



JUAN QUESADA

RED HAT CERTIFIED ENGINEER

When Juan Quesada began experimenting with Linux, Red Hat Linux 5.2 was on retail shelves and formal Linux training was hard to come by. So he learned through hands-on experience and IRC channels, to the point that he even helped migrate some small businesses to Samba and Sendmail.

In 2001, Quesada's employer, a leading homebuilder in the United States, decided to convert 2000 users from Groupwise to Lotus Notes and was researching different platforms on which to base the new system. Quesada knew that Linux was a viable option, so he seized the opportunity to get the formal Linux training he'd been lacking. In February 2002, Quesada became a Red Hat Certified Engineer (RHCE).

Quesada recently shared with us the effect RHCE has had on his career.

Q: SINCE YOU ALREADY HAD SEVERAL YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WITH LINUX, WHY DID YOU WANT TO TAKE A FORMAL COURSE?

A: When I started to need Linux, there weren't many courses out there, so I learned through hands-on experience.

Whether its OS/400, Windows, or Linux, nothing beats learning through actual experience, but I wanted something to prove my knowledge. I took the RH300 RHCE Rapid Track Course, which includes lots of hands on experience, and it was quite challenging.

Q: YOU EARNED YOUR RHCE IN FEBRUARY 2002. THE RHCE CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING CURRICULUM HAS BEEN AVAILABLE SINCE 1999. WHAT MADE YOU SAY, "NOW IS THE TIME"?

A: The company I work for decided to convert 2000 users from Groupwise to Lotus Notes in a two month time frame. Both Microsoft and Linux were being considered as platforms, so I decided it was the right time to get the formal training I'd skipped. I went ahead and pursued my RHCE.

Q: DID YOU SEE ANY IMMEDIATE RESULTS FROM EARNING YOUR RHCE?

A: After the course, I was able to proficiently use Kickstart--on top of a ton of other things. Given the timeframe we were working with for the migration to Lotus Notes, the tight budget we had, and the stability my company required, Linux came out as a winner. I think that my ability to meet those goals with Kickstart was key to that decision.

My company gladly reimbursed all expenses and has given me the green light to take more Linux courses. I learned so much that week.

Q: HAS BEING AN RHCE ENHANCED YOUR CAREER?

A: During the Linux deployment, I had already received my RHCE, and because of that I was allowed to lead the Linux deployment. After Linux proved itself and we met our deadline, I was promptly promoted to Linux Network Administrator with the responsibility of overseeing all aspects of Linux in the company, including management and implementation of over 60 servers. I am also the "go to guy" when a team member has a Linux question.



Experience is important, but the RHCE proved to my company that I had the knowledge needed to carry out the Linux deployment with confidence and within time constraints.

Q: IF YOU COULD SHARE 2 OR 3 'SECRETS OF SUCCESS' WITH POTENTIAL RHCE CANDIDATES, WHAT WOULD THOSE BE?

A: Many things made me successful but the three most important are as follow:

1. Be patient, practice makes perfect.
2. You must keep an open mind, after all that is what Linux and open source is all about.
3. Sell your ideas, do your research and prove how Linux can benefit your company.

The RHCE Program

The Red Hat Certified Engineer (RHCE) program began in 1999 and has granted over 10,000 certifications. Certification Magazine ranks the RHCE program as #1 overall for all of IT.

There are two RHCE curriculum tracks: Rapid and Standard. The RH300 RHCE Rapid Track course is aimed at those who already possess significant systems administration experience and knowledge in a UNIX or Linux environment. The Standard Track consists of 3 courses -- RH033, RH133, RH253 -- and is aimed at persons who need more review of key concepts or who are new to both UNIX and Linux.

Red Hat also offers the Red Hat Certified Technician (RHCT) program, the fastest growing certification in the Linux space. RHCT is a good choice for those transitioning to Linux from non-UNIX OSes, or who want to prove their competencies at a midway point on the way to RHCE. The RHCT Exam is a half-day performance based exam included in RH133 Red Hat Linux System Administration course.

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