

Q&A

CISCO CHANNEL PARTNER PROGRAM

CISCO REGISTERED PARTNER

Q. What is a Cisco® Registered Partner?

A. A Cisco Registered Partner is a partner who has submitted a Cisco Partner Registration application that has been approved by the field organization in that partner's theatre.

The Cisco Registered Partner badge replaces the Cisco Authorized Reseller badge and applies to indirect channel partners who resell or provide professional services related to Cisco Systems® products. It is also a prerequisite for becoming a Cisco certified or specialized partner and must be renewed annually.

Q. Why has Cisco introduced the Cisco Registered Partner Program?

A. Over the past two years, Cisco has introduced more discipline into the Cisco Channel Partner Program by requiring that all partners renew their certifications each year. Cisco is now doing the same for new partners and existing Cisco Authorized Resellers by introducing a new process for registering as a Cisco Channel Partner.

Q. What are the benefits of becoming a Cisco Registered Partner?

A. Benefits include the following:

- Partner-level Cisco.com access
- Eligibility to become a Cisco certified or specialized partner
- Cisco Partner Locator listing (for United States, Japan, and Americas International)
- A welcome e-mail, including a URL to view an online Cisco Registered Partner kit that includes useful tools and resources such as sales tools, logos, guidelines, and information about Cisco certification and specialization
- Use of the Cisco Registered Partner logo

Q. What type of partner is eligible to become a Cisco Registered Partner?

A. Registration applies to both resellers and non-resellers who provide professional services related to Cisco products because these are the types of partners that this program targets.

Q. How does a partner become a Cisco Registered Partner?

A. Using the Cisco Partner Registration application, all new indirect partners must accept the terms and conditions of the Indirect Channel Partner Agreement (ICPA) (which covers value-add and basic commercial terms and conditions [software license, trademarks, confidentiality, warranty, etc.]).

Once the terms and conditions of the ICPA are accepted and the application is submitted, it must be approved by the Cisco channels field organization prior to being accepted into the program.

Q. Is becoming a Cisco Registered Partner related to becoming a Cisco certified or specialized partner?

A. Becoming a Cisco Registered Partner is a prerequisite for obtaining partner-level access to Cisco.com and participating in the Cisco Channel Partner Certification and Specialization Programs.

Q. Are existing Cisco certified and specialized partners required to go through the Cisco Partner Registration process?

A. Yes. Existing certified partners and specialized partners who do not have a direct resale agreement in place with Cisco are required to become Registered Partners by accepting the terms of the Indirect Channel Partner Agreement (ICPA). They will be prompted to do so upon their next certification or specialization application (either new or renewal) after January 26, 2004. If they do not do so, they:

- Will not be able to renew their certification or specialization.
- May lose their partner status, including partner-level access to Cisco.com and eligibility to participate in the Cisco Channel Partner Program.

Q. Where can partners go if they have questions about partner **registration**?

A. Partners should go to [Partner Help](#) on Cisco.com for answers to their questions, or to open a case if the answers to their questions are not available.

CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Q. Because certification and specialization are based on meeting all requirements within a given country, or country grouping, what is the definition of “country” for certification and specialization purposes?

A. Certification and specialization are based on meeting all requirements within a given country. This is typically an individual country, but Cisco sales management can group smaller countries into a consolidated “country” or add them to other larger countries for purposes of this definition. When the theatre has formed these country groupings for the territory, then the certification and specialization requirements apply to these “countries.” View the [Country Grouping list](#) at Cisco.com.

Q. How can partners verify their certification anniversary dates?

A. This information is available for all Cisco certified partners in the [Certification and Specialization Application](#).

Q. How is the certification anniversary date determined?

A. The certification anniversary date is established based on the date the partner was originally certified at a given level. A change to the anniversary date occurs only when the partner changes certification levels, or Cisco and the partner mutually agree to adjust the date. Each year the partner must submit a complete application for recertification by this date in order to maintain certification. Partner compliance is then validated through an annual recertification audit, which must be conducted no later than 90 days after the partner’s certification anniversary date.

Q. Must all partners have an annual onsite audit to be recertified?

A. Not necessarily. In October 2003, Cisco introduced a policy to waive the onsite audit requirement for recertification of partners who have demonstrated outstanding performance within the certification program. This policy was introduced to reward and recognize partners for their outstanding performance and to reduce the resource investment that the onsite audit requires, allowing partner organizations to focus on normal business operations.

Q. How do partners qualify to have their onsite audit for recertification waived?

A. In order to qualify, partners must have demonstrated exemplary performance during their prior year's audit, resulting in no "get-well" plans, and must also have remained in compliance with the program's personnel, specialization, and customer satisfaction requirements consistently during the past year. They must also meet all criteria outlined in Section II.1 of the [Certification Audit and Policies Document](#), plus relevant Cisco Technical Assistance Center (TAC) performance, attach rate, and service revenue metrics. Eligibility for the audit waiver is based upon the discretion of the Cisco certification program manager. The partner must participate in an onsite audit every other year. If a partner qualifies to have an audit waived one year, the partner must have an onsite audit the following year.

Q. How will partners know if they qualify to have their onsite recertification audit waived?

A. If, after a partner's recertification application is submitted, a partner meets all the criteria (as outlined in Section II.1 of the [Certification Audit and Policies Document](#), plus relevant TAC performance, attach rate, and service revenue metrics), the partner will be notified by e-mail of eligibility. Qualification is based solely on Cisco's discretion.

Q. How is a Cisco certified partner's discount affected if the recertification deadlines are not met?

A. Cisco certified partner who fails to comply with recertification is subject to decertification. If a partner is decertified, the contractual discount points associated with gold or silver certification are withdrawn (in accordance with the discount policy in the partner's then-current contract).

Requirements Questions—Career Certifications

Q. What is a certified contact?

A. A certified contact is an individual who has passed at least one Cisco individual certification examination, for example, Cisco Sales Expert, CCDA®, CCDP®, CCIE®, and other exams.

Q. Can one individual be counted toward multiple certified personnel requirements for certification?

A. No. All certified personnel requirements must be satisfied by unique individuals. A minimum number of career certified individuals is required for certification (gold—16, silver—8, and premier—3).

