

IES&BD Past Winning Submissions

Nominee: Cisco Systems, Inc. Channel Partner Team Category: Excellence in Sales Training

About the Nominee

Cisco Systems, Inc. is the worldwide leader in networking for the Internet. Today, networks are an essential part of business, education, government, and home communications; and Cisco Internet Protocol-based (IP) networking solutions are the foundation of these networks.

Cisco hardware, software, and service offerings are used to create Internet solutions that allow individuals, companies, and countries to increase productivity, improve customer satisfaction and strengthen competitive advantage. Cisco provides the foundation and works closely with its network of channel partners to deliver complete solutions to the end customer.

Cisco culture is one of connecting and collaborating with others. The company is committed to innovation, and spends nearly \$5.3 billion a year in R&D, making it one of the top research and development spenders in the world. Founded in 1984, Cisco Systems, Inc. is headquartered in San Jose, California, and employs more than 72,000 worldwide.

Describe the Nominee(s)'s Accomplishments

Cisco has developed a number of successful programs focused on business development and sales training. Combined, these programs offer a comprehensive outlook on a very innovative approach to building and training the workforce of tomorrow. Specifically, over the last two years, Cisco has honed its internal training program for early-in-career professionals and expanded that opportunity beyond its four walls to develop an innovative program designed to transfer and spread that knowledge to its channel partners.

Cisco employs more than 72,000 worldwide, but the Cisco channel partner community is made up of more than 280,000 employees worldwide. Combining Cisco's innovative training program with the company's commitment to its channel partners, Cisco developed the Cisco Partner Sales Academy (PSA), designed to recruit and intensively train top talent for Cisco's Worldwide Partner.

Bruce Klein is Senior Vice President of Cisco's Worldwide Partner Organization, which is responsible for supporting Cisco's global business with more than 60,000 partners, representing the company's primary route to market. This global partner community, which includes systems integrators, value-added resellers, distributors, services, and technology partners, accounts for more than 80 percent of Cisco's revenue. These partners expand Cisco's customer reach with innovative solutions and services based on Cisco technology.

Klein and his team develop the strategic initiatives and program innovations that create capacity to promote Cisco's growth in existing markets and new areas of opportunity. They also ensure that partners have the right capabilities and skills to meet evolving customer needs, while accelerating market adoption of Cisco products and services. The Partner Sales Academy is a great example of one of Cisco's strategic initiative to enable growth.

Cisco Partner Sales Academy

The Cisco Partner Sales Academy (PSA) hires and trains early-in-career sales & engineering talent to bring diversity of background and experience to the Cisco partner sales force. The program was developed as a direct result of hearing requests from numerous channel partners regarding a lack of available sales talent

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in the industry. Made available to channel partners in 2012, PSA was developed to help solve the major skills gap and help partners achieve essential growth goals. The program was built upon the tenets that recruiting early in career and offering those hired sales associates the very best industry training would result in higher productivity, increased loyalty, and improved collaboration with the Cisco partner sales force.

In further exploring the voids that needed to be addressed, Cisco found that partners were looking to grow their headcount and most were targeting 10-25% growth. These stats continue to hold true and in further developing the program Cisco considered the following:

- Talent shifting to more emphasis on solution sales and design skills
- 60% interested in leveraging on-the-job training as a development strategy
- 66% interested in lowering costs while optimizing learning

By offering partners access to a program produced in tandem with the Cisco Sales Associates Program (CSAP), Cisco is providing its channel partners with an extensive level of training and preparation that goes well beyond the norm. Revamped in 2009, CSAP has won several national awards and its graduates have been recognized internally for selling more Architectures than Cisco field reps not graduated from the program, booking over a billion dollars of revenue annually, and having a higher retention rate than Cisco field reps not graduated from the program.

In addition to the resources provided through the intensive three-month bootcamp and the additional nine months of on-the-job coaching and development, PSA fosters a relationship between the partner associates and Cisco that translates into increased trust, collaboration and synchronization that yields optimal results for their mutual end customers and provides Cisco partners with “next generation” sales leaders.

The program targets recruits from the Millennial generation (born 1982-2002) - a very different group than Generation X, Y or Baby Boomers – and has been adapted to fit their style of learning, including the incorporation of two-way dialogue via a high definition learning environment.

