



The Cisco Networking Academy Program is a comprehensive e-learning program that provides students with the Internet technology skills essential in a global economy.

Cisco Networking Academy Graduates: Lessons of Decision and Courage.

It is not easy to establish a standard that defines success. Its definition is based on a personal set of values.

The stories of Ricardo Martínez, Víctor Córdoba, Abelardo Martínez, Ramón Viñals, and Gustavo Romero all began in different places, but they are tied by their personal effort, dedication, decision and courage to achieve success. All of them were once students of the Cisco Networking Academy Program, and thanks to their perseverance, they each have their own success' definition story.

Ricardo Martínez. Curiosity turned into passion.

Since he was a little boy, Ricardo wanted to understand how computers' networks worked; he never imagined that this curiosity would become his passion.

Ricardo attended the Cisco Networking Academy Program in the National Polytechnic Institute (Instituto Politécnico Nacional), where he graduated in Telematics Engineering. The Networking Academy was the door to his first job, however, he soon realized that to be considered for serious tasks in the networking area, he had to be CCNA certified. (Cisco Certified Network Associate) certified.

“When I started studying, I didn't know such certifications even existed, but now I can tell that Cisco Career certifications are widely acknowledged in the industry.”

Ricardo works as an Operations Engineer in Nextel's PNO (Packet Data Network Operation Center). Nextel is a leader in the national market of mobile radio-communications systems specializing in flotillas (trunking). “My job is basically to verify the correct operation of the international network, as well as of some in-house applications,” he says proudly.

This job is one of Ricardo's successes, however, he understands that confidence and is confident that with decision and experience will help him go farther. “I am satisfied with my job, because I have contact with the international network of a very large company in Mexico and abroad, however my goal is to learn every day new things.”

Ricardo finished the program 2 years ago, and thanks to his ongoing learning and his job, he broadened his knowledge, “CCNA taught me the basics, but I'm aware that this certification is only the beginning of more specialized certifications such as (Cisco Certified Security Professional) or CCNP (Cisco Certified Network Professional)”, he adds. Ricardo's primary goal is to get the CCIE (Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert) certification; the most respected industry certification, held by only a reduced number of professionals in Mexico and worldwide.

Abelardo Martínez. Obstacles became challenges.

The story of Abelardo Martínez begins in Victoria, Tamaulipas. Encouraged by the Information Technology boom and determined to learn more about technology, he joins the Autonomous University of Tamaulipas (Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas - UAT) to become a Telematics Engineer.

Abelardo belongs to the first generation of Cisco Networking Academy Program students in the UAT. However, things were not easy for Abelardo. When he started studying, he did not know anything about computers, and the structure of the program helped him very much. “The curriculum guided me since the beginning. Without it, I would have never understood networks.”

When Abelardo finished his education, he decided to get the CCNA certification. “I like to finish what I start. Besides, I think that no matter how much you know, a company will always ask you for a document that supports your knowledge”, says Abelardo.

Cisco Networking Academy Program

The program prepares students for industry standard certifications which are acknowledged around the world. These certifications are based on market requirements, which result in more competitive graduates.

For Abelardo, the Networking Academy program and the certification were the doors to the working market. "In my resumé, besides my experience, I always mention the certification, which I think is taken more into consideration than my degree," adds Abelardo.

When he finished the program and after his CCNA certification, the University allowed him to use the lab equipment for practice purposes; later he was hired by the Institution. This job allowed him to meet Grupo Dice, leader in structured cabling and distributor of Cisco equipment.

Today, Abelardo works as a Cisco Product Manager for the Northern Region in Grupo Dice. "We offer pre-sales support for the strongest products. For Cisco's products, we have a dedicated engineer, and in Monterrey, that's me. My job is to follow up with small customers who need technical support, design assistance and help in deciding which products to buy. I am also in charge of several logistics, as well as of the configuration of the products."

After one and a half years at Grupo Dice, having overcome the challenge of moving to Monterrey, Abelardo is satisfied. "I feel successful."