Q. Can a partner earn additional points if one individual has more than one career certification?

A. No. All certified personnel credit (toward either base requirements or extra credit points) is based on unique individuals. So an "extra" individual with a CCDP and CCNP® certification would be worth only 9 points. The only exception to this policy is in the case of an "extra" individual who has dual CCIE® certification. The partner would receive 30 points for this certified individual, as opposed to 20 points for an additional standard CCIE certification.

Q. Can a higher-level individual replace a lower one?

A. A higher-level certified individual can replace a lower one within a given track (network or design). CCIEs within the network track can replace either a CCNA[®] or CCNP. CCIEs within the design track can replace either the CCDA or CCDP.

The Cisco Sales Expert requirement cannot be replaced by any other career certification.

Q. Can a dual CCIE (one individual certified as a CCIE “Communications and Services” and a CCIE “Routing and Switching” or a CCIE “Security”) count as two CCIEs?

A. No. Each of the certified personnel requirements must be satisfied by a unique individual.

Q. Can certified individuals counted toward the certification requirements be used to qualify for specializations?

A. When the required number of career certified individuals is met (gold—16, silver—8, premier—3), then the rules for specialization personnel are as follows:

One individual can fulfill up to two roles in any specialization and participate in no more than two specializations. With some exceptions, each specialization generally has three roles: field engineer (postsales), sales engineer (presales) and account manager. These individuals can be the same as those fulfilling the core requirements for certification or any other qualified individuals in the organization.

Q. Does Cisco have a protection policy for the investment that a partner has made in training CCIEs?

A. Yes. Cisco recognizes the investment that partners make in order to attain the required number of CCIEs to become certified, and has set forth the following policy:

Losing Partner:

If the loss of a CCIE takes a certified partner below the number of CCIEs required for certification, the partner must notify Cisco of its noncompliance within 30 days. Cisco then determines whether or not the partner qualifies for an extension of 6 months to replace the CCIE in order to avoid decertification. A partner who voluntarily terminates the employment of a CCIE may not qualify for the time extension. During the extension period, the partner retains its certification as long as all other certification requirements are met.

If a partner does not notify Cisco of its noncompliance with the CCIE requirement within 30 days and Cisco identifies the CCIE deficiency, the partner is given an extension of 60 days to replace the CCIE in order to avoid decertification. This extension period begins when Cisco notifies the partner of noncompliance.

Gaining Partner:

If a partner hires a CCIE away from another Cisco certified or specialized partner, Cisco will not count this individual toward certification or specialization for the hiring partner for a period of 12 months from the date of hire. This rule does not apply if a Cisco certified or specialized partner

terminated the CCIE. In this case, Cisco will require documentation from the partner that terminated the CCIE.

Q. I do not see all my certified contacts in the Certification and Specialization Application. What could be the problem? What do I need to do to fix this?

A. There could be many reasons for this:

- To get [certified by Cisco](#), contacts working for your company need to take a test with one of the Cisco testing vendors ([Prometric](#) or [Pearson Vue](#)).
- The data from the testing center has not reached the Tracking System. If the certified contact took the test more than one week ago, and you do not see it in the Tracking System, please open a case on the [Certifications Online Support](#) site.
- Data about certified contacts is brought into the Cisco database from testing centers only if the certified contact has signed a legal agreement authorizing the test data to be made available to Cisco. You may want to ask the certified contact if that person has signed the legal agreement allowing the test information to be made available to Cisco.
- Cisco may have the certified contact in the database, but that person may not be associated with your company. To locate the contact, enter that person's CSCO ID in the Partner Self Service tool. If available, the certified contact details will be retrieved and added to your company. This situation happens when the company details provided by the certified contact at the time of registering for the test are different from the company details provided by you.
- The certified contact that now works for your company may have been associated with a different company in the past. The contact will need to update their company association by going to [Partner Self Service](#) and updating their profile. After verifying the information, the certified contact will be moved to your company within five business days. In all cases where Cisco has to move a certified contact to your company, note that if the CSCO ID (CCIE expert only) has been used to certify a company in the last 365 days, the CSCO ID (CCIE expert only) cannot be used toward certification or specialization for your company.

Q. Where can I find more information about Cisco certifications for individuals?

A. The Cisco [Training and Certifications](#) Web site has more information, or visit the [Certifications Online Support](#) directly.

CISCO CHANNEL PARTNER PROGRAM BENEFITS

Q. What are the benefits of participating in the Cisco Channel Partner Program?

A. The Cisco Channel Partner Program is one of the most respected in the industry and offers significant benefits including:

Credibility: Cisco has one of the strongest brand names in the world. As a result, Cisco partners often enjoy an increased level of credibility within their industry and offer a greater sense of comfort and security to end customers who are purchasing from a Cisco partner.

Differentiation: Cisco certifications and specializations set your company and your staff apart—and provide objective evidence to customers of your company's commitment to delivering competent implementation services and outstanding support.

Enhanced competency: Depending on the training you choose, you can enhance your organization's overall skill sets and proven technical knowledge, and increase the ability of your staff to deliver consistent, high-quality services related to the latest Cisco technologies for target markets.

Consistent program rules worldwide: The Cisco Channel Partner Program gives value-add partners a level playing field with fulfillment partners who deliver higher volumes. It enables partners to evolve to higher certification levels regardless of geography or size.

Preferential engagement: Participation in the Cisco Channel Partner Program makes your company more visible to the Cisco sales organization—and increases your credibility with them as well—which can result in a higher level of collaborative selling and provide your company with a wider range of opportunities.

Training: Cisco provides free and discounted training to its partners through the Cisco Partner E-learning Connection—the primary learning source for partners to receive fast, accessible training solutions in a variety of formats. Cisco partners also have access to the latest networking technologies through a variety of tools that help them stay at the leading edge of their respective markets.

Visibility: The Cisco Partner Locator allows end customers to search globally for partners who are qualified for specific sales situations. This tool also provides detailed information about partner qualifications, certifications, and specializations.

DIRECT PARTNER DISCOUNTS

Q. Are partners rewarded with discounts for achieving specialization?

A. Specialization is required to achieve certification. Therefore, partners do not receive incremental discount points directly for specialization, but do receive the discount points for certification.

SPECIALIZATIONS

Q. Why are Cisco Gold Certified Partners required to have multiple specializations?

A. Program requirements state that a Cisco Gold Certified Partner must earn 70 specialization points. Based on the specialization point assignments of approximately 25 points each, partners would typically need to acquire three technology specializations. Alternatively, partners could focus their efforts and achieve the 70-point goal by combining services specialization with a technology specialization.

