



You're Never Too Young to Start Thinking Big

Ruchir Jain Gets His Start Earning Certifications—at Age 12

For many of us, finding the right career path can take years, or even decades. But for Ruchir Jain, becoming an IT professional was something he knew he wanted early in his life.

“I was into computers at a young age,” says Ruchir. “My father encouraged me to go after a professional certification. When you hold a certification, you learn a lot. I was highly motivated to learn new things, even as a youngster. And a certification has a lot of professional value.”

Remarkably, Ruchir earned his Microsoft Certified Professional badge when he was only 12 years old, followed by Microsoft Certified System Engineer in 1999 at age 13. “At that time, I was probably the youngest person in the world to earn these,” says Ruchir. He became a Microsoft Certified Solution Developer when he was 16 years old.

Ruchir’s interest and expertise in computers grew stronger through his years as an undergraduate at Uttar Pradesh Technical University. After graduating in 2008, he got a job offer from Cisco, and became Network Engineer. He then took part in a talent development program, Cisco 360, which helped him prepare for CCIE Routing and Switching Certification.

“I started with instructor-led training, or ILT, and had six months of on-the-job training, too,” says Ruchir. “I also read a lot on my own, and participated in hands-on practice labs, which were very helpful. I typically spent 8 hours in labs every weekend.”

The Positive Aspects of Certification Training

Ruchir was among 17 people who joined Cisco at the same time, at the same level. “We all became friends as we prepared for our certification exams,” says Ruchir. “All those days I spent in the lab were really fun and enjoyable with a CCIE study partner.”

Being at Cisco, Ruchir had very good mentors around him. “My main mentor was Edward Swenson, among the first 15 CCIEs in the world, who gave me lots of support and encouragement,” says Ruchir. “He is the best.”



Cisco Career Certifications

Case Study Subject

Ruchir Jain, Technical Leader in Services, Cisco Bangalore

Industry

IT

Challenge

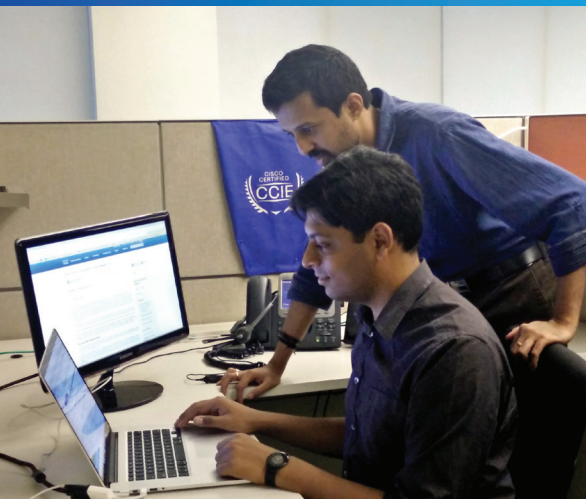
Needed to learn about routing protocols, programming, automation, and other areas of IT, to improve his value to Cisco customers and build his knowledge base.

Solutions

- Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert (SP) (2015)
- Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert (Routing and Switching) (2010)
- Cisco Certified Internetwork Professional (2009)
- Cisco Certified Network Professional (2008)
- Cisco Certified Network Associate (2008)
- Microsoft Certified Solution Developer (2002)
- Microsoft Certified System Engineer (1999)
- Microsoft Certified Professional (1999)

Professional Benefits

Improved ability to solve customer problems and provide better service.



Considering Certification? Ruchir Advises:

- ✓ Make sure that you have a timetable and stick to it; it's a long journey, so be diligent and respectful of time
- ✓ Practice in labs as much as you can
- ✓ Find a mentor who has earned a CCIE; they can guide you through the steps of what you should and shouldn't do
- ✓ Gain some industry experience before earning your CCIE
- ✓ Have a support system, including your friends, family, mentor, and colleagues
- ✓ Don't feel shy about reaching out to get the help you need

Ruchir realized the value in certification, despite the sacrifices, which included spending less time with friends and family. "Certification recognizes you for your abilities, and is good self-motivation," says Ruchir. "You have to take time out of your personal life, but my family, friends, and mentor all supported me. I had help from everyone.

They all wanted me to earn my CCIE; in the end, it's quite rewarding. It's challenging, and requires lots of dedication. But I learned new things every day."

The first time Ruchir took the CCIE Routing and Switching Certification Exam, he was unsuccessful. With encouragement from his mentor, he tried for a second time, in 2010, and passed. He then moved to the Routing Protocols team, which gave him good exposure to Service Provider technologies. In 2015, he earned his CCIE Service Provider Certification, and was promoted to Technical Leader, Services.

What the Future Holds in India—and on the Job

As a Cisco IT professional in Bangalore for the past 8 years, Ruchir has had a front-row seat to the latest IT developments in India. "India is a developing country, with lots of good projects," says Ruchir. "IT is embracing the latest technologies, including SDN, virtualization, and Cisco's Application-Centric Infrastructure; they're not shy of trying new things.

"With my programming background, I'm a big fan of automation, which eliminates manual processes and brings down provisioning time. CCIE can give you the base requirements for technical automation. "

With so much expertise gained at such a young age, Ruchir knows where he wants to be. "Cisco was one of my dream companies to work for," says Ruchir. I want to spend my whole career here, and help Cisco become the number one IT company. I want to bring agility to areas I work in. I enjoy helping customers solve problems faster. Every day, there's a new problem and a new challenge, which motivates me. I never get bored."

For More Information

To learn more about Cisco CCIE certifications, visit learningnetwork.cisco.com/community/certifications.