

EFMD EXCELLENCE IN PRACTICE AWARD

SUBMISSION FOR CISCO GLOBAL TECHNICAL LEADER PROGRAM
(GTLP)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cisco is the worldwide leader in networking that transforms how people connect, communicate and collaborate. It is in the process of a transformation on a huge scale: to move from its hugely successful history as a hardware company to its next wave of success as a software and solutions leader connecting the unconnected. Engineering is at the heart of that transition so its leaders will have to be exceptional in navigating the organisation through a rapidly-changing environment. Key to this are the technical leaders who need to effectively communicate the new technologies and the opportunities they offer and to collaborate with other leaders in the business to deliver new technical solutions that meet changing customer needs.

The Global Technical Leader Program (GTLP) is Cisco's only cross-organisational, globally-implemented, high-potential-targeted technical leadership program. This three-month duration, nomination-only program is uniquely developed for senior technical talent in *Individual Contributor* roles to support them in the transition from technical leader to business leader. Their next roles will be principal engineers, architects or distinguished engineers for various business units in the engineering, sales, IT, supply chain and services functions of the company.

The objective of the program is for technical leaders to develop a strategic business perspective, and to communicate effectively with other leaders in the organisation in order to collaborate across the organisation to deliver solutions that meet customer needs.

The program content includes self-awareness/emotional intelligence, influencing, coaching and business communications, innovation and business case development. The content is delivered in a mix of face-to-face workshops, virtual connect sessions and group project work to optimize the application of learning and embed new leadership behaviours.

A key part of the program is the team action learning project which requires participants to work on real business case projects from the various technical business units within the company. Program participant project teams

consisting of 6-7 cross-functional technical leaders apply the skills learned in the facilitated learning portion of the program to research and develop a business case. Ultimately they present to a panel of vice president level CTOs and top-tier executive senior technical leaders at the end of the three-month period.

Since 2010, 467 senior technical leaders have participated in the program, resulting in average performance improvement of over 15%, and the development of approximately 80 business cases representing future business opportunities for the company. The GTLP program has become well known inside the company as an incubator for global cross-functional projects (see section 3 for more detail).

'The program pushes our engineers to think more strategically and get the big picture. The leadership skills and capabilities that they learn in the program have the potential to transform their own day-to-day work. In my observation, most GTLP alums display a demonstrable leap in their leadership competency capabilities compared to their non-GTLP peers.'

- Engineering CTO Director

1. THE CHALLENGE

Cisco is a global technology leader which is going through a major transformation from a highly successful hardware manufacturer to becoming a solution provider focused on software and services. This transformation affects the whole business, but particularly focuses attention on the technical leaders, who need to translate these new opportunities into real customer solutions. This requires technical leaders to develop a broad set of skills and develop networks internally to collaborate effectively in order to bring the whole of Cisco capability into the development of customer solutions.



Traditionally, Cisco has offered a variety of routes to a successful career, which follow either a traditional management pathway or an *Individual Contributor* pathway where progress is in levels of responsibility or scope of a technical or specialist area. Starting ten years ago, and increasingly in the face of fast-paced technology change, Cisco senior leadership recognised that some technical *Individual Contributors* were limited in their career progression by a perceived lack of strategic thinking, business perspective and effective senior-level communication and collaboration. A solution was needed to round out the capabilities of these senior technical leaders in order for them to fully contribute to Cisco's success. Furthermore, Cisco wanted to invest in this group of highly valuable employees to build engagement and loyalty as they could be targeted by competitors in this period of rapid growth in the technology industry.

Over the last ten years the Global Technology Leaders Program (GTLP) has been providing high-quality, strategically-targeted, leadership development to meet these business imperatives. The program evolution has been unusual and challenges throughout that time have led to a flexible, innovative and highly-effective program with excellent personal and business impact.



GTLP EVOLUTION

The original version of the GTLP program was developed in 2006 in response to a skills gap among the technical leaders in the customer services division in the APAC region. In particular, those technical leaders needed to develop capability in influencing, stakeholder communications, strategic thinking and innovation in order to progress in their technical leadership careers.



Early success in performance improvement of TLP graduates led to the program expanding rapidly over geographies and business units. But in 2008 the global financial crisis led to cost cutting and the program was put on hold. The following year the HR teams carried out a review of programs to be re-developed and determined that TLP should be prioritised for redevelopment as it '**contained content critical for technical leader development**'. Consultation with senior technical leaders contributed to a further development of the program with the recognition that the target technical leaders:

1. demonstrated a lack of business understanding and would benefit from working on a business case in order to place their technical work in a business context
2. had limited experience of working across cultures and functions and should be exposed to a broader range of employees in order to build a broader set of stakeholder relationships
3. had high attrition rates, because of a perceived lack of career progression opportunities within Cisco

The result was the GTLP program which was developed to build the company's technical leadership bench strength and a pipeline of next generation technical leaders. These senior technical leaders are required to