Q. How will partners be able to focus and add value if they need several specializations?

A. Cisco encourages partners to specialize in related technology areas, thereby taking advantage of their breadth of knowledge to add more value and services. Or they could develop comprehensive expertise in a single technology area with services on top of the base specialization. If partners want to focus primarily on just one or two technology specializations, they would likely fit well within the Cisco Premier Certified or Cisco Silver Certified Partner levels.

Q. Why are specializations a requirement of the Cisco Channel Partner Program?

A. Networking technology has become far too complex to build a sustainable business model around generic value-added services. The Cisco Channel Partner Certification Program was,

therefore, designed to require specialized expertise for Cisco badging. Cisco Systems will recommend partners in specific sales situations based on these specializations. The Cisco Channel Partner Specialization Program complements this by helping you maximize your skills and market focus, regardless of your chosen business model. Through the use of structured training roadmaps and an objective knowledge validation process, you will be able to pursue a technology or services specialization that can make your company more profitable and sharpen your competitive edge.

Q. How does Cisco determine specialization points? Why are some specializations worth more points than others?

A. Specialization points are based on both the complexity of the technology content and the strategic value of the specialization in the market. Cross-functional teams determine the specialization value. These points are reviewed annually.

Q. What are the current specializations and their point values?

A. View the [Cisco Partner Specializations](#) point-value Web site.

Q. What are the benefits of specialization?

A. By acknowledging the partner's ability to deliver and support the latest Cisco technology, a Cisco specialization enhances the value of their company, enables partners to enter new markets, and gives them added credibility with customers and prospects. Cisco specialized partners can effectively differentiate themselves from their competitors while they grow their business around their core competencies.

The Cisco Channel Partner Specialization Program offers benefits that help develop technical expertise while driving value into your business model.

- Differentiation from your competitors
- Migration to a higher-margin, services business model
- Preference for specialized partners by Cisco sales organization through value engagement
- Skills to address new, high-priority markets
- Focus around core competencies
- Enhanced credibility with customers
- Ability to take advantage of Cisco certified personnel
- Foundation for entry into services specializations
- Equal consideration regardless of geography and size
- Listing on Cisco Partner Locator
- Contribution to certification
- Subscription lab equipment (where available)
- Partner spotlights—online promotion on Cisco.com
- Virtual lab access

Q. Are distributors eligible to become specialized?

A. Yes. Distributors are eligible to complete the course and exam work necessary to become specialized in any technology, service, or solution program offered by Cisco. Allowing distributor partners to include this capability enables the distributors to better differentiate their services and provide more proactive support to their reseller customers.

Q. Are distributors eligible to participate in the other aspects of the Cisco Channel Partner Program?

A. Although the specialization program is also part of the Cisco Channel Partner Program, distributors are ineligible for participating in any other aspects of the Cisco Channel Partner Program, including any discounts associated with the Cisco Channel Partner Program. Although distributors may publicize any specializations they obtain, the specialization is not transferable to resellers or customers. In addition, successfully completing certain specializations automatically provides partners the ability to purchase and resell some restricted products; even though distributors may successfully complete a specialization related to restricted products, distributors will continue to need approval from Cisco for access to any specialized restricted products.

Q. What are the benefits to the distributors for becoming specialized?

A. In return for successfully completing a specialization track, the distributors receive the following:

- Ability to differentiate themselves in market and provide added value to their customers
- Congratulatory notification to Cisco sales and reseller community
- Recognition for their specialization status on the Cisco Distributor Locator
- Specialization certificate and press release template

Q. Where can I find more information about Cisco partner specializations?

A. View the [Cisco Channel Partner Specialization Program](#) information, including specialization requirements.

Renewal Policy—Specialization

Q. Do Cisco specializations have expiration dates?

A. Yes. A specialization is valid for one year. Partners must renew their Cisco specializations annually, within 90 days of the anniversary date that the specialization was issued.

Q. What is the renewal policy for specializations?

A. Specialization renewal consists of three elements:

1. The partner must apply for the specialization renewal through the [Certification and Specialization Application](#) tool.
2. Individual professional certifications must be current (for every CCDA, CCDP, CCNA, CCNP, CCSP™, CCSE, CCIPTM, or CCIE individual certification requirement) in each specialization in which the partner participates.
3. Each individual must have a current/validated Cisco Qualified Specialist badge for their respective Specialization job role (where appropriate) or passed all exams required at the time of specialization renewal.

Q. What happens if a specialization partner does not comply?

A. Partners who fail to comply with any of these requirements by their specialization renewal date will be deemed ineligible to claim that specialization and will lose any points associated with that specialization. The partner's certification level may be adjusted accordingly, as well as removal of any references on the Cisco Partner Locator for the partner related to that specialization. When ineligible, the partner must reapply for a specialization or any certification changes that resulted from the loss of the previous specialization or certification status.

A partner who notifies Cisco of noncompliance with the specialization requirements may be eligible for a 4-month "get-well" period. Get-well periods will not be granted for retired specializations or specializations within 90 days of the renewal deadline. Partners must notify the Cisco specialization team of noncompliance by opening a case at Partner Help. Notification does not guarantee a get-well period. Noncompliance cases are reviewed and an acknowledgement is sent to the partner confirming or denying a get-well period and including any deadlines or additional requirements. If at the end of a get-well period the partner still lacks the necessary specialization points to retain current certification, the partner is moved to the next appropriate certification level (or potentially decertified).

Q. Can partners combine points earned with a newly released specialization that is related to an existing specialization (that is, an advanced version)?

A. When a new or advanced specialization is created to replace an existing specialization, certified partners can use only points from the more advanced specialization (no double counting of specializations in the same technology or discipline). For example, partners with both a Cisco Security and VPN/Security Specialization can count only the VPN/Security Specialization toward their certification level.

Q. What happens if a certified employee leaves a certified partner who has helped that partner meet the requirements?

A. If the loss of a certified individual who is performing in one of the required specialization roles takes a partner below the number required for a specialization, the partner must notify Cisco of noncompliance with specialization requirements within 30 days of the event. The partner may be given a get-well period from the time of notification to replace the missing individual in order to avoid losing the specialization (and, potentially, the current certification level). Get-well periods are not available for retired specializations or for partners within 90 days of their specialization renewal.

