

Cisco | Gold Winner

Repositioning the Brand

In 2018, Cisco went back to its roots to rediscover what makes the company unique. In doing so, it unearthed an origin story that most brands can only dream of. The founding of Cisco (named after San Francisco) was born from a simple desire to connect one man and one woman – and their computers – across the Stanford campus. The original logo they chose, based on the Golden Gate Bridge, reflected that purpose. And while the bridge logo has evolved along with Cisco’s business, connection is still core to everything it does.

This idea had always been key to Cisco’s culture, yet the story had not been told in a holistic way. And even though Cisco’s business had seen exponential growth over three decades, customers experienced many different Ciscos, complete with inconsistent brand voices and images, and a complex set of products and services.

In particular, Cisco’s unique origin story was lost on the Millennial generation, many of whom are too young to remember the early days of the internet. Thus, “The bridge to possible” visual storytelling campaign – which evolved into “The Internet for the Future” – brings to life the essence of what makes Cisco special, while paying homage to its heritage, showing its lineage to the present, and looking to the future.

Before sharing its story, Cisco surveyed its customers and partners to assess brand awareness. The data showed that Cisco needed a flexible yet focused way of talking about the company and its offerings, one that was unified and simple across every touch point (from sales, to products, to customer service and support, to engineering, to marketing).

Creating a more cohesive marketing strategy that moved beyond selling on technical innovation or products alone required a mindset and cultural shift internally at Cisco. To realize the vision and purpose of the company 30 years after its inception, Cisco needed its 75,000 employees to reimagine a vision in which each and every one of them had a personal stake. The campaign would become a litmus test of Cisco’s values and culture, so it needed to speak to every employee in a way that they related to and could take ownership of.

Ultimately, the strategy was built on three central pillars that would lead to:

1. Building a unified platform that shines a light on the stories that demonstrate who Cisco is.
2. Creating a narrative that demonstrates Cisco as greater than the sum of its parts.
3. Demonstrating what is possible when imaginative people and innovative technology coalesce around a common purpose.

The launch of Cisco's latest technology in conjunction with video stories of the people that make the company tick, and the customers making an impact, would become a powerful trifecta of The bridge to possible. For the first time, the launch of Cisco's technology and the origin story that embodied the brand and its purpose would go to market in unison.

The public launch spanned 35 countries and 20 languages. But The bridge to possible would go far beyond a standalone brand campaign. It was about creating a movement through a truly integrated marketing initiative that activated employees, customers, partners and beyond. From leveraging all paid and owned media and relationships with tech influencers, to live events and promotion with Live Nation and Global Citizen partners, to customer hero stories, to employee activations to give back to the community – this campaign was as much about what the company does, as what the company says. It was about how Cisco connects emotionally with all audiences.

Cisco measured the success of the campaign on:

- Video views, completion rates, average view length
- BTP page bounce rate, on-page clicks, heatmapping, user recordings
- Return visitor rate (RVR) as a KPI
- The bridge to possible effectiveness on customer conversion journeys

The results thus far have been stunning:

- The campaign has been viewed over 3.5 billion times. 75% of all US digital leads can be tied to brand assets
- Averaging 570,000 Cisco.com visitors / month, and a return visitor rate double that of previous campaigns
- When campaign content is the first interaction w/ Cisco, customers convert 63% faster
- 98% of employees feel inspired by the campaign and feel it is authentic to Cisco

And in the past 18 months The bridge to possible has continued to spread its wings and bring renewed meaning to the brand and its purpose – to the people who work there and beyond.

Anthem:

