps Associate Prep
  - Cisco Expert Prep

Ask any of the certification holders we highlighted, 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. By learning the latest methods and skills to **connect, secure, and automate**, they gained the self-confidence from setting goals, then accomplishing them. And that self-confidence continues to empower them on their career paths.

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