A key component of PSA’s program is virtual training. It is conducted primarily via an advanced TelePresence classroom environment. TelePresence is Cisco’s immersive meeting technology that offers high video & audio clarity. Participants are “life size”, and every sound, gesture and facial expression supports natural communication styles. WebEx also is one of Cisco’s collaborative technologies. It allows integrated voice, video and desktop sharing. These technologies, combined with other collaborative tools (including a mobile iPad solution) have become the delivery platform for the program’s global developmental activities. This allows PSA to maintain an exceptional learning experience, scale globally, and ensure local sales relevance.

Using these technologies to deliver trainings, Cisco has needed 40% less staff than the former face-to-face model used in CSAP (pre 2009), which has led to a 24% reduction in training costs for the program overall. In addition, learner satisfaction scores have increased from 3.9 to 4.65 (on the Likert 5.0 scale), and for the PSA and CSAP programs, global processes have provided a standard 12-month development experience, regardless of the Associate’s physical location.

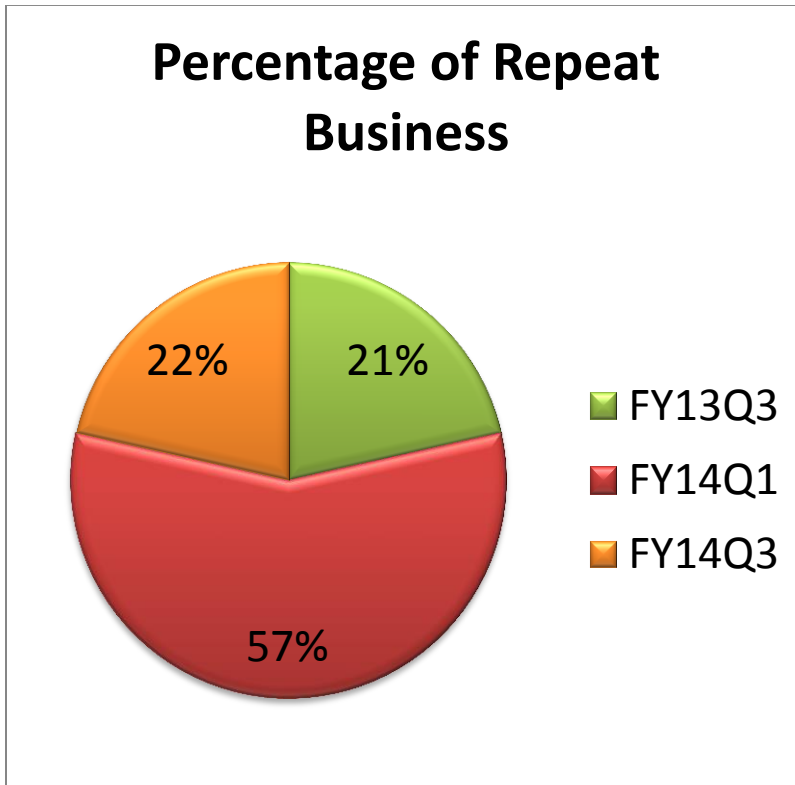
The Partner Sales Academy just welcomed their 4th class of sales and engineering associates. More than 40 associates have graduated from the program and now making significant sales and technical

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achievements.

Total Cisco Partner Associates 107

- Participating Partner Companies 44
- 288 Certifications Achieved
- Millions in closed business



In 2012, PSA was created a program to help solve major skill gaps and help partners achieve essential growth goals. In 2014, we are achieving both alongside our partners.

The Cisco Partner Sales Academy Team

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Nominee: Cvent

Category: Excellence in Sales Training

About the Nominee

[Cvent, Inc.](#) (NYSE: CVT) provides a leading cloud-based enterprise event management platform. The company has more than 1,450 employees and 12,600 customers worldwide. Cvent offers software solutions to event planners for online event registration, venue selection, event management, mobile apps for events, e-mail marketing and web surveys. Cvent also provides hotels with a targeted advertising platform designed to reach event planners looking for suitable venues. Cvent solutions optimize the entire event management value chain and have enabled clients around the world to manage hundreds of thousands of meetings and events.

Founded in 1999, Cvent is headquartered in McLean, VA, with additional offices in North America, Europe and Asia.

Describe the Nominee(s)'s Accomplishments

Cvent has averaged 30% growth for the past 15 years. In August of 2013, the company completed a successful IPO, and today has a market cap of \$1⁺ billion. The company's growth can be attributed to many things: a strong executive management team, which includes the company's founders; innovative products and services that continue to evolve, and aggressive expansion, through international opportunities and acquisitions. One additional, essential factor – and what sets Cvent apart from other organizations – is the company's substantial investment in training employees, especially its sales teams.

