

**A**s CTO, she is responsible for helping drive Cisco's technology innovations and strategies. She works closely with its senior executive team and board of directors to align their efforts with the company's corporate goals.

Warrior joined Cisco in 2007, prior to which she was the CTO at Motorola, and headed Motorola Labs, the R&D wing of the company, with a budget of \$3.7 bn. Over the course of 23 years with the company, she has undertaken various roles.

Under Warrior's leadership, the President of the United States awarded the National Medal of Technology to Motorola in 2004. Warrior is a Masters in Science in Chemical Engineering from Cornell University and has a BS degree in Chemical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi.

In an exclusive interview with Dataquest, Padmasree Warrior shares her thoughts on Cisco's technology directions and more. Excerpts

**How smooth was your transition from Motorola to Cisco?**

I have been at Cisco for roughly four months now, and I have to say that the transition has been extremely smooth, probably better than I expected in terms of culture and understanding of Cisco. I spent my first three months learning about Cisco, its product portfolio, technology strengths, gaps, and meeting our customers and teams all over the world.

There are some similarities and differences between companies. Large companies tend to have similar challenges, and the issue is always to get the teams to work together. How to drive globalization, and get innovation out of a big company are other common challenges of large companies. We are strong in networking, and we want to use network as our platform. But we are also looking at applications, software-as-a-service, and mobility. So there's a lot that I can bring from my experience to Cisco's future.



**“We are excited about visual networking and collaboration”**

—Padmasree Warrior, chief technology officer, Cisco

**On the technology front, in which direction is Cisco going and what is your role in that?**

At Cisco, we have certain areas that we call as our priority. The first technology area that is our focus and that we are bullish and excited about is visual networking. Visual networking in a way is video and social networking. TelePresence and extending it beyond the consumer home space is an example. This can be used in any vertical like enterprise, and later we can move to consumers and solutions for home. Moving forward, there are potential applications for the healthcare vertical as well.

The second area is what we are really excited about—collaboration. Collaboration specifically is an extension of Web 2.0 with unified communications—a sort of merging together of the two. So, it is traditional unified communications extended to applications like Webex, for creating a collaborative work place. We are using networking as a platform and applications as software-as-a-service.

**What is the product line for this?**

Initially we have the unified communications product line. And recently we also announced Webex Connect as a platform, and enabled third party applications to develop APIs. Virtualization is