

CompUSA's Network Training Certification Program

By Larry Dunlap

National High-end Training Manager

CompUSA NetWare Training Introduction

Recent experience with a third party NetWare training vendor has shown CompUSA that there is a market for Novell NetWare training. This training prepares prospective network engineers to take the highly challenging examinations that will authorize them to work on Novell Network operating systems. The primary certifications are:

CNA - Certified Network Administrator

Novell's entry level certification to train network administrators for day to day support and maintenance of Novell networks.

CNE – Certified Network Engineer

Novell's most valuable certification is a big step up from CNA. This training prepares a network engineer for system integration, network design, trouble-shooting, repairing and upgrading networks at workstations, peripherals, and servers. Many CNE's become consultants or full time employees at companies with complex networking facilities.

ECNE - Enterprise Certified Network Engineer

This level of expertise adds on to the CNE by preparing the network engineer for connecting differing systems across the enterprise in WANs (Wide Area Network) that may be international in scope. This is the first step to other, more exotic, network technology specializations.

The training to reach acquire these certificates is intensive, technical, and very expensive. By offering these high-ticket courses, CompUSA in an entirely new training arena - high end technical training. To find solutions for customers needs in the networking market specific expertise, knowledge, and equipment is required. This chapter explains CompUSA's Certification program and how it dovetails with Novell's own professional-user certifications.

Novell's Educational Solution - The NAEC, NEAP, and the CNI

Though Novell requires that only certified network engineers can work on their network software without endangering the warranty on the network hardware or software, they are primarily a software manufacturer and not a training company. To maintain the integrity demanded Novell has standardized their training through private companies, Novell Authorized Education Center or NAECs and their educational institution counterpart the Novell Education Academic Partner, NEAP. To assure the level of training meets Novell's standards, Novell allows CNE-level network engineers to take a further certification, the Certified Novell Instructor, CNI. However, the CNI certificate only applies to each specific course that they qualify on. Novell also produces the courseware.

The problem for Novell is that it is not a training company and policing the quality at over 900 training centers was never the role it intended for itself. Also, CNI's, because they are rare, create a bottleneck causing most who have passed the certification to work as independent trainers who can demand very high fees rather than staff trainers. Since all of these training entities have other agendas, their training expertise and business disciplines often cause them to differ from one to another, limiting the standardization of training that Novell would prefer. Finally, Novell has been criticized roundly for its inability to write training materials that are accessible to network engineers, let alone new trainees.

For a number of reasons, CompUSA's training program is aimed to not only equal the Novell Authorized Education Centers (NAEC) but surpass what the NAECs can offer. Below will be covered:

- CompUSA's presence in this market.
- CompUSA's training program's competitive edge over other network training programs including Novell's NAEC and NEAP programs.
- CompUSA's own certification program; what CANI, CANS and CANSA acronyms mean.

CompUSA Resources and Market Position

1. CompUSA Direct Sales

As the largest computer retailer in the world, CompUSA is in a unique position to sell NetWare training. Every business day CompUSA's direct sales staff makes about 12,000 phone calls a day to corporate America to sell them multiple computers and the hardware and software to support them. This is the specific target audience for NetWare training. Though CompUSA network technology training competes directly with the affiliated NAEC's offerings for corporate business these independent centers are forced to sell NetWare training based on training price alone. CompUSA's corporate sales team already across the country can package training with other software and hardware sales programs. This market position is CompUSA's greatest competitive advantage.

2. CompUSA Training Centers

In our current retail locations and at the planned standalone training sites, CompUSA has developed the nation's largest network of wholly owned training centers. These centers are already successfully offering technical training for consumers. There is a tested team of training administration and sales professionals at each location. And, because we are CompUSA, the largest computer superstore, the perception already exists that we will have the best equipment in our classrooms. By offering the highest quality NetWare training possible and using CompUSA's own unique resources we can deliver far more for our customer than the Novell Authorized centers can - and for significantly less.