With decision and courage, Abelardo is preparing his next success: CCNP certification. "I already took the switching and routing courses, and I am ready to take the exams."

Víctor Robert Córdoba. **A lesson from reality.**

Víctor Córdoba comes from Tabasco, where he became Telematics Senior Technician, at the Technological University of Tabasco (Universidad Tecnológica de Tabasco - UT Tabasco), where he also attended the Cisco Networking Academy Program

Thanks to the inspiration and encouragement of the teachers in the Telematic Division of the Technological University of Tabasco, who were also his Academy instructors, Víctor decided to study Computer Systems in the University of Valle de Grijalva (Universidad del Valle de Grijalva) in Chiapas, where he graduated in January 2005.

Before finishing his education, Víctor obtained the CCNA certification. He admits that he had no choice. "The companies that offered me the opportunity to join their working teams, asked me for my Cisco ID. What a surprise! I didn't even know what they were talking about", says Víctor. Due to the lack of this certification, I missed not one, but three job opportunities.

Learning was not in vain. Today, Víctor is a young professor, after having competed for this position and beaten two other engineers. "The Division's Director was very clear about my situation, he told me 'I am giving you this opportunity, because of your certification', which means a lot to me," says Víctor.

Perseverance is the reason for his achievements. Since 2002, Víctor has also worked in the Chiapas' Government Rural Development Agency as Regional Information Technology Coordinator for the Northern Region of Chiapas. His main functions include, network administration, design of web pages, and the implementation and management of SMBDs.

As said by Víctor, success is still in development. "I have a lot to learn and many projects ahead. I want something else. I would like to be in charge of the administration of the routers and switches of a company. Right now, I hope to achieve Building Cisco Multilayer Switched Networks Certification", says Víctor.

For Víctor, a very valuable add-on is the follow up of the Networking Academy team with its graduates. "Cisco cares about our working life, and through Alumni Connection allows our knowledge and skills to be known by other companies."

Ramón Viñals. **A story that only begins.**

Whoever knows the meaning of the CCIE, realizes that Ramón belongs to a very exclusive group of IT professionals: Network Experts. Ramón belongs to the 3% of professionals who, after achieving any Cisco certification, become CCIE. Even more, he belongs to the reduced group of the Cisco Networking Academy Program graduates who first certified in CCNA, than in CCNP, and than became the first graduate from Mexico to obtain the CCIE certification.

Ramón attended the Cisco Networking Academy Program in the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, where he earned a degree in Computer Systems Engineering, as well as his first certification.

For Ramón, what he learned in the Program is invaluable. "I was surprised how good the program was. I found it motivating to face different ways of learning, where I could be more active. I liked to have access to the lab and the ability to practice what I'd learned in class." After graduating as an engineer, Ramón and other graduates, were invited for an interview for a scholarship program in Cisco Systems Mexico.

SUCCESS STORY

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"They seemed to be evaluating everything. I knew I was not weak in the technical field, but I had to show them that the theory could be used in the field. Eventually, I was selected, together with two other mates," says Ramón.

The scholarship program finished, and Ramón Viñals is still in Cisco Systems, but now as a Systems Engineer. He is responsible for Cisco business partners' technical pre-sales support. This means that Ramón is responsible for offering customers, solutions based on telecommunications infrastructure, that helps them increase their business productivity, reduce costs, and become more successful in the different markets.

The CCIE was, in part, a requirement, but for him, it had a deeper meaning. "It was a personal challenge, because after work I had to spend time learning, at night and during weekends. Being aware of the importance of this exam and what others were expecting from me, I had to pass it."

After 7 months of staying awake at nights, Ramón could finally sleep soundly, but not for long.... Ramón is certified as CCIE in one of the 4 tracks comprising this certification: Routing and Switching, Security, Voice and Service Providers. "Now, I must concentrate on the next track", he says.

