

CCDE Practical Exam: Tips and Tricks

- ❖ Determine what your role is for the scenario, at the beginning of each scenario
- ❖ Reflect on your role throughout the scenario
- ❖ Your role will determine what you have access too
 - For Example, Enterprise vs Service Provider

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- ❖ Determine what the Business vertical is
 - Retail, Bank, School, etc...
- ❖ Determine what the Design Use Case is
 - Add / Replace Technology or Service
 - Merge Divest
 - Scaling
 - Greenfield
 - Design Failure

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❖ Don't make assumptions

- Don't assume complexity is bad if the scenario does not mention it.
- The scenario will give you enough information to make a decision, you just need to find it.
- Bring your technical knowledge and experience but Leave your Preconceived Notions and Assumptions at the door of the testing center

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❖ Read and Read again!

- Carefully read each question at least 2 times
- Also, read each answer a couple of times to make sure you full understand what is being asked
- If you are following or understanding the question, re-read the scenario, you are probably missing some relevant information
- Lastly, try to determine what the test creator is trying to test you on

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❖ Scenario Note taking strategy

- Divide your notes into different sections
 - Business
 - Network
 - Application
 - Security
 - QoS
 - Multicast

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❖ Draw a diagram per Scenario

- A physical diagram
 - Huge benefit for some technologies such as replacing DS3 circuits with MPLS L3 VPN. Drawing this out will show benefits of the technology
- A quick logical diagram
 - Huge benefit for overall routing design when complex technologies are brought up (Inter-AS, CSC, BGP RR, Redistribution)

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❖ Do not dwell on questions

- If you do not know an answer to a question, you probably missed key information in the scenario, go find it!

❖ Questions will have multiple answers

- This is intended so do not stress. Stick with the answer you can properly defend the “Why did I choose it?” question, because you will be asked!

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❖ Do not focus on the level set choices

- Through out the scenarios, they will level set on design decisions. They might choose MPLS L2VPN over MPLS L3VPN, even though MPLS L3VPN was the better answer.
- Do not focus on this, as the scenario is testing on something else now.
- Be confident in your answer and move on!

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❖ It's a chart, I must fill it in... don't!

- When seeing a chart, check only the items that actually make sense in the current scenario
- Do not fall into the mental trap of needing to fill in the entire chart.

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❖ Connecting with the Scenario

- You need to connect with the scenario but you also need to be reading the scenario fast. There is a happy middle ground here that you will have to determine for yourself.
- I found skim reading and Sparsely highlighting worked for me.
- Do not over connect with the scenario

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❖ Highlighting

- I was an overzealous highlighter in the first 2 attempts, this makes it hard to find important information when everything is highlighted
- Skim reading while **sparsely** highlighting is what worked for me in the end
- I used 1 color but others have used multiple colors
- Practice and do what works for you

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❖ Lunch Break, Do I study more????

- During your lunch break, use the time to relax your mind.
- Do not attempt to study or do work
- Eat some good food, drink some water, have some coffee
- This exam is a marathon and you need every minute to de-stress and relax

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❖ Summary

- You can't be successful with the CCDE Practical Exam with out a **Strategy**
- Each person's strategy will be different, but you need to come up with one that will work for you.
- What worked for me most likely will not work for everyone else. Take the bits and pieces that does work for you, and build your own strategy off of it.

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Questions?