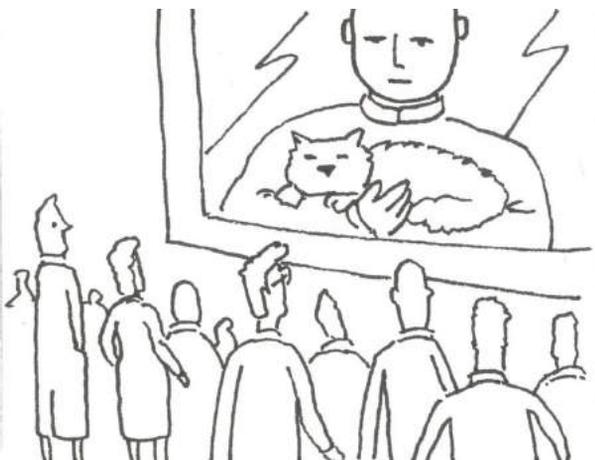
- understand the broader business context of their role
- communicate more effectively with business executive leaders the contributions and customer-focused business needs of their technological solutions
- collaborate with other technical and business leaders within the company in designing customer solutions

These objectives require a collaborative, global perspective; strong influencing and communication skills and a clear understanding of the business strategy and how that manifests itself in delivering customer solutions.

'For the first time in ten years I have been able to have a conversation with a customer where they didn't get frustrated. I understand what others need to know and I adjust my communications to meet that need.'
- 2015 Program Participant

SPENDING CONSTRAINTS DRIVE INNOVATION

In 2010 Cisco imposed a ban on all non-essential, non-customer related travel, so the program was designed for all-virtual delivery. This led to a highly-innovative approach using virtual meeting and video conferencing technologies to develop a level of connection and engagement among the group despite not being co-located.



In late 2011 internal travel bans were removed and the GTLP team was tasked with redesigning the program in blended form. The program objective and the content are broadly unchanged but the delivery method has changed dramatically over the life of the program.

Ten years on, GTLP evolves to develop the technical leader transformation

GTLP has continued to evolve to meet Cisco's needs for technical leaders to drive real business innovation to meet customers' changing needs. This strategic focus for Cisco is at the heart of its latest advertising campaign - 'It's never been a better time to...' - which showcases the use of technology to solve some of the biggest challenges to businesses, to the environment and to healthcare. These

challenges are large in scale and scope and Cisco is putting the full resources of the whole organisation behind those solutions. This requires the leaders driving those projects to use strategic thinking, have a global outlook and be able to effectively collaborate within and outside the organisation to bring the best of the world's technology to bear.

The GTLP program supports this strategy by being recognised as an essential 'incubator' for these large cross-company projects. Project sponsors value the opportunity to have a highly-skilled and well-supported technical team who are able to dedicate a meaningful amount of time and resources to a project outside their day-to-day work.

Several recent projects have addressed new cloud technologies, for example exploring ways to provide visibility for companies of all the cloud apps in use throughout the organisation in a single dashboard; or identifying opportunities through big-data analytics to create new revenue models for cable TV companies building on customer experience services.

One unusual project was highlighted in the advertising campaign. The project team worked in partnership with a number of technology companies, wildlife groups, local communities and a national park in Africa to apply technological solutions to the problem of rhino poaching. The result has been the creation of a network of security, tracking, sensors and communications services which together secure the park perimeter while allowing free movement of the animals in safety.

The broader team acknowledged the structured approach to collaboration and decision making brought by the GTLP team, and their skills in building a business case. The GTLP team supported the wider group in developing their solution and in influencing senior stakeholders to support and fund the project.

'Real encouragement to disrupt thinking inside the company's silos to leverage the power of the company.' – Program Participant

2. THE PARTNERSHIP

LIW has partnered with Cisco since 2000. Starting in the Asia-Pacific region the partnership expanded to include a number of global initiatives that have delivered proven business outcomes. A few examples are shown below:

- **Cisco Advanced Manager Series (CAMS):** winner of the 2014 Bersin by Deloitte WhatWorks award for Developing Future Leaders, this program is in its 6th year and has delivered over \$400 million in performance improvement.
- **Partner Leadership Masters (PLM):** a suite of programs to help Partner Account Managers is transforming Cisco's relationships with its key partners and delivering multi-million dollar returns.
- **Leadership Breakthrough:** an EFMD award-winning program for high potential leaders from across the business. This program has run ten cohorts over four years and created a pipeline of leaders to step into global roles.

Partnership in Design

The design team consisted of internal L&D, technical specialists, business leaders and external (LIW) program design and development consultants. This broad group established clear roles and set up regular reviews and milestones to maintain momentum.

The first step in design was a series of 'discovery' interviews with senior-level leaders in order to understand the big challenges facing the business in the next five years and to define the leadership that was needed to meet those challenges. In particular, the team focused on the specific role of the technical leader, although they considered it in the context of the leadership needs of the whole business. Out of these findings the team developed a needs analysis which underpinned the high-level design of the program. This includes the content and structure of the learning experience, the duration of the program and the method of delivery.

In this phase the diversity of the team paid dividends, as the internal HR team provided the broader organisational context while the LIW team members brought an external perspective to challenge existing leadership and technical role expectations.