He is aware that this certification will give him several advantages, as well as responsibilities. "I'm able to talk to customers at all level, but I'm also compelled to offer faster solutions which better meet customers' needs."

Though Ramón is recognized in the industry as a Network Expert, he is aware that technical matters are not everything. "I need to develop in other areas, such as sales and negotiation, to conclude my occupational training."

The Cisco Networking Academy graduate stories show us that employers acknowledge and value those candidates who attended the program, but these stories are also proof of the tenacity and decision of some individuals to reach their goals.

In Mexico, the Cisco Networking Academy Program includes more than 280 Academies, more than 33,000 students and 1000 instructors all around the country.



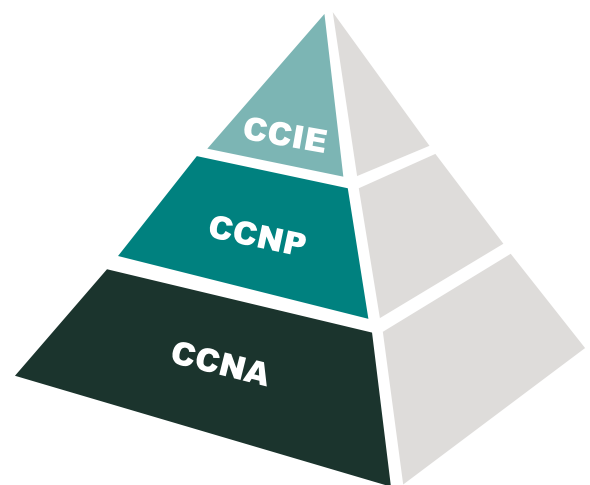
Ramón Viñals, the first graduate from Mexico to obtain the CCIE certification.

Cisco Certifications

CCIE (Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert)

CCNP (Cisco Certified Network Professional)

CCNA (Cisco Certified Network Associate)



Gustavo Romero.

The company; a step into the real world.

Gustavo Romero learned about the Cisco Networking Academy Program a few years ago, while he was studying Computer Engineering in the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, Campus Estado de México (TEC). This was the beginning of a long lasting relationship, and it had nothing to do with marriage. Gustavo is one of the few students who became a program manager, instructor and now a businessman looking for graduates.

Before finishing his degree in Engineering, Gustavo got his first job in a Telecommunications company. A few months later, he received an invitation from his former TEC instructor, to support the institution as a Cisco Academy Training Center. "At that moment, my job was totally focused on the program; 80% of my time on assuring compliance with the quality programs, and the rest of my time was dedicated to administration and technical support tasks," says Gustavo

During that time, he enrolled in a Master's Degree program and continued preparing for the Cisco CCNA certification. He finished his training in CCNP and got the CCAI (Cisco Certified Academy Instructor) certification, a certification given only to Networking Academy instructors. With this training, he started teaching the program to instructors and students of several engineering programs.

Nearing the conclusion of his master's degree program, Gustavo received several job offerings that were different from teaching, but he decided to have the best boss: himself.

With two other partners –one of them also a program graduate- they developed and launched a business plan, and soon they had two customers. After two years, his company, Ingeniería en Sistemas Tecnológicos S.A. de C.V., offers consulting services to small to medium educational and industrial companies requiring assistance in IT to improve their business processes.

"The three areas we address in IT consulting are; Design and Implementation of Data Networks, Software Systems development, and Electronic Systems. Fortunately, we've had the opportunity to work with some important companies, such as Costco México, Volvo, Bayer México, TV Azteca, Televisa BigBrother, TEC de Monterrey, Universidad Panamericana, ENEP Acatlán, the Government of State of Puebla, Marquis Reforma Hotel", says Gustavo.

"One of the most interesting projects is the one we developed with Costco. In this project we worked together with Nordstern in the development of an ERP tool to manage the infrastructure resources and to monitor networking equipment comprised in the stores along the country. The most relevant issue of this project was that being a small business we were able to develop a project for a large company," adds Gustavo.



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