All new sales employees receive at least 8 weeks of sales training. First they spend time with the Cvent executive management team, who share the company's history (including lots of great stories about Cvent's early days), provide an overview of the company and drill into details on how each Cvent department contributes to the company's overall success.

Next, more than a week is devoted to hands-on instruction on the products they will sell and can cross-sell. The new sales reps then spend a great deal of time shadowing other sales team members to absorb best practices for successful selling – engaging in role playing, practicing sales pitches and doing mock calls with existing reps, learning how to handle questions, objections and **close deals**.

The next phase of training involves extensive reverse shadowing, when new sales employees take on actual sales tasks, engaging with prospects and customers while experienced Cvent sales professionals provide one-on-one guidance and feedback. This personalized training is augmented with classroom training on the various tools they will use, such as Salesforce and internal Cvent systems.

In addition to the formal training, new Cvent sales employees are also paired with a mentor. The mentor and new hire typically connect before the employee's start date or training, and the mentor serves as an on-going resource for questions and guidance. These relationships are maintained throughout the employee's career at Cvent.

Cvent's ongoing success is probably the best proof of the company's outstanding sales training, but here's a quick employee testimonial: "I received more and better training in 3 days at Cvent than I received during 3 years at my previous company – by a wide margin."

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Nominee: R.W. Murray Co.

Category: Excellence in Team Building, Management, and Development

About the Nominee

R.W. Murray Co. is a privately-held general contractor in Manassas, VA whose foundation is built on quality, safety, excellence and ethics. Company success is measured by client satisfaction and the commitment of employees to “Always Do Right”. This old adage may sound simple, but it is the company’s core ideology and the key to past and future success. R.W. Murray Co. provides pre-construction, design-build and general contracting services for commercial, industrial, health care, educational, retail, fitness and recreational facilities, including base buildings, interior build-outs and renovations. Clients include commercial developers, building owners and/or their representatives, government contractors, and large and small business owners.

The company’s mission is “to provide an environment where the employees can achieve their goals in life.” This mission promotes personal and professional growth and nurtures a company culture that embodies well-being and happiness. We currently have 29 employees, most with tenure of 5 – 20 years. There are 2 primary owners, and with a succession plan in place, a new partner has been announced. The owners and executive team all have a “no red tape” and “open door” policy, which encourages team member confidence and healthy communication. Company revenue for 2013 was \$38,130,000, a significant increase from 2012, which R.W. Murray Co. attributes to its team building, management and development strategies.

Describe the Nominee(s)’s Accomplishments

“We’re thrilled to announce that your outstanding teamwork efforts have resulted in a 46% revenue increase!” This was the year end announcement made by the owners at the 2013 4th quarter meeting held at the Prince William Ice Center. The financial portion of the meeting ended and everyone grabbed a stick and headed onto the ice for the 3rd annual broomball games. After some slipping, sliding, a little swearing and a few points on the board, Team Blue won 2 out of 3 games. R.W. Murray Co. team building at its finest.

The project teams at R.W. Murray Co. deliver work products to loyal clients, week in and week out; Class A office buildings, distribution and warehouse facilities, doctors’ and dentists offices, restaurants and more. The company is proudly versatile, and teams do not remain the same, changing with each project. Most work on several projects at once, so they’re on multiple teams simultaneously. They are shape-shifters of sorts, literally and figuratively! They have to be adaptive to suit the needs of the client, design team, and to complement the internal team dynamic. It must be second nature for a new project team to immediately “click” and perform on a fast-paced schedule. That is why team building is vital to the health of the company; not just occasional team-building exercises and a yearly picnic for family introductions, but ongoing, purposeful interaction all throughout the year.

The company’s approach is to practice a continuous, “team building lifestyle”. It is designed to benefit the team member as an individual, as a member of a project team, and as a member of the larger group. The objective is multi-faceted: to create and strengthen internal relationships, enhance quality of life in the workplace, promote healthy lifestyles, and ultimately to encourage peak performance. Each year the company strives to enhance the team building program and a description of the past year's activities are including herein.