3. CompUSA Instructor Pool

In the past few years, CompUSA has made a significant commitment to application and computer instruction. Six days a week and many evenings, in 250 plus training classrooms, CompUSA Instructors train more than 1,000 people in the latest computer applications and operating systems. We have developed a broad base of instructor talent to draw upon. By training our own elite instructors we avoid the Certified Novell Instructor (CNI) bottleneck and provide a career path for them.

CompUSA's Authorization Program, the CANI, CANC and CANSA

To assure quality and but avoid the bottleneck Novell authorization could create, CompUSA's National High End Training has developed three Certifications to dovetail with Novell's Professional-user certificates.

1. **CANI**, the *CompUSA Authorized Network Instructor* is a highly motivated CompUSA instructor, who has achieved Novell CNE certification and who has been specifically trained in adult technical education specializing in network technology with an emphasis on Novell NetWare.
2. **CANC**, the *CompUSA Authorized Network Training Center* is a CompUSA training center which has passed a stringent examination of its equipment, training environment and staff and has been judged able to deliver the technical training and service required.
3. **CANSA**, the *CompUSA Authorized NetWare Sales Agent* is a member of the CompUSA corporate sales or training sales team who has taken the training to fully understand the product offerings and market. As a knowledgeable representative, they can offer complete network training solutions to CompUSA network customers that will often include hardware and software.

CompUSA Authorized NetWare Instructor

(CANI) - Level I

The CompUSA High End Training Manager believes the most important component in a successful training program is the instructor. A major emphasis of this program is to prepare instructors both technically and professionally to offer the highest quality training we can arrange. CANI Level 1 is a special course created by a highly trained courseware developer in conjunction with our courseware vendor, Logical Operations, emphasizing CompUSA's specific requirements. To qualify to enter the CANI program the Instructor-candidates must meet certain pre-requisites:

- A Novell Certification for each course they wish to teach.
- Sponsorship by a CompUSA Training Center.

- Six months training experience in a CompUSA or equivalent training environment.
- Passing a pre-qualifying examination similar to but more demanding than the Novell exam.
- A submitted application form with resume and agreement guaranteeing Instructor will give the highest priority to CompUSA assignments for at least 1 year.

Currently, candidates are chosen on the basis of geographic need, test scores, manager recommendations and previous network experience. Instructor-candidates who are chosen then attend a CANI Level 1 training course. Here they must:

- Learn the techniques of instructor-led adult and technical training.
- Prepare and deliver video-taped presentations for class presentation evaluation by the CNI and the other instructor-candidates.
- Pass 100% evaluation by CNI instructor.

These graduates are prepared to instruct in the instructor-led courses that will lead to Novell CNA certification for their graduates.

CANI - Level II

To prepare CANI Level I instructors for the more advanced courses, CompUSA NetWare Training is working to provide hands-on NetWare installation and administration by these instructors. To apply for the Level TT training, CANI Level I trainers must:

- Hold a valid CANI Authorization.
- Have 100 hours minimum of hands-on work with Novell NetWare operating systems.
- Hold Novell competency certificates for the courses which they will teach.
- Maintain a customer evaluation average of 90% or better for the CANI Level 1 courses they teach.

CANI Level II training will feature instruction on how to instruct in the Novell NetWare lab environment and lecture courses, much different disciplines than the usual instructor-led courses.

CANI Training Courseware Materials

The second most important element in successful training is courseware. Novell has often been criticized for its courseware. Very few software manufacturers have been able to write successful training materials for their products. CompUSA training, on the other hand, has always relied on professional course writers who prepare courseware as their main business.

After examining all available courseware for these specialized classes, CompUSA has found in Logical Operations a courseware vendor who has developed what we feel are

the most logically organized and accurate course books. Logical Ops is owned by Ziff publishing, runs its own huge training center in Rochester, NY and offers NAEC training just to stay in tune with Novell. The materials they provide come with trainer guides which help the instructors setup the equipment and training environment, lead them through the chapters and provide classroom tools.