The high-level design was reviewed with key program stakeholders across the business to ensure strategic alignment and the detailed design and facilitation plan was completed. The particular challenges of virtual delivery required a wider group of stakeholders to be involved including technical experts in the delivery technologies.

Action Learning Projects

The action learning projects drove a second parallel design path with internal HR leaders and the GTLP program manager engaging with senior-level CTO stakeholders and senior-level technical leaders to identify relevant business case topics with appropriate goals and timeframes. They enrolled sponsors for each project and established a project framework with regular check-ins, mentorship and feedback. Final project presentations were set for the program close meeting with sponsors and senior stakeholders, and clear expectations were set for project outcomes, business case development, and recommendations for next steps.

The GTLP program design team successfully engaged and partnered with a top-tier executive Technical Fellow, also co-founder of Cisco, who has helped to secure numerous stakeholders and project sponsors, including SVP and VP-level CTOs across the engineering, sales, customer services and IT functions of the company. His support brings a high level of technical credibility to the GTLP program, and has enabled the team to develop the perception of GTLP as a key incubator of global technical projects for Cisco.

ONGOING COLLABORATION

The program teams meets quarterly to review program results.

- Reaction survey results (Kirkpatrick levels 1 and 2) feed back into program delivery and facilitation to optimise learning.
- Impact survey results (Kirkpatrick levels 3 and 4) are communicated to senior program sponsors in order to demonstrate the value of the program in delivering technical leadership development and business outcomes. They are also shared with prospective participants and their managers to set expectations and to help them prepare for the program.
- Project case studies are shared with senior sponsors and help to sustain the positioning of GTLP as an incubator of key business-wide projects.
- Results are also shared with the alumni community to build a network of GTLP graduates across the globe who can share best practice and further develop technical leadership in Cisco.



'The success of the GTLP program is a testament to the true partnership between Cisco and LIW. The Cisco program team brings a tremendous passion, determination, transparency and drive to deliver a high-impact learning experience - and we have fun in the process. This has allowed the program to deliver the business impact whilst also being able to be agile to evolve the program to changing business circumstances.'

Mark Ferguson, LIW Program Manager

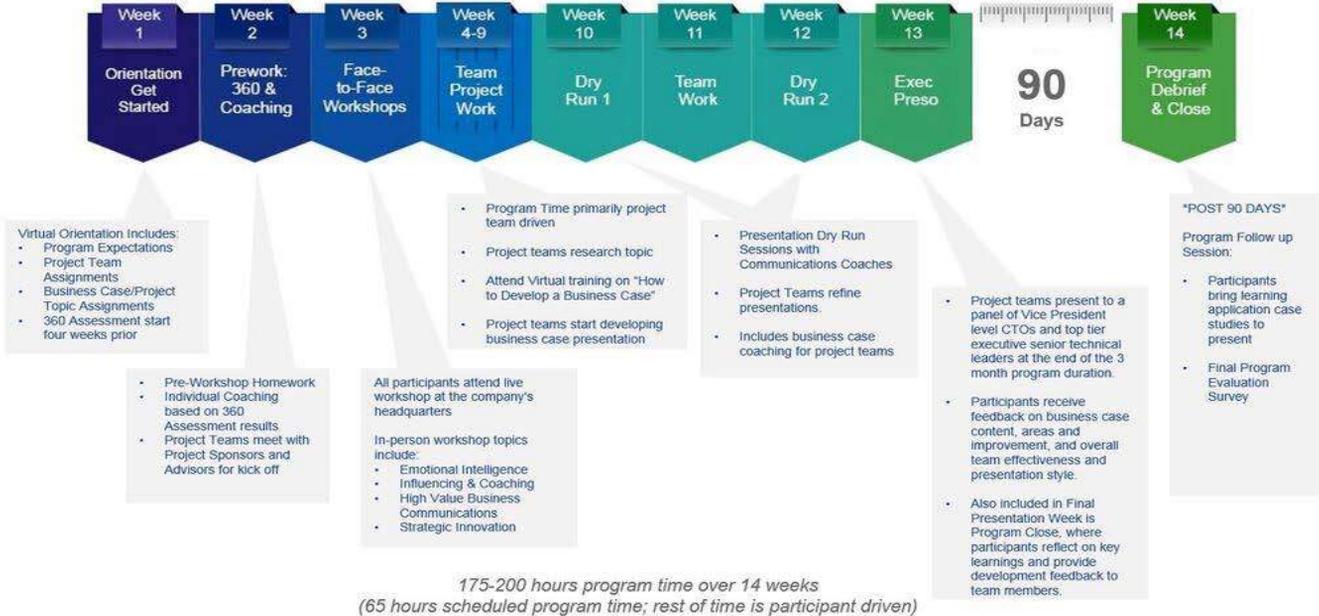
3. THE L&D INITIATIVE



The GTLP program runs across a 14-week period and consists of a virtual orientation, a five-day face-to-face workshop, individual 360 assessments and debrief, 1-on-1 coaching aligned to development goals, presentation dry-run sessions, action learning project presentations to an executive panel, and a 90-day program completion review.