If a partner hires a CCIE expert away from another Cisco certified partner, Cisco will not count this individual toward a specialization for the hiring partner for a period of 12 months from the date of hire.

Q. How do partners know when their specialization is up for renewal?

A. In all cases, it is the partners' responsibility to track the expiration date(s) of their respective specializations. Cisco may notify partners, via e-mail 90 days prior to renewal date, that they are required to complete the renewal process by a specified date.

Q. Do the points earned for any particular specialization ever change?

A. It is Cisco's intent not to change point values of specializations. However, Cisco does reserve the right to do so; partners will be provided at least six months notice in the event of any point value changes.

Q. How will partners know when a new specialization is available?

A. Various communications are used to announce new specializations. It is also suggested that partners consult with their Cisco channel account managers and frequently visit the [Specialization Web site](#) to stay current on any new specializations, as well as changes to existing specializations.

Q. What new specializations are on the roadmap?

A. It is not Cisco policy to preannounce specializations. In the next year, however, partners will see the addition of technology and services specializations tailored to the commercial, enterprise, and service provider marketplace.

SPECIALIZATION PLANNER

Q. What is the Specialization Planner?

A. The Specialization Planner is a new enhancement within the Certification and Specialization Application (CSApp) tool that allows partners and channel account managers (CAMs) to view contacts who either meet specific job role requirements within a specialization or who are close to meeting the job role requirements within a particular specialization.

Q. Who can access the Specialization Planner?

A. Anybody associated to the partner with Read-Write or Read-Only capabilities can access the Specialization Planner.

Q. What steps do I need to take to review which employees at my company meet the role requirements for a specialization?

A. You can access the Specialization Planner in one of two ways:

1) Clicking on the Specialization Planner tab within CSApp takes you directly to the planner. Click on the "Contacts who meet requirements" link; select the specialization you would like to view; and select either one job role or "All" (to view all job roles).

2) In the Specialization Application tab, under allocate job roles, click on the "View Contacts" link to access the Specialization planner. Click on the "Contacts who meet requirements" link; select the specialization you would like to view; and select either one job role or "All" (to view all job roles).

Q. What steps do I need to take to review which employees at my company are close to meeting the role requirements for a specialization?

A. To view the employees at your company that are close to meeting the job role requirements, you can access the Specialization Planner in one of two ways:

1) Clicking on the Specialization Planner tab within CSApp will take you directly to the planner. Click on the “Contacts close to meeting requirements” link; select the specialization you would like to view; and select either one job role or “All” (to view all job roles).

2) In the Specialization Application tab, under allocate job roles, click on the “View Contacts” link to access the planner. Click on the “Contacts close to meeting requirements” link; select the specialization you would like to view; and select either one job role or “All” (to view all job roles).

Q. Can I allocate contacts while I am in the Specialization Planner?

A. No, you cannot allocate contacts from within the Specialization Planner screen.

Q. Some employees are currently listed as being close to meeting certain job requirements. How can I determine which exams or additional qualifications they are missing?

A. The exams or individual certifications that an individual is missing will be displayed under the “What contact needs” column.

Q. How can I see if an employee has met the maximum number of job role allocations?

A. Click on the “View Job Role Allocation” link to the right of his name to view the job roles to which this individual is already allocated.

Q. How can I determine why I do not show up under the “contacts who meet requirements” and have passed all the exams and required pre-requisite(s)?

A. Check to see if you have two or more CSCO numbers.

If you have multiple CSCO numbers you will need to have them merged before your profile will show in the “contacts who meet requirements” screen. Instructions for how you can merge your CSCO numbers can be found at the following URL:

http://ciscocert.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/ciscocert.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=1017&p_created=1002818640

Q. What is the download Excel spreadsheet for and am I allowed to download this spreadsheet and save it?

A. The download Excel spreadsheet is for putting the results of your search within the Specialization Planner into an Excel spreadsheet format. This allows you to save the information to your desktop.

Q. Why would an individual be listed on the spreadsheet as a person who meets the requirements if he has already met the maximum number of job roles?

A. All individuals who meet job role requirements are listed in the Excel spreadsheet along with their current job role allocations.

CISCO ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY PROVIDER PROGRAM

Q. What is the Cisco Advanced Technology Provider (ATP) Program?

A. The objective of the Cisco ATP Program is to bring emerging technologies to market through Cisco Channel Partners. ATP offerings help define the necessary knowledge and skills to bring emerging technologies to market and also provide a program that supports the services required for a particular technology. As a particular technology progresses along the adoption curve and becomes more standardized, it can evolve into a specialization.

Q. How are specializations different from ATPs?

A. The Cisco ATP Program limits participation to partners on an invitation-only basis. This restriction allows Cisco ATP Partners to gain early entry into an emerging market of new or low-volume technologies. These partners are required to provide postsales end-to-end support, because often Cisco TAC support is still being defined. Because the program is not open to all Cisco partners, it does not offer points toward a certification. Specializations, on the other hand, are focused on more established technologies and are open to any partner who meets the minimum role requirements. Additionally, partners can provide their own postsales support or resell Cisco SMARTnet® contracts. All Cisco specialized partners receive points toward their Cisco certification.

Q. What are the benefits of participating in the Cisco ATP Program?

A. The Cisco ATP designation enhances the value of a partner company and provides partners the opportunity to enter into new markets. Partner expertise in various technology areas also enables differentiation from competitors, and increased credibility with customers. Cisco ATP Partners are listed in the Cisco Partner Locator.

Q. Will my partner(s) receive certification points for participating in ATPs?

A. No. Because the program is not open to all partners, Cisco ATP offerings do not enable partners to earn points toward certification under the Cisco Channel Partner Program.

Q. Where do I find out more about the Cisco ATP Program?

A. View the [Advanced Technology Provider](#) Web site.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Q. What is customer satisfaction?

A. Customer satisfaction through Cisco Channel Partners is a quantitative measure of both pre- and postsales support that an end customer experiences while purchasing Cisco products or services from a partner. Cisco uses an independent company, Walker Information, to survey the end customer and obtain an objective customer satisfaction score. Cisco management uses this score as an evaluation tool.

Q. How has customer satisfaction helped Cisco?

A. Cisco believes that customer satisfaction is a key corporate objective, and has determined that customer loyalty is directly related to a satisfactory purchase and support experience. This is a “best practices” activity at Cisco, and the company attributes a significant portion of its success to achieving a high customer satisfaction score.