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In order to delve deeper into the inner-workings of teams, the owners agreed on a company-wide study of the book "The 5 Dysfunctions of a Team". After everyone read the book, a consultant was hired to moderate and facilitate break-out group sessions to identify negative behaviors relating to trust, conflict, commitment, accountability and results. The sessions were enlightening and resulted in the company collaborating on a set of "teamwork tenets" to commit to at each project kick off meeting. Study of The 5 Dysfunctions of a Team lasted a year, culminating in a unique, fun, 6-week team building event unrelated to construction. This lengthy event, called the Team Step Race to Disney, described in detail below, prompts competing teams to encounter the 5 dysfunctions along the way and apply the book principles to the benefit of the individual, their team and the large group.

Being a small company where project teams work in an entrepreneurial fashion, it is important to nurture the family feel of the larger group. Themed monthly luncheons are hosted by the company to share a meal, celebrate a holiday or just talk about non-work related things. It's easy to learn about someone when they share a story at the table and it's fun to see shy types break out of their shells. Team building exercises play a big role at all quarterly meetings. Each person shares personal information, such as a New Year's resolution or bucket list item and team break-out sessions include problem solving and corporate goal discussion.

A robust, healthy team lifestyle component has gained momentum this past year. Events include a yearly golf outing, bowling tournament, charity run participation and our newest event, a team step race. With a simple objective of more steps per person per day, 4 teams of 8 participate in a 6-week long, team step race to a virtual location. It is fitting for this company to race to the heart of world-class customer service, so Disney World was chosen as the virtual destination! Each participant was provided a race packet with instructions, pedometer and step/mileage log sheet for daily entries. Team captains change weekly to keep a fresh team dynamic and provide leadership opportunities. The team daily step totals are stacked and after the first week all 4 groups were already approaching North Carolina! A tracking map is posted on the company's lobby board and updated weekly for all to monitor team progress. Great prizes go to the winning team members as well as individuals with most steps overall and most improved weekly totals. So, how does the company measure the success of this approach? Performance indicators that calculate a net promoter score have served the company well.

Upon project completion the client is asked to take a short survey comprised of 7 questions. The questions cover overall project quality and referral indicators, customer service, time management as well as specific performance of the project manager and site superintendent. An additional comments section is provided to allow to the client freedom of expression. Rather than complaints, it is often used as further affirmation of a job well done.

Performance results serve as teamwork vital signs, and are not only current trend indicators, but lagging indicators as well. Large project duration is several months to over a year, so the client is weighing in on the team's ability to mitigate risk over a long period of time. The construction industry is one where "Murphy's Law" is not a stranger, as a project can easily be affected by external factors such as the weather and owner changes. Looking back to 2012, our net promoter score was a whopping 96.72%, painting a rosy picture for the upcoming year. With exceptional teamwork and customer service values in place, the 46% revenue increase in 2013 was an exciting result. To ice the cake, the company took a spot as a top 20 general contractor in Virginia Business' "The Big Book 2013"! In 2012, although revenue was down, profit margins increased. It was a year of "right revenue", where there were more service sensitive projects and less cost sensitive ones. Whereas performance on any type of project can result in repeat business, loyal client relationships tend to be more of the service sensitive types than low bid seekers. In 2013, 85% of revenue was from repeat clients, with 64% negotiated contracts versus competitive bid award. The remaining 15% of revenue was mostly referred business, thanks to great teamwork.

The year was not without its obstacles. Although the company has long-standing processes in place to minimize the impact of changing market conditions, the overall sluggishness of the commercial real estate

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industry continued to pose a challenge throughout the year. In addition, R.W. Murray Co. is one of a growing number of small businesses to change its IT solution from an in-house IT department that maintained its own servers to internet-based computing in a hosted environment, with an outside vendor to handle all IT matters. Significant resources were dedicated to implement and maintain this new technology. The team had to overcome more than transition obstacles when the original vendor did not work out and had to be replaced. At this point, everyone has adapted nicely to working "in the cloud" and enjoys the many benefits of the new work environment.

In addition to business development efforts which are driven by the executive team, R.W. Murray Co. believes that every employee serves as a "salesperson" for the organization. In fact, employees from all departments have brought business in the door, be it through an industry event, a community event or in casual conversation as a patron of a local business. All team members are encouraged to develop relationships and become trusted construction advisors for everyone in their network - personally and professionally. To promote professional development, every employee is provided a membership to the Virginia Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. (ABC) and encouraged to attend classes for professional development, serve on committees and attend networking functions as applicable. Executives and project managers are offered a membership to the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP) and encouraged to serve on committees, attend functions, and participate in programs when applicable such as Development 101 and Emerging Leaders. The company norm is to encourage and financially support participation in any relevant industry organization and to pursue professional development classes and continuing education.