Total time commitment for the program is 175-200 hours, 65 of which are in formal scheduled events and the remainder is related to application of learning and project work and is participant driven. This aligns to the overarching philosophy of the GTLP program that participants take from it what they put in, and that the participants are accountable for their own success. Participants are nominated for a seat in the GTLP program, with support from their senior leadership and up-line manager. This leads to a high level of engagement among participants who have chosen to take the time to attend in pursuit of a senior technical leadership role.

Global Technical Leader Program



PROGRAM ORIENTATION

Virtual orientation sessions for both participants and managers prepare both groups to optimise the GTLP experience. The sessions are facilitated by an LIW consultant and the program delivery manager and set out to:

- Clarify the objectives of the program of leadership transformation for technical leaders
- Discuss and agree ways that managers can support participants throughout the program
- Agree a current business challenge for participants to work on 'live' as they learn



WORKSHOP

The workshop is highly interactive so that participants have opportunities to network and learn from each-other as well as the formal learning experience. The approach is to cover content in cycles of 'learn – try – apply' so that everything they do is aligned to outcomes and participants are able to make use of learning immediately in their work.

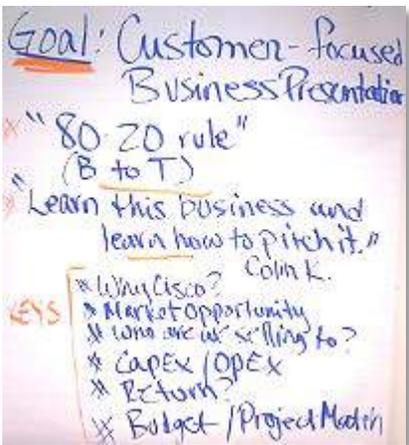
- Learn: program facilitators use an exercise or another discovery activity to learn theory
- Try: the participants use the learnings in the simulation
- Apply: the participant uses the new learning to plan for the successful execution of their own business challenge or their project objective.

'Great program ... Really strives to get people talking and interacting. I especially like the mix of backgrounds on the teams. This really gives a new perspective.' –
Program Participant

Action Learning/Business Case Projects

The projects have become a core element of GTLP, where participants have the opportunity to apply their learnings in real, current challenges. The high-level sponsorship for the GTLP program means that these projects are cross-business, current projects which often don't fit naturally into a single business unit or function. GTLP has become a recognised incubator within Cisco for these projects to receive high-quality technical and business analysis to move them forward.

The project presentations are attended by senior sponsors and the project teams receive valuable feedback and guidance for next steps. Around 20% of projects continue to the next stage of implementation and GTLP teams continue to work together on them after the formal program has ended. These are highly-visible global projects which showcase the team's work and their strategic leadership contribution.



Manager Engagement

Managers attend a pre-program orientation session to enable them to create the conditions for their team member's success. Our surveys revealed the real value of manager engagement: participants who met with their manager after the program to plan application and impact from their learning achieved **37% higher performance improvement** than those who did not have that manager support.



Alumni

Many graduates of the program come back and serve as project team advisors for the subsequent cohorts' project teams. This has developed a community of practice in the company specific to the target program role, as well as the next career level i.e. principal engineer, architect, or distinguished engineer. Participants get to observe the learnings in action from their graduate peers. This community of practice is supported by the company's internal social collaboration platform JIVE, with a restricted group of current participants, past graduates, project sponsors, advisors and program stakeholders. It includes program content, past participant project work, and an on-going discussion section.

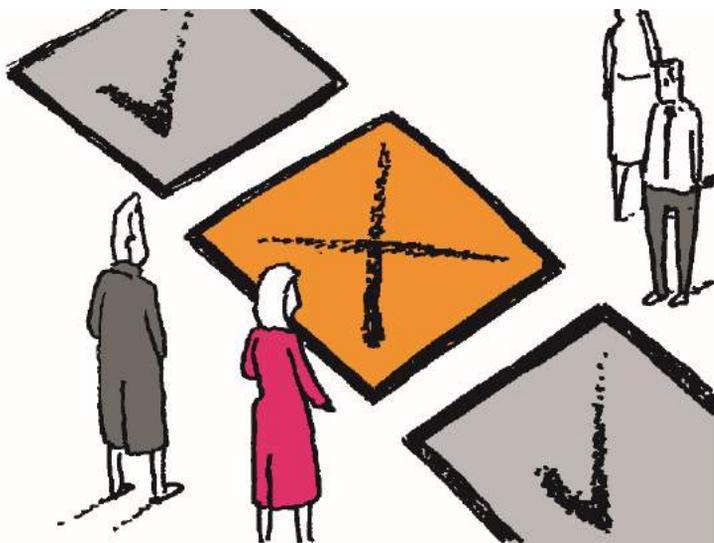
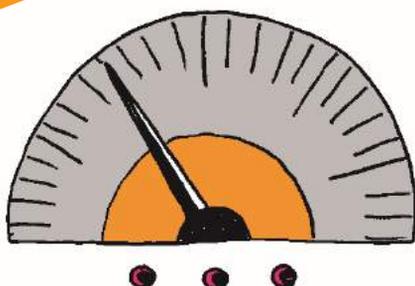
'The long-standing support from VP-level CTOs, distinguished engineers from the engineering, services and sales functions, and the GTLP graduate community, is a critical factor in the program's success. These stakeholders serve many roles for the program participants: action learning project sponsors, project SME advisors and project team mentors. The program team often call this group the 'unsung heroes' of the program; they graciously dedicate their time and passion to help develop the next generation of technical leaders and make the program a success.' – Rob Dinsmore, Senior Program Manager, Leadership and Development, Cisco