Q. Why is Cisco requiring customer satisfaction through partners?

A. Cisco regards partners as a direct extension of the company and wants to share its own success factors to help them become more successful. In addition, the end customer experience should be the same whether purchasing directly from Cisco or through Cisco partners. Customer satisfaction is the cornerstone by which Cisco and its partners are aligned to achieve customer loyalty and retention.

Q. Are partners given a customer satisfaction objective under the program requirements?

A. Cisco requires all Cisco certified partners to meet customer satisfaction objectives in order to renew certification. Cisco has initially involved all Cisco certified partners in an assessment against specific customer satisfaction objectives, and will incorporate additional partners for targeted satisfaction achievement as needed in the future.

Q. How are the customer satisfaction targets set?

A. Cisco applies the same methodology it uses internally to set partner customer satisfaction targets. For FY '04, customer satisfaction data for partners collected from August 2002 through June 2003 served as the actual baseline in developing customer satisfaction objectives. For FY '04, Cisco applied an uplift factor of +0.04 using FY '03 targets as the baseline.

Q. How do partners receive their customer satisfaction target?

A. FY '03 and FY '04 customer satisfaction objectives were sent to all Cisco Gold Certified and Cisco Silver Certified Partner contacts, segmented by theatre, in August 2002 and September 2003, respectively, via e-mail. Cisco Premier Certified Partners were also sent their FY '04 customer satisfaction targets, segmented by theatre, in September 2003, and they are required to meet their targets by their next certification anniversary dates after August 1, 2004. If you do not know your theatre customer satisfaction target, you have two options:

Contact your Cisco channel account manager or systems engineer.

Log in to the [Partner Access onLine](#) (PAL); select your company view, and locate the "Theatre Objective" within the Quick View box on the right. If you do not currently have access to PAL, contact your Cisco channel account manager or systems engineer to grant access.

Q. Are the customer satisfaction objectives set by area or theatre, or are they partner-specific?

A. Customer satisfaction targets are set by theatre, and all partners within the theatre have the same target.

Q. When were these targets announced?

A. The partner targets for FY '03 were announced in August 2002. The partner targets for FY'04 were announced in September 2003.

Q. Where does the partner customer satisfaction data come from?

A. The data is extracted from the Cisco Global Survey database, currently referred to as Walker Information Internet Reporting.

Q. What survey questions are relevant to the target score?

A. Partner targets are based on a combination of pre- and postsales overall satisfaction as determined within the Walker Information Survey, “Channel Partner” section. Namely, question 15: “Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with the pre-sales support provided by (your) Cisco channel partner?” and question 18: “Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with the post-sales support (repair, maintenance, and technical support) provided by (your) Cisco channel partner?”

Q. What customer satisfaction tools are available to partners?

A. Partners have real-time access to their scores (based on specific customers) via PAL, a Web-based partner tool. Partners can log in and view their specific customer feedback and satisfaction date. As a result, both Cisco and the partner can collectively review the same data.

Q. Do partners have access with the Cisco PAL tool to see competitive data?

A. Partners have access only to their own data, but the tool provides the aggregate results so that partners can measure themselves against aggregate data.

Q. How are customer names submitted for survey purposes?

A. Partners may submit names for surveys with the PAL tool. Names may also be submitted directly by Cisco into the survey database.

Q. How many customer names are required to ensure that satisfaction objectives are supportable by a “statistically significant” sample size?

A. Cisco Gold Certified and Cisco Silver Certified Partners are required to obtain a minimum of 30 responses (more are encouraged) per partner, per “certified” country (not just name submissions) to serve as a “baseline” in achieving satisfaction objectives (for recertification purposes). This minimum number of responses qualifies the partner for “Step 2” in determining if the partner has met the customer satisfaction goal. These minimum 30 responses can come from multiple employees within the same company, but Cisco strongly encourages a balanced view from multiple companies. Moreover, any end customer names entered by Cisco field personnel can also be applied in determining this minimum 30-response requirement, and they are used in calculating the final customer satisfaction score.

Existing Cisco Premier Certified Partners are required to obtain a minimum of 10 responses per partner, per certified country in order to qualify for recertification starting in August 2004. New Cisco Premier Certified Partners will not be required to meet the customer satisfaction requirement for approval, but will need to meet the requirement upon their next annual recertification.

Q. What if an end customer identifies a different partner for presales support and postsales support, even though the requesting partner assumed that he provided both pre- and postsales support?

A. To ensure partner confidentiality, Cisco accepts only end-customer-confirmed data identifying a partner as having delivered pre- or postsales support. Consequently, if customer A names ABC as its presales partner and DEF as its postsales partner, then ABC sees data for customer A *only* as it pertains to presales support.

Q. What if an end customer selected the “wrong” partner when completing the Cisco survey? Can we go back and change the name?

A. End customers are given full right to select the partner(s) they choose to rate. Cisco does not edit the data, nor does Cisco screen for perceived inaccuracies. You can well appreciate the unsolicited exposure if Cisco is seen as making judgments as to what end customers meant to say (or not say) or who they meant to select or not select. One of the primary reasons Cisco employs a third party (Walker Information) to administer its corporate survey is for a full disclosure and accounting of the data. Simply, all responses are valid and Cisco makes no assessment of what an end customer intended. Cisco’s position has been consistent with all partners worldwide: to drive more survey responses.

Q. Most of the Cisco survey is about Cisco products and services; very little is about perceived benefit to the partner compared to the reasonably small amount of partner-specific questions. What is the value-add for partners to encourage their end customer to fill out the survey?

A. The survey generally is voluntary; more than 98 percent of the questions are optional to the end user. Cisco encourages end users to complete as much as they want to complete. The more data, the better for both the partner and Cisco to take the appropriate corrective action(s). Answers to the questions regarding Cisco product, services, price, return on investment (ROI), and the like stand to benefit both Cisco and the partner because each partner represents products and services both parties mutually want to succeed. Simply, if Cisco wins, the partner wins, and conversely. It is important to remember that most Cisco end customers are served only through a Cisco partner. The only way for Cisco to get an accurate picture of the customer satisfaction is to gauge this satisfaction through its partners.

Q. Is PAL customer satisfaction data available to *all* partners, not just Cisco certified (gold, silver, premier) partners?

