



Sponsorship Proposal

for

Quentin D. Demmon

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WHAT DO I WANT?

It's time to step up my game and take it to the next level. It's not going to be easy, and it's not going to be cheap, so I'm asking [COMPANY NAME] to help me finally get that number - a CCIE certification number, that is.

Having wandered different parts of the IT infrastructure landscape awhile, several years ago I decided I want to grow up to be a network engineer, and not *just* an engineer, but a **GREAT** engineer. As everyone in our industry knows, obtaining the Cisco Certified Internetworking Expert certification is one sure way to get there. Last month (Feb 2015) I passed the third and final CCNP route/switch exam with a perfect score, 1000, and I want to keep riding that momentum right into the CCIE route/switch track.

Are there high failure rates for this certification? Yes, very high. Is it expensive? Yes. Will it require significant sacrifices in my personal life for the next two years or more? Absolutely. Why put myself through the pain, suffering, time, sweat and, no doubt, tears? Because it's worth it. Because I want it. And, I plan on getting it, no matter what it takes.

WHY SUPPORT ME?

Aside from the boilerplate adage that "a bosses' job is to help their employees get to their next job", I have always felt there is more to it than that. Yes, salary is important, but loyalty in an employer/employee relationship is often underappreciated. I can enumerate this in my own experience at a previous employer. I requested tuition assistance for a business degree and was declined, while another coworker was approved, without any clear or satisfactory explanation. Did that prevent me from getting my degree? Absolutely not, and I'm still paying for those loans. Although disappointed in my company's decision, I have always taken responsibility for my own future - a lesson learned a long time ago from my Baby Boomer grandparents. I worked hard, very hard, for that employer (received promotions) while simultaneously working on the degree. However, my feelings of loyalty had subtly changed in this case, like or not. After turbulent management changes there, I was disinclined to stay.

The last company I worked for was very committed to certifications and went a long way to help me obtain a VCP, CCNA, and the bulk of the CCNP. My feelings of loyalty towards upper management and the company ran high and survived several tempting offers for opportunities elsewhere. Loyalty and commitment are important to me and works both ways. When I left, I did so having gone above and beyond to ensure continuity after my departure, and in excellent standing with upper management.

Aside from the singular benefits to my relationship with the company, there are many others.

- Cisco's web site:

Service requests made to Cisco Technical Support (TS) by CCIEs in good standing, on behalf of an organization with a valid support contract, will be routed directly to the more experienced core TS support engineers.

- Having a CCIE on staff, or even someone making progress on the certification track, adds to the prestige and credibility of the network team and company.
- CCIE candidates and graduates develop valuable contacts in their journey.

- Some of the materials requested will be relevant right now to all members of the network team, either for reference or study aids for their own CCIE tracks.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Poaching is usually the first that comes to mind. The prestige of a CCIE pass can lead to poaching attempts, some claim by Cisco itself, but in particular by Cisco partners. Resellers are eager to claim those CCIE numbers in order to qualify and maintain deep discount status, putting them ahead of competitors. While I won't rule out it out entirely, my previous employer was a Cisco reseller, and I'm not eager to return to that market. I specifically left to get back into the enterprise. If seen as a high risk, I would be willing to consider a 'golden handcuffs' arrangement, such as full or partial repayment penalties for departure prior to a reasonable term.

Some industry think-tanks recommend enterprises avoid staffing CCIEs, as this may be overpaying in proportion to need. This is usually qualified, however for 'enterprises with a static network'. Scaling networks with considerable growth save money building versus buying CCIE expertise.

HOW MUCH?

Phase I (2015 - 2016): \$1,695

The first year is all about passing the written exam, which includes:

- Written exam fee (\$400), taken in Nashville. I'll be purchasing and scheduling the exam at the start, which creates a fixed deadline. Written exams can be re-scheduled if needed, but having that date to work towards is valuable.
- Books (\$495) can be purchased for the network team and made part of a study library.
- Study guides and a workbook (\$600) from a reputable CCIE training vendor, INE, Inc.
- 1-year subscription to Cisco's network simulator, VIRL (*pronounced 'viral'* - Virtual Internet Router Lab), installed on my personal laptop. Earlier this month I purchased the software and hardware upgrades to run VIRL, and I'm not requesting reimbursement for those personal items.

Phase II (2016 - 2017): \$3,550

This is the most difficult part; an 8-hour long proctored lab exam. The fee is \$1600 and requires travel to Orlando, FL. The rest of the funding is for advanced lab rental time from INE, Inc., estimated to be 350 hours (\$1750). I'm not asking the company to reimburse travel expenses.

Please note that these figures are estimates, as products can often be discounted in a bundle, which will be actively negotiated with vendors like INE, Inc.

CONCLUSION

The cost has been kept low by bypassing instructor-led training altogether and solely leveraging self-study programs. As I mentioned earlier, this is going to happen one way or another, and I'm perfectly capable of going it alone. I don't know that I can fully

enunciate all the reasons why, but somehow I feel it's important just the same to partner with my employer and work with management in this endeavor.

Thank you for your considering this request, and please feel free to ask me any questions. I welcome any opportunity to present this information to concerned parties.

CONTACT

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ADDENDUM

- Budget schedule