4. THE IMPACT

The purpose of the GTLP program is to enable the transformation of technical leaders into business leaders who can deliver value for Cisco, so it was critical to the program that we demonstrate real leadership behaviour change and quantifiable business outcomes achieved by the participants.

We follow the Kirkpatrick methodology for learning evaluation to track learning through behaviour change to business impact. We collect data through surveys and case studies.

'This was definitely a learning experience for me, both in co-leadership within a team, providing compelling communications with executive leadership, and even just getting a good look under the hood of Cisco. It's been a long and sometimes exhausting 16 weeks, but definitely worth the time and the effort.' - **William Young, Technical Solutions Architect, Security Sales**



We use two surveys:

1. **The reaction survey** primarily addresses levels 1 and 2 of Kirkpatrick: the training experience and learning. The survey builds on the traditional 'happy sheet' but with the emphasis clearly on the participant as the driver of learning and behaviour change. All questions are framed in terms of how the participant approached the program; how well they were supported in their learning and practice by peers, the facilitators and their manager; and their motivation post-workshop to go back to their role and apply the learnings to their work.
2. **The impact survey** includes questions focused on levels 3 and 4 of Kirkpatrick – application (behaviour change) and impact. The key here is the alignment of the outcomes to the program objectives and to the wider business objectives of Cisco. So behaviour change is rated against executive-level competencies for technical leaders; and impact (performance improvement) is determined in alignment with individual and team/business unit objectives.

In addition to the surveys we created two kinds of case studies for this program:

1. **Individual case studies** which describe an individual's experience applying learnings to their work to address a specific challenge in their work
2. **Project case studies** which describe the team projects which run through the program with external sponsors and real/current business objectives.

PROGRAM RESULTS ARE IMPRESSIVE

Strongest behaviour changes (Kirkpatrick level 3) are in:

- ❑ Executive communication
- ❑ Taking a broader business perspective
- ❑ Bringing a customer perspective to their role
- ❑ Thinking strategically

Strongest business outcomes (Kirkpatrick level 4) are in:

- ❑ Greater collaboration
- ❑ Strengthened stakeholder relationships (internal and external)
- ❑ Increased team engagement
- ❑ Better work efficiency and execution



91% agree/strongly agree that the program was a worthwhile investment in their leadership development.



15.3% average performance improvement attributable to the program.

Participants described the content areas which they most expected to apply to their work. (SCIPAB® is a business communication method from [Mandel Communications](#), one of the additional GTLP partners.)



PROGRAM RESULTS (CONTINUED)

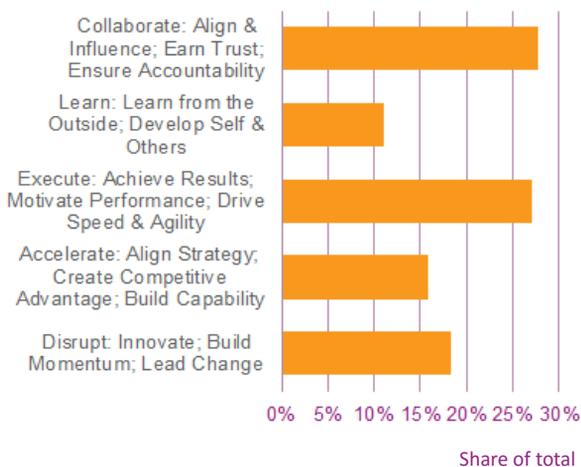
Strategic Alignment

Cisco identifies strategic leadership competencies in five areas:

C	Collaborate
L	Learn
E	Execute
A	Accelerate
D	Disrupt

Alignment of GTLP outcomes with these strategic competencies was strongest for Collaborate and Execute, which were a central goal of the program – to transform technical leaders into business leaders and empower them to leverage the whole of Cisco to deliver customer solutions rapidly and effectively.

Outcomes achieved to CLEAD priorities



'I developed an understanding of what leadership means and ...tools to self-assess and assess the situation, help solve the problem and coach others.'

- Program Participant

In addition to these surveys results, individual participants recognised the benefits of the program in case study examples:

'Using the new tools from GTLP: business communication, delegating and consensus building, and the feedback from my LSI assessment to influence a team of experts, I convinced the business unit to do something they had never done before for a customer, and presented /influenced a competitively held account to go with our solution, which they did not consider before. We won the account, built new relationships and got our team to overcome some previously immovable obstacles. We won a \$16M project which is 20-30% of our region's annual goal as a result.'