CompUSA Authorized NetWare Center (CANC)

The next critical element in training is the training environment including the equipment, ambiance and professionalism of the supporting staff. CompUSA training centers do not automatically qualify as NetWare training sites. First, they must request to offer NetWare training. Then they must be evaluated for the following CANC levels. When it is impossible to evaluate a training center prior to class availability, provisional status can be given until an on-site inspection is made. All CompUSA training locations must use CANI instructors for network training and our designated courseware materials.

CANC Level I sites can offer the NetWare basic courses by passing a checklist which lists equipment, staff and environment requirements. Most CompUSA training centers currently meet these requirements.

CANC Level II sites must be able to provide an extensive list of hardware and installed software to create the lab environments necessary for the advanced training. They must meet staffing and environment requirements as well. These checklists must be passed annually.

CompUSA Authorized Sales Agent (CANSAs)

An important, and often overlooked, part of CompUSA's professionalism comes from the sales people representing this advanced training. CompUSA sales staff wishing to represent CompUSA's NetWare training program to their customers must first attend the customized Understanding Network Fundamentals class, of which the information here is a part. This training explains the basics of networking technology and its terms. The CANSAs authorization resulting from this training assures CompUSA of a knowledgeable sales person who can provide real solutions for their customers and represent CompUSA training responsibly.

CompUSA's Marketing Advantage Summary

We're not "JUST AS GOOD" as a Novell authorized training center- we're BETTER!

- CompUSA training is the largest wholly owned training company in the country. We can offer the highest quality NetWare training with national consistency in the most locations.
- Because we're CompUSA, America's computer superstore, we have consistently better equipment and better classrooms.

- We pre-qualify and train our own CANI certified instructors, using Novell trained instructors with an emphasis on how to train technical topics and how to train adults. This gives us consistent and experienced instruction, country-wide.
- We qualify our training centers to the highest possible standard of equipment, staff and environment to authorize them as CANC's, CompUSA Authorized Network Training Centers.
- We use the best NetWare courseware written.

Course comparison chart

| LOGICAL OPERATIONS - COMPUSA | NOVELL, INC. | WAVE TECHNOLOGIES |
|---|--|---|
| System Administration for NetWare 3.12 | NetWare 3.1x Administration | Admin for NetWare 3.x |
| System Administration for NetWare 4.0 | NetWare 4.0 Administration | Admin for NetWare 4.0 |
| CNE Core Classes | CNE Core Classes | CNE Core Classes |
| System Admin for NetWare 4.0x | NetWare 3.1x Advanced Administration | Admin for NetWare 4.0 |
| Advanced Admin for NetWare 3.x | NetWare 4.0 Administration | Advanced Admin for NetWare 3.x |
| Advanced Admin for NetWare 4.0x | NetWare 4.0 Advanced Administration | Advanced Admin for NetWare 4.0 |
| Principles of Internetworking | Networking Technologies | Data Communication Technologies |
| Troubleshooting & Support for NetWare | NetWare Service & Support | Technical Support for NetWare |
| The Basics | The Basics | The Basics |
| Advanced Topics in DOS 6.0/6.2 | Microcomputer concepts | PC Support Specialist |
| Understanding Network Fundamentals | Fundamentals for NetWare Users | Local Area Network Technologies |
| User Orientation for NetWare 3.12 | N/A | N/A |
| User Orientation for NetWare 4.0 | N/A | N/A |
| Electives | Electives | Electives |
| NetWare TCP/IP Transport | NetWare TCP/IP Transport | Internetworking with TCP/IP |
| NetWare Install & Config for NetWare 3.12 | NetWare 3.x Installation & Configuration | Installation and Configuration of NetWare 3.x |
| NetWare Install & Config for NetWare 4.0 | NetWare 4.0 Installation & Configuration | Installation and Configuration of NetWare 4.0 |
| NetWare 4.0 Directory Service & Design | NetWare 4.0 Directory Service Design | N/A |
| NetWare Upgrade 3.x to 4.0x | NetWare 3.1x to 4.0x Update | Update from NetWare 3.x to 4.x |
| NetWare NFS | NetWare NFS Gateway | N/A |