A. Yes. All Cisco Authorized Resellers and Cisco Registered Partners have access to the same data and are afforded the same customer satisfaction tools as Cisco certified partners.

Q. Can Cisco certified partners use their own satisfaction survey tool(s) as a substitute for information supplied within the Cisco Walker Information Reporting data?

A. No. Partners can use their own tools for internal purposes, but only Walker Information results are used for the Cisco certification process to ensure consistency of scores between partners and with Cisco. Cisco must adhere to one measurement as defined by the responses the company collects, but Cisco will incorporate suggestions for improvement as appropriate and reasonable.

Q. When are new the Cisco Gold Certified or Cisco Silver Certified Partners or partners who are re-certifying measured against customer satisfaction objectives?

A. For new certification the following requirements apply:

- A minimum of 15 unique responses in each country or country group where the partner is seeking certification are required. Total unique responses can be from a combination of customer invitations provided by the partner and/or Cisco high-touch sales representatives.
- A “unique response” directly correlates to a unique individual’s reply to the survey sent.
- New partners must achieve at least 95 percent of the theatre customer satisfaction target to qualify for certification.
- Measurement will be based upon results within the preceding 12 months.

For re-certification audits the following requirements apply:

- A minimum of 30 unique responses in each country /country group where the partner is seeking re-certification are required. Of the 30 minimum unique responses, 15 must be partner generated with the balance supplied from either partner-sources or Cisco sources.
- A “unique response” directly correlates to a unique individual’s reply to the survey sent
- The partner must achieve the theatre customer satisfaction target to qualify for re-certification.
- Measurement is based upon results during the prior 12-month period from anniversary date.
- A minimum of 10 valid responses is required from Cisco Premier Certified Partners’ customers by this date.

Q. What if a partner “misses” the customer satisfaction objective at the time of certification renewal?

A. The key objective of customer satisfaction is to share Cisco best practices. If partners miss the target, Cisco will provide resources to help them understand why the score was below target. Partners will be put on a “get-well” plan for six months on the assumption that additional resources will help improve their customer relationship process and meet the target score at the end of this period. If at the end of the get-well period the agreed goals have not been met, the partner will risk decertification.

Q. What if a partner exceeds the customer satisfaction target objective at the time of certification renewal?

A. If partners exceed their customer satisfaction target, they may be eligible for *extra credit points*. Extra credit points are applicable only after exceeding the theatre target and meeting the minimum of 30 valid responses.

LAB EQUIPMENT

Q. What are the lab requirements for Cisco Gold and Silver Certified Partners?

A. As of November 1, 2005, the lab requirements for Cisco Gold and Silver Certified Partners are as follows:

- The annual purchase requirement for Cisco Gold and Silver Certified Partners has been removed. Partners are no longer required to spend \$100K (for Gold) and \$40K (for Silver) per year for their lab and demo equipment.
- CSSP and SIS (not CBR) partners are required to have a **support** lab.
- All partners are required to have the necessary equipment to perform a successful demonstration of one of their Specializations.

Q. How will the support lab equipment for partners with a CSSP or SIS support agreement need to be set up?

A. The lab equipment must be set up in a network topology and should be used for proof-of-concept, post-sales support and training. It can also be used for pre-sales demonstrations. Remote access to the lab, or a process for troubleshooting, must be available and will be verified at the time of the audit. The lab is not to be used for demonstration or evaluation on customer premises.

Q. Are partners required to upload their equipment lists (demo and/or support) into their Certification and Specialization Application?

A. No. Partners are not required to upload their list of equipment. The equipment will be checked at the time of the audit by the auditor or prior to the audit by the Cisco SE.

Q. Since CBR partners are no longer required to have a support lab, can they resell their existing lab equipment?

A. Partners can not resell used equipment unless it is inspected by Cisco and it is re-imaged and is covered by a service contract.

Q. What are the lab requirements for multinational partners?

A. Since there is no longer an annual purchase requirement for lab equipment, the multinational requirements are as follows:

- No annual purchase level requirement.
- CSSP and SIS (not CBR) partners are required to have a support lab.
- All partners are required to have the necessary equipment to perform a successful demonstration of one of their Specializations.

Q. Can partners count leased equipment toward the support and/or demo lab requirement?

A. Yes. Leased equipment will be considered toward the support and/or demo lab requirement and must be present at the time of the audit. The partner must provide the lease document at the time of the audit.

MULTINATIONAL CERTIFIED AND CISCO GLOBAL CERTIFIED PARTNERS

Q. What is a Cisco Multinational Certified Partner?

A. A Cisco Multinational Certified Partner is a partner who has achieved gold certification under the certification program in at least four distinct countries (or Cisco defined country groups) within a theatre. The Cisco Multinational Certified Partner designation is theatre-specific.

Q. What is the definition of a Cisco Global Certified Partner?

A. To be Cisco Global Certified Partner, a partner must be a Cisco Gold Certified Partner in a minimum of 14 countries and have achieved Cisco Multinational Certified Partner status (or be gold certified in single-country theatres) in all five Cisco theatres. Cisco Global Certified Partners will not receive a global contractual discount.

Q. How are discounts determined for Cisco Multinational Certified and Cisco Global Certified Partners?

A. Discounts are based on certification by country, except for specific multinational customer situations. For more information regarding the partner discount policy for multinational customers, contact your Cisco account manager.

Q. Will certification requirements be scaled for Cisco Multinational Certified Partners?

A. Multinational partners will be required to meet the combined requirements for all certified countries with one exception. When a partner achieves multinational status for a theatre, the annual lab equipment purchase requirement will be scaled to 25 percent of the required amount for each additional country seeking certification within the theatre.

CISCO SALES EXPERT REQUIREMENT

Q. What is a Cisco Sales Expert?

A. The Cisco Sales Expert badge recognizes account managers and sales professionals who have demonstrated their knowledge about Cisco technologies and solutions by successfully completing the Cisco Sales Expert exam (No. 646-202). The Cisco Channel Partner Program requires that partners maintain designated numbers of sales experts within their organizations as part of the base requirements for the premier, silver, and gold certification levels. The Cisco Sales Essentials course and Networking 101 course are recommended learning for account managers and sales professionals who would like to achieve the Cisco Sales Expert badge. A Cisco Sales Expert badge is valid for two years.