- Sales/Systems Engineer Program Participant

PROGRAM RESULTS (CONTINUED)

The project outcomes produced further evidence of the learning journey of GTLP participants and the real impact these teams delivered for the business. Projects tend to be cross-functional/geographic in scope and provide opportunities for teams to bring a variety of skills and experience to deliver truly innovative solutions to some of the organisation's most difficult challenges. One example is of a project which fell under the CSR scope and had a positive impact on the organisation's international brand:

'Our team was tasked with working with a varied group of stakeholders to collaborate in designing a technological solution to the problem of game poaching in African national parks. We first had to travel to the park and meet with local stakeholders to understand the problem and scope the technical possibilities. Then we worked collaboratively with technology partners, wildlife experts and local communities to implement new technologies in tracking, security and data capture. We used cutting-edge Internet-of-Things technology to get real-time data to the right people at the right time. The project advanced animal protection as well as showcasing Cisco's technology and commitment to the region.'

- Connected Conservation Team 2015

This project features in one of Cisco's new series of adverts - 'There's never been a better time to save the rhinos' - where the technology solution was described as 'a game changer' in catching poachers.

http://www.cisco.com/c/m/en_us/never-better/csr-1.html



Protecting the world's oldest animals with some of the world's newest connectivity technology

There's never been a better time to save a species.

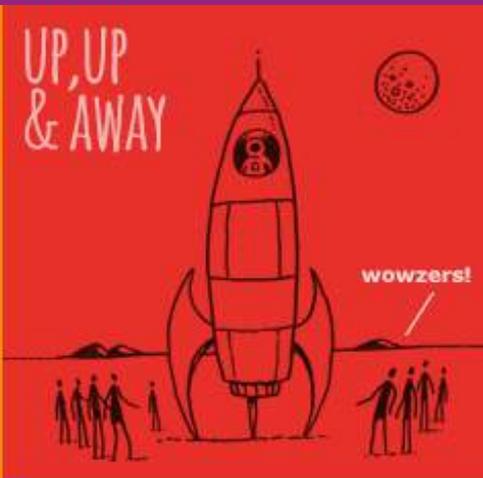
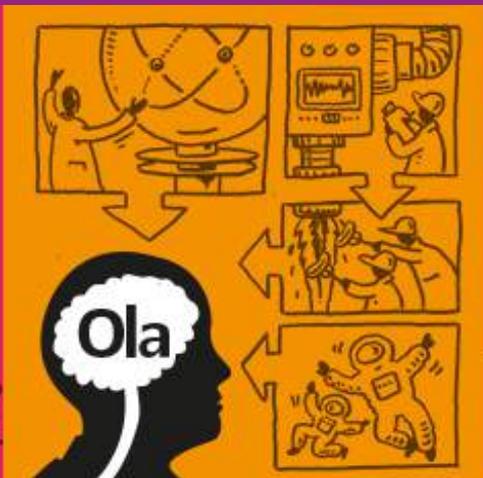
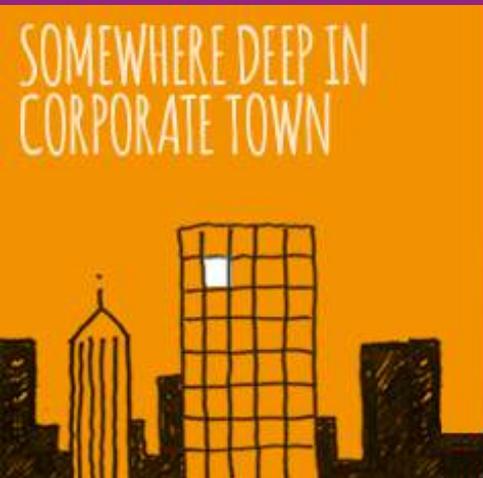


APPENDICES

- LIW BUSINESS IMPACT REVIEW
- FURTHER ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

LIW Business Impact Review

Cisco/GTLP





Impact Highlights

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

To build Cisco's technical leadership bench strength and a pipeline of next generation technical leadership demonstrating C-LEAD competencies

For the first time in ten years I have been able to have a conversation with a customer where they didn't get frustrated. I understand what others need to know and I adjust my communications to meet that need.

