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Cisco and Microsoft Launch Small and Medium-Sized Business Collaboration

Initiatives Geared to Promote Channel Partner, Customer Success

CISCO PARTNER SUMMIT 2004 — HONOLULU, Hawaii, Feb. 12, 2004 — Cisco Systems® and Microsoft today announced that the two companies intend to team up based on their respective expertise in technology, services and applications to help accelerate small and medium-sized business (SMB) customer and channel partner success. Building on the companies' prior collaboration in areas such as data center architectures and IP telephony, and their shared vision for encouraging new levels of productivity and profitability for SMBs, Cisco and Microsoft aim to collaborate on SMB solution development and optimisation, marketing and channel programs.

“Cisco and Microsoft have long had many of the same small and medium-sized business channel partners and customers,” says Peter Alexander, vice president, Worldwide Commercial Market Segment, Cisco Systems. “The pre-tested, pre-configured architectures and solutions that we are jointly developing will help drive partner success and make it easier for them to provide integrated solutions to their SMB customers.”

"Our two companies want to share the knowledge we have each gained from working with SMB customers. Through our partners, we hope to use this knowledge to offer robust and cost effective solutions that help our customers increase productivity and realise their full potential" says Darren Huston, corporate vice president, U.S. Small and Mid-market Solutions and Partners, Microsoft.

New Business Growth Resources for the Channel

Cisco and Microsoft have teamed to develop reference architecture blueprints for Microsoft's IT Solutions for Small and Medium Businesses. The collaboration will help enable channel partners to provide Cisco industry-leading secure networking infrastructure and Microsoft award-winning applications to their customers.

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The blueprints are being validated through a joint verification process, and are being developed to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of SMB customers with 500 or less employees. The architectures will serve as business growth resources that will help drive Cisco and Microsoft channel partner profitability. Going forward, Cisco and Microsoft will be announcing additional joint channel resources and programs.

"As a channel partner of Cisco and Microsoft, I see a huge advantage in these 'best practice' architectures from two established SMB leaders," says Gia McNutt, CEO, Special Order Systems. "Cisco and Microsoft are providing us with what amounts to a roadmap for offering our customers end-to-end solutions that will help them improve the profitability and productivity of their businesses."

Optimised Customer Care Solutions

Cisco and Microsoft have teamed to develop customer relationship management (CRM) solutions that combine Cisco IP Communications with Microsoft CRM. Small and medium-sized businesses will now have one complete, communications solution that can quickly, reliably and cost-effectively be installed and maintained. By making possible a single, integrated view of all customer communications – whether on the phone, by email or voicemail -- these CRM solutions are designed to help SMBs improve customer satisfaction, increase productivity, reduce total cost of ownership and sustain a competitive advantage. Channel partners will be able to capitalise on the Cisco and Microsoft collaboration by providing CRM solutions that offer unprecedented integration of IP communication technologies and CRM applications from the industry leaders.

Integrated Server and Network Platform Offering Helps Unleash Business Potential

In addition to the reference architectures and CRM solutions, the two companies have teamed to introduce a joint product offering specifically designed to increase the productivity and security of growing businesses. The offering is based upon the Cisco 831 Broadband Router and Microsoft Small Business Server 2003 Standard Edition. The joint Cisco and Microsoft offering will allow channel partners to deliver proven solutions to help SMBs increase their business efficiency through server-based solutions for e-mail, fax, database, shared Internet access and remote management and support. It will also help SMBs maintain the security of their IT systems reducing the threat of losing valuable intellectual capital to hackers while maintaining the confidentiality and integrity of the data within their network.

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“SMBs seek integrated technology offerings that simplify, support and facilitate business processes,” says Mika Krammer, SMB research vice president at Gartner, Inc. They want to make investments from as few sources as possible that ‘just work’ and address their business needs versus having to worry about hunting for and integrating individual components. Well-supported joint architectures and solutions position partners to better meet the needs of the SMB market.”

For more features, news, videos, and photos relating to the Cisco 2004 Partner Summit visit

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About Cisco Systems

Cisco Systems, Inc. (NASDAQ: CSCO) is the worldwide leader in networking for the Internet. News and information are available at <http://www.cisco.com/news>.

About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (NASDAQ: MSFT) is the worldwide leader in software, services and Internet technologies for personal and business computing. The company offers a wide range of products and services designed to empower people through great software -- any time, any place and on any device.

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