Q. Why is the Cisco Sales Expert badge a requirement of the Cisco Channel Partner Program?

A. As technology migrates and matures, networks and business needs change. Cisco Systems responds to the changing landscape by introducing new products and solutions. The Cisco Sales Expert badge recognizes individuals who have the most up-to-date knowledge about these solutions to better serve their customers.

Q. How do I know who in my company needs to take the new Cisco Sales Expert exam?

A. To find out who in your company is currently qualified as a Cisco Sales Expert:

Go to [Partner Self Service](#).

Click "Update Company Data."

Type Country and Company Name.

Select Company.

Click "Reports" tab.

Click "All Cisco Certified Sales Experts."

Ensure the individual has taken Cisco Sales Expert 1.0 (# 646-201) or Cisco Sales Expert 2.0 (# 646-202) within the last two years.

Q. How do I get a Cisco Sales Expert badge?

A. Individuals obtain the Cisco Sales Expert badge by successfully completing the Cisco Sales Expert exam (No. 646-202) at a [Prometric](#) and [Pearson VUE](#) testing center. Visit [Cisco Partner E-Learning Connection](#), Sales Training, Cisco Sales Expert to access the Cisco Sales Expert learning map for more details on the recommended training and required Cisco Sales Expert exam.

Q. Where do I access the Cisco Sales Expert exam training and the recommended course(s)?

A. The Cisco Sales Essentials course and Networking 101 course are recommended learning for account managers and sales professionals who would like to achieve the Cisco Sales Expert badge. Visit [Cisco Partner E-Learning Connection](#), Sales Training, Cisco Sales Expert to access the Cisco Sales Expert learning map for more details about the recommended training and required Cisco Sales Expert exam (No. 646-202).

Cisco Sales Essentials is available via e-learning at [Cisco Partner E-Learning Connection](#) and in CD-ROM format in the [Cisco Learning Store](#). The availability of instructor-led training varies by country; refer to the [Cisco Partner E-Learning Connection](#) for classes scheduled in your area Networking 101 is available through e-learning at [Cisco Partner E-Learning Connection](#) in various languages. The Cisco Sales Expert proctored exam (No. 646-201) is available at [Prometric](#) and [Pearson VUE](#) testing centers.

Q. What is the Cisco Sales Expert exam number?

A. The Cisco Sales Expert exam number is 646-202; it is available at [Prometric](#) and [Pearson VUE](#) testing centers around the world.

Q. Is the Cisco Sales Expert exam available in different languages?

A. The Cisco Sales Expert exam is localized at the discretion of the testing center. Visit [Prometric](#) and [Pearson VUE](#) online for more information.

Q. Is the Cisco Sales Essentials course available in different languages?

A. Instructor-led classroom training of the Cisco Sales Essentials course may be delivered in your local language. Visit [Cisco Partner E-Learning Connection](#), Sales Training, and Cisco Sales Expert to find an offering in your area. E-learning and CD-ROM are available in U.S. English versions only.

Q. How long is the new Cisco Sales Expert badge valid?

A. The Cisco Sales Expert (No. 646-202), badge is valid for two years. Individuals who fulfill the sales expert role in their company's Cisco certification (premier, silver, or gold) must pass the exam every two years.

Q. Are there any other exams or badges that supercede the Cisco Sales Expert badge?

A. No. The Cisco Sales Expert badge is the only badge that rewards account managers and sales professionals who have demonstrated their sales knowledge about Cisco technologies and solutions.

Q. Why does the Cisco Sales Expert training and exam include products I do not sell?

A. The goal of the Cisco Sales Expert training and exam is to provide all Cisco Channel Partner account managers and sales professionals an introduction to the full range of solutions that Cisco offers. The course was designed by a global audience for a global audience, and the subject matter in the course and exam are weighted accordingly with all theatres in mind. Though there may be content on products not sold in all theatres, detailed technical knowledge is not required. Students will find that proper exam preparation from the two-day classroom training or the 12–16 hour self-paced training is sufficient to address the Cisco Sales Expert exam.

CISCO CAREER CERTIFICATION TRACKING SYSTEM

Q. How do I log in?

A. Existing or returning users should go to the login page at www.cisco.com/go/certifications/login.

- Enter your Test ID or Cisco ID followed by your password and click the “Login” button. If you are using the tracking system for the first time, you will need to set up a password first for future access. Click the hyperlink under the “Register for the First Time” section to create your password.
- Enter your Registration ID and last name *exactly* as it appears on the score report you received from the test center.
- Click the “Create Password” button. The next page will ask you to create your password. Passwords are case-sensitive and must contain a minimum of four English characters. After you type your password, click the “Create Password” button.
- You may create a password hint in case you forget your password in the future.
- After you have created your password, log in to the tracking system. Enter your Test ID or Cisco ID and your password to log in. If you forgot your password, from the login page click the “Forgot Password” link located below the “Login” and “Need a Hint” buttons.
- Enter your e-mail address and click the “Submit” button. If the address entered matches the database, your login ID and your password will be e-mailed to you.

Q. How do I update my personal contact information, change my password, or sign up to receive notifications from Cisco?

A. Go to the “Personal Information” section to update your contact information, change your password, or subscribe to receive notifications from Cisco.

To update your contact information:

- Type your current address, e-mail address, company name, etc. and click the “Update/Verify” button found at the bottom of the page.
- The system will not allow you to skip mandatory fields, and will display an alert message to remind you to provide information on a mandatory field before processing your request to update your contact information.
- Candidates residing in countries that use double-byte characters can provide their local information under the “Localized Information” section. The localized information (name and address) you provide can be used (if applicable) when Cisco mails your certificate.

To change your password:

- From the “Personal Information” page, click “Change Password.”
- After you enter your password, click the “Change Password” button.

To subscribe to or unsubscribe from Cisco notifications:

- From the personal information page, click “Opt In/Opt Out.”
- Read the questions and click or answer “Yes” if you want to receive messages from Cisco. Click or answer “No” if you do not want to receive messages from Cisco.
- Select the format in which you would like to receive your e-mail (if you answered *yes* to the previous question).
- Click the “Update/Verify” button.

Q. How do I review my test history or find out when my certificate was mailed?

A. To review your test history or track an exam, go to the “Test History” section. Exams are recorded from the most recent exam taken to the oldest exam on record. Related certification(s) are listed if the exam is a requirement for a particular certification at the time when the exam was taken. Cisco Career Certification and Specialist exams are listed separately from Cisco Sales and Technical Expert exams. The tracking system does not display any CCIE written exam or lab information. For more information, go to www.cisco.com/go/ccie.