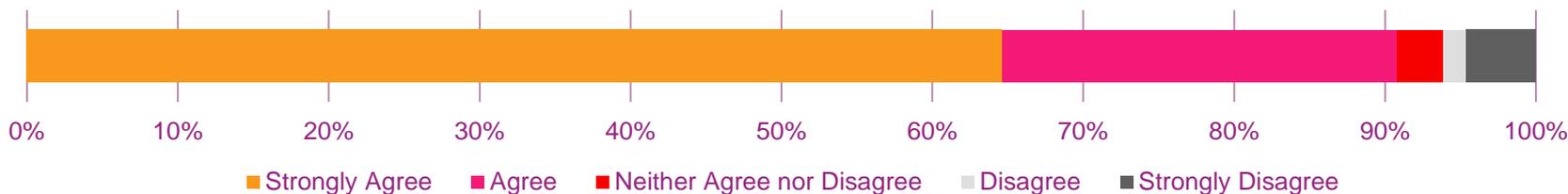
-Bridget Barry: GTLP Session 17

PROGRAM RESULTS

14.5% Average performance improvement since attending GTLP

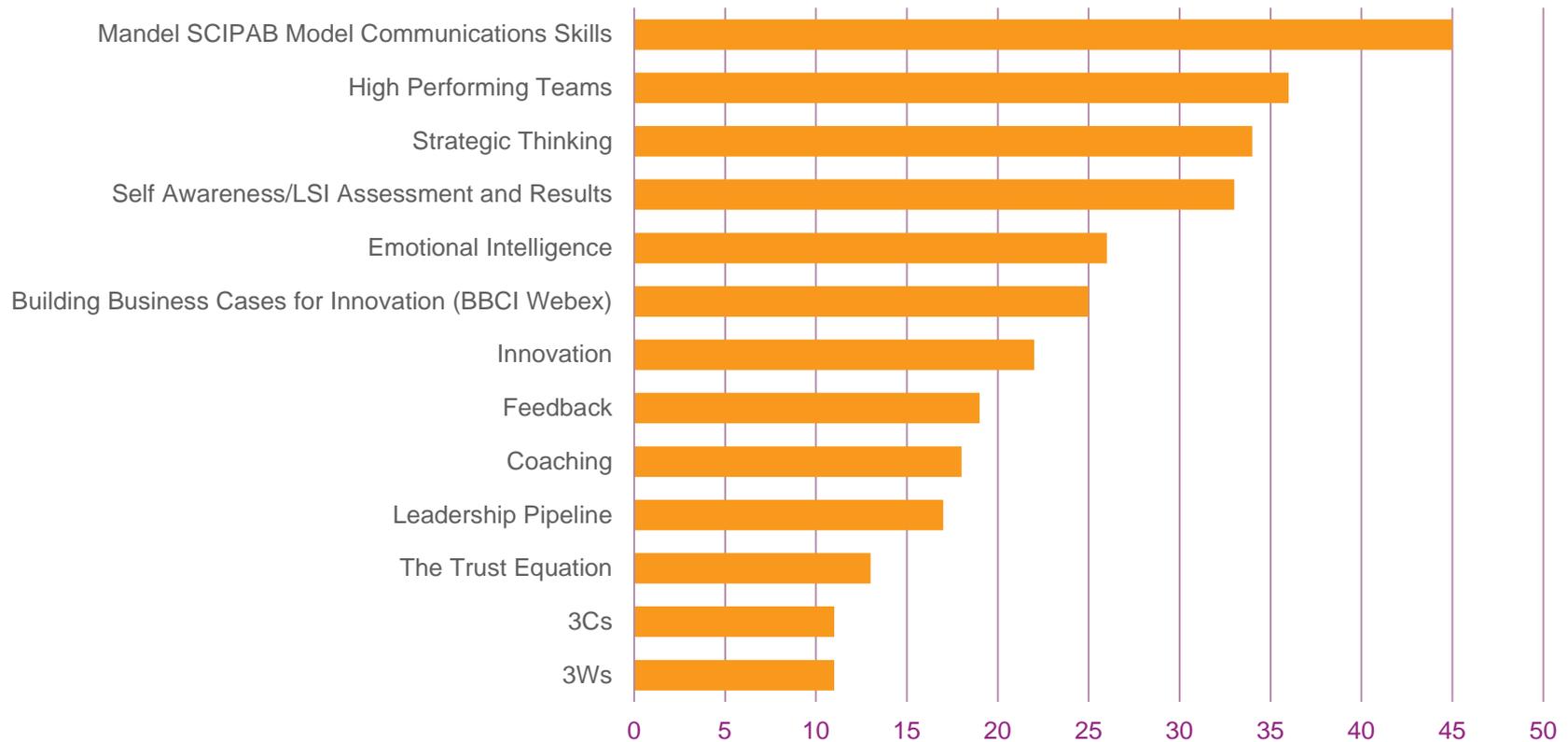
72% have achieved business outcomes since attending GTLP

This program was a worthwhile investment in my leadership development



Learnings most relevant to work

The most relevant GTLP Workshop learning topics for my leadership development were



