

Personal Narrative Essay

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Abstract

Paylocity has posted a job advertisement for a position of Cyber Security Specialist I for Virtual Service Operations (VSO) that targets entry level applicants with a bachelor's degree or three years of experience without a degree. The posting emphasizes communication, independent work, teamwork and problem solving. The paper compares these needs with my background as a current network specialist and cybersecurity student and then adds unstated requirements such as analytical thinking, scripting, adaptability, and Security+ certification. The posting does mention TS/SCI clearance and a pay range of \$75,000 to \$86,000. The discussion connects demand to the costs of cybercrime, examines the culture of adhocracy as well as challenges of a remote work. My current work in computer networking and my coursework in cybersecurity prepare me for this position.

Job Ad Analysis

My search for job advertisements took me to Paylocity website where I found an advertisement (ad) about Cyber Security Specialist I, a job that I have always admired. The ad states that "the candidate must be a good match to fully contribute to cybersecurity goals of Virtual Service Operations (VSO)." In this essay, I will use the ad and further research to describe the skills that a good match is expected to exhibit and how my skills fit these expectations. The paper will conclude by identifying what skillset, experience, and training must be demonstrated by the suitably prepared Cyber Security Specialist.

Cyber Security Specialist I's purpose at VSO

The position is a rank I role as is indicated by the 'I' designation attached to the title. This confirms it is an entry-level role that does not need specific experience despite being critical for the organization. In fact, the ad explains that the candidate does not need to have experience unless he or she has not completed a bachelor's degree (Paylocity, 2025). In the absence of degree, the candidate will have to prove an experience of three years. Accordingly, I will be ready for this program once I complete my program, even without a lot of experience.

Skills, Experience, Qualifications, and Training

Four critical skills, including excellent communication, ability to work independently and excellent problem-solving and teamwork abilities, are mentioned in the ad (Paylocity, 2025). Based on the list, the most important skill is excellent communication, followed by ability to perform tasks independently, teamwork and problem-solving skills. Excellent communication is required in the role because the employee's duties will involve coordinating activities with the security manager and other team members. The importance of problem-solving skills can be identified in the responsibilities of the successful candidate. Primarily, this employee will perform technical support in which he or she must solve security problems. Demonstrating ability to engage in teamwork will also be essential for the position since the employee will have to coordinate activities and work together with colleagues. However, the

position does not require experience aside from where a candidate has not achieved the degree requirement (Paylocity, 2025). The major requirement is a bachelor's degree in cybersecurity or other related fields. With regards to training, the ad does not specify the programs required, but the job description implies that the candidate must have received courses in network and systems security. In addition, the candidate must have TS/SCI security clearance due to the fact that the organization often secures government contracts.

Unstated Skills, Experience, Qualifications and Training

Since the role involves the provision of technical support for securing systems, the employee must have a couple of additional skills, including analytical thinking, scripting, and adaptability. The ability to analyze new threats and complex data can improve the ability of the specialist to solve security issues. He or she also needs scripting ability in order to develop programs that can facilitate the analysis of complex logs. Also, working in virtual environments will expose the candidate to new work conditions, expectations and systems which make adaptability fundamental for the role. Despite it being an entry-level job, the job role requires the candidate to possess previous experience with network security, system administration, or similar roles in the field of cybersecurity risk management. The candidate must also have CompTIA Security+ to provide confirmation of competencies for cyber security operations. Thus, the specialist needs to have completed a program in network/system administration.

Existing and Upcoming Motivators

The position has currently attracted a lot of demand due to the massive prevalence of cyber threats that have made organizations requiring cybersecurity professionals. In 2025, cybercrime resulted in organizations losing almost \$10.5 trillion (Avanzi et al., 2025). Considering the continuous evolution of technology and threats, cyber incidents would only be higher in the future. Based on this prediction it seems that the demand for cybersecurity professionals is only going to increase as organizations look to avoid major security-related

disasters.

The Reasons for Wanting the Job

I want to work as a Cyber Security Specialist for couple of reasons. As an entry level job, this is one of the jobs with highest and consistent demand which leads to job security. The position also comes with a huge salary, something that will be needed for meeting my huge financial demands. The ad indicates that the employee will be offered a salary range of \$75,000 to \$86,000 which is among the highest salary range (Paylocity, 2025). Lastly, the requirements of this job are a perfect match with what I have learned in my program. The key words the ad uses are system security, communication and problem-solving (Paylocity, 2025). My program has relevant units like database systems, computer networks and digital forensics that have prepared me for such a job.

The Company's Culture

Based on the key words and phrases of the ad, and the literature about organizational culture, VSO's culture can be described as adhocracy. The organization provides the opportunity for learning, which encourages innovation and creativity that characterizes the adhocracy culture. Its mission statement reveals that it wants to provide the best information technology services and facilitate the growth of its people (VSO, 2025). Therefore, a person who wants to be a part of its workforce must have skills that suit adhocracy culture including adaptability, flexibility, leadership, and creativity.

Soft Skills That Are Not Explicitly Stated

While competencies in relation to a role are important, they are not the only skills or abilities an employee should have. In cybersecurity role like this one, knowledge of networks, systems, and risk management will undoubtedly be critical to the ability of the employee to contribute to VSO's mission. However, he or she must apply soft skills that are suggested by the ad, one of which is time management. The ad's need for the person to be willing to manage his or her normal activities without over-relying on a supervisor, as well as the work taking

place in a virtual space is testament to the importance of time management. Also, strong leadership appears to be a requirement in this position as the employee must work with colleagues to meet organizational goals.

The Challenges a Person in this Role May Experience

Challenges come out of the contradictions experienced in the advertisement. The position requires working onsite in Arlington, but the company name stresses "virtual service operations." This tension between the physical presence and the virtual delivery may cause stress. Government contracting is strict access facilities in spite of cloud-based models. The need for clearance makes things complicated. Maintaining TS/SCI eligibility requires very strict standards of personal conduct about social media, money and foreign contact. Another challenge is that the entry level status is dealing with low complex tasks that may appear to be repetitive. It appears the trade-off to gain specialized Cybersecurity Experience and Clearance-Relevant Work is acceptable. Although the \$75,000 salary is reasonable compensation for the D.C. area, it appears that the cost of living in Arlington may make the budget for entry-level employees a struggle.

Conclusion

The Cyber Security Specialist I position at Virtual Service Operations is a good fit for me as a current network specialist and cyber security student. The posting focuses on communication, independent work, teamwork and problem solving and I practice these skills in support work, labs and documentation. The implied needs such as analytical thinking, scripting, adaptability and Security+ readiness also align with my training goals. The TS/SCI clearance requirements and the Arlington cost of living present some real challenges, but the role does provide good growth and meaningful security work. Overall, this job is a perfect fit for what I am currently looking for.

References

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