To find out when your certificate was mailed:

- From the “Test History” page, click “Certificate Status.”
- The “Certificate Status” page displays which certificate was mailed, when the certificate was mailed, and if the certificate was returned by the postal service. If you did not receive your certificate and it has been more than eight weeks from the date the certificate was mailed, use the Certifications Online Support tool at www.cisco.com/go/certsupport to submit an online request. Be sure to verify your personal information, including your address in the tracking system, by clicking “Personal Information” to avoid further delays.

Q. How do I check my certification progress or find out when my certification(s) will expire?

A. To check your certification progress or find out when your certification(s) will expire, do the following:

- Go to the “Certification Progress” section.
- Click the particular certification group you wish to review (that is, Cisco Career Certification).
- Color-coded boxes appear on each track to denote the tract status of your current certification. Each certification you have earned displays the valid-through date. If the certification is no longer active or has been decertified, a box with an X mark is displayed to denote that this certification has been decertified. The gray boxes with the arrow on the right side of the certification track display a table of exam requirements needed to complete the certification or to recertify this certification. If the gray box with the arrow is not displayed on the certification track you earned, the recertification requirement for this track is currently not available or is no longer available.

Q. How do I allow my employer or third party to verify my current certification(s)?

A. To allow your employer or third party to verify your current certification(s), do the following:

- Go to the “Validation and Logos” section.
- Click “Certification Validation.”
- A validation ID is automatically displayed and ready to be sent.
- The e-mail notification can be sent to five different individuals at the same time by typing the recipients’ e-mail addresses in the boxes.
- To set the expiration date to less or more than 30 days, type the expiration date desired in the “Expires On” box and click the “Update” button.
- To make the current validation ID inactive and prevent assigned third parties from viewing your current certifications, click the “Disabled ID” button.

Q. How can I get my Cisco logos?

A. To get your Cisco logos, do the following:

- Go to the “Validation and Logos” section
- Click “Certification Logos”
- Read or download the Cisco Certification Agreement and click the “Yes, I Agree” button to accept the terms and conditions of the Cisco Certification Agreement
- Verify the e-mail address Cisco has for you and click the “Send Logos” button
- If the e-mail address Cisco has is behind a firewall system, use an alternate e-mail address to ensure that you will receive your certification logos.
- You will be sent one e-mail per certification, complete with instructions on how to use the Cisco logo for each certification you have earned.

Q. How do I sign the Cisco Career Certifications Agreement online?

A. To sign the Cisco Certifications Agreement online, do the following:

- Go to the “Certification Agreement” section.
- Read or download the Cisco Certification Agreement and click the “Continue” button.
- Confirm that you are 18 years old or older and click the “I am 18 years old” button. If you are younger than 18 years, follow the instructions listed on the page and fax your agreement signed by your legal guardian or parent to 408 525-5105.
- Click the “I Agree” button.
- If you have already signed the latest version of the certification agreement, the system will display this notice and will not require you to sign this again.

Q. How do I combine two tracking system records?

A. If you received two different Candidate ID numbers or Cisco ID numbers from the test delivery partners, Prometric or Pearson VUE, you must have these records combined. Submit an online support request by visiting the Certifications Online Support tool at www.cisco.com/go/certsupport. Allow up to 10 business days for your exam files to be combined.

Q. How do I order a duplicate score report?

A. Candidates may order a duplicate examination score report through the test delivery partners Pearson VUE or Prometric. A fee may apply.

Q. How do I report if my exam information is not listed on the tracking system?

A. If your exam information was not updated 10 business days after the date of your exam, fax a copy of your concern and score report to 408 525-5105, attention Database Administrator. Allow up to 10 business days for your examination score to be updated to the tracking system. If you require further assistance on how to use the tracking system or have other certification questions, use the Certifications Online Support tool at: www.cisco.com/go/certsupport.

Q. What is a CSCO ID?

A. The CSCO ID is the only way to verify that an individual has indeed been Cisco certified. The first time an individual takes a test (whether the individual passes or not), that individual is assigned a CSCO ID. The CSCO ID will be used to identify all the tests that an individual takes (that is, each individual gets one unique CSCO ID).

Q.

How can I find out my CSCO ID?

A. If you have taken a Cisco certification test, you can find your CSCO ID using one of the following methods:

- Look up details of the certification examination you took by using the Cisco [Career Certifications Tracking System](#). If you have taken a test, your details are listed here. The Web site has details of how to get access, in case you have not looked up your details before.

If you do not find your certification details listed or your details need to be corrected, following are some additional options:

- If you are just beginning your training and certifications career or if you already hold a Cisco Career Certification, the Cisco [Certifications Online Support](#) site can answer all your questions.
- Call the Cisco Customer Support Center at 800 829-6387 in the United States and Canada.
- Call the Cisco Customer Support Center at 408-525-6387 internationally.

Q. What do I need to do to ensure that my career certification status is up-to-date and available to be counted toward my partner organization's application for partner-level certification or specialization within the Cisco Channel Partner Program?

A. You need to have passed all the requirements stated on the Cisco [Training and Certifications](#) Web site for the particular certification you believe you have passed. You should have passed all tests and have signed the legal agreement to be considered toward your company's Cisco certification or specialization. *If you have not signed the [legal agreement](#), your information will not be passed to the channels database and you will not be able to be counted toward the partner-level certification or specialization.* You may change your legal agreement status using the Cisco [Career Certifications Tracking System](#).

Q. I have multiple CSCO IDs assigned to me. What seems to be the issue?

A. This is an error and it needs to be corrected immediately.

Following are some options:

- The [Certifications Online Support](#) site can answer all your questions. By simply selecting the "Instant Answers" section, you will have access to the Cisco in-depth customer service knowledge base. Ask them to merge the two (or more) CSCO IDs assigned to you.
- Call the Cisco Customer Support Center at 800 829-6387 in the United States and Canada.
- Call the Cisco Customer Support Center at 408 525-6387 internationally.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the Cisco The Specialization Planner within the Certification and Specialization Application (CSApp) tool, visit <http://www.cisco.com/en/US/partners/pr11/index.shtml> or contact your local channel account manager or contact Partner Help for further assistance at <http://ciscopartner.custhelp.com/>.



the Cisco Web site at www.cisco.com/go/offices.

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