Since GTLP I'm doing this differently or better



59% Have met with their manager since GTLP to plan application to work

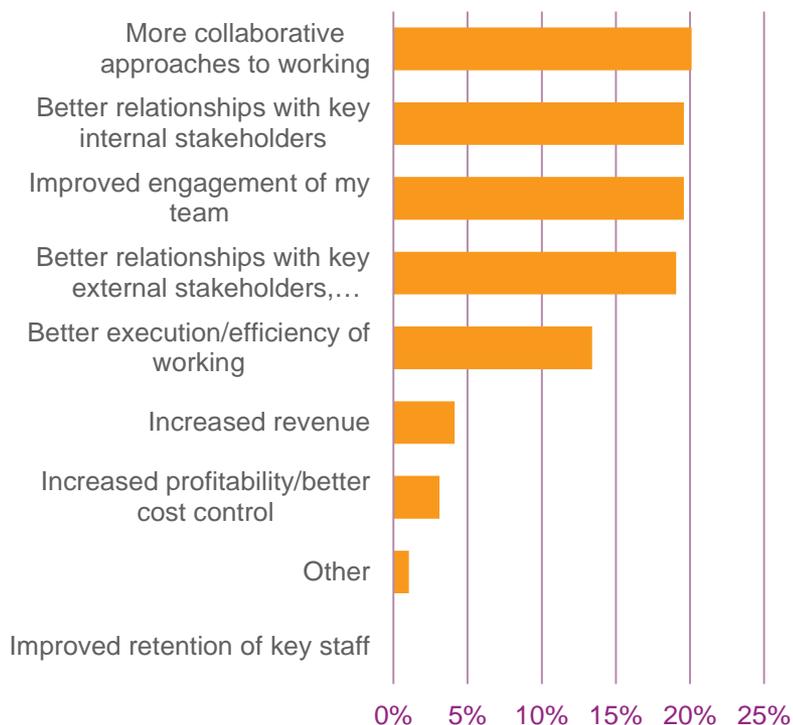


OlaTM

Organisational
Leadership
Architecture

Business Impact and CLEAD

Business Outcomes



- Greatest changes in collaboration, team engagement, strengthened relationships
- Least change in revenue and profitability

- Greatest impact in Collaborate & Execute
- Least impact in Learn
- Opportunities to build impact through alignment and disruption

Outcomes achieved to CLEAD priorities



GTLP Participant responses

Anonymous feedback:

This is a fantastic and valuable course. I can see how the more people in Cisco get to take this course, the greater better it would be for Cisco.

Great program ... Really strives to get people talking and interacting. I especially like the mix of backgrounds on the teams. This really gives a new perspective

Understanding better the challenges that lie ahead for Cisco. Also, how we can look at the trends and the possible future scenarios to provide real innovation in my role.

Real encouragement to disrupt thinking inside Cisco silos to leverage power of Cisco

Understanding of what leadership means and ... tools to self assess and assess the situation and help solve the problem and coach others.

Learned completely different way of thinking about issues, problems and projects

Really great info to focus efforts for meaningful business conversations

GTLP Participant responses

“Thanks for all your guidance, encouragement, organization and expectations for us in the GTLP program. I really am a better employee having gone through this. In my everyday job, I’m able to ask better business questions and understand more complex and nuanced business issues. SCIPAB and the Mandel work has been the most immediate tool for me so far. This is best course I’ve been involved with ever at Cisco.”

- Raymond Viscaina
Technical Leader, Services

“This was definitely a learning experience for me, both in co-leadership within a team, providing compelling communications with executive leadership, and even just getting a good look under the hood of Cisco. It’s been a long and sometimes exhausting 16 weeks, but definitely worth the time and the effort.”

- William Young
Technical Solutions Architect, Security Sales

“GTLP was a highly demanding course, tougher than some college-level courses I have taken. But, I think the benefits are well worth it. I learned valuable communications techniques, including SCIPAB, Business Model Canvas, and others. The presentation project was a very rewarding culmination (we did something like 33 drafts of our presentation on using WebRTC to improve Cisco Services, and upon delivery got overwhelmingly positive feedback from a very tough audience). I got to know Cisco leaders from all across the company. Finally, I feel renewed confidence in my communications skills.”

- Chuck Byers
Technical Leader, CSIG

Opportunities for GTLP

W1:

to build Cisco's technical leadership bench strength by providing a strategic/whole business perspective for high potential Technical Leaders to expand beyond their technical roles

Potentially to be the incubator of cross-Business Unit projects within Cisco

- Apply high level technical resources to a project
- Provide a real project for GTLP graduates to apply leadership learnings
- Drive collaboration across the organisation to develop market leading solutions

W2:

Participants report strong leadership development, particularly in communicating and collaborating beyond their traditional technical environment

Sponsors value the rigour and analysis of a GTLP team on their project

But the project outcomes may not be shared with the right audience

The successful projects do not always find a champion to push them on after GTLP

W3:

Continue to deliver excellent leadership development to high potential technical leaders

In addition: position GTLP as a project incubator to Cisco

Broaden the final presentation audience to more senior stakeholders

Create a clear path post GTLP for project to get into the execute-commit framework

Appendix

Breakdown by FY and Program Version

Further Analysis of Results

14.5% Average performance improvement since attending GTLP

12% vGTLP FY10,11,12

16% GTLP FY 13,14, 15

Performance improvement by year

- FY10 14%
- FY11 9%
- FY12 13%
- FY13 19%
- FY14 12%
- FY15 18%

Impact of Manager on performance (Compared to 14.5% overall):

- 17% performance improvement for those who met their manager
- 13% performance improvement for those who did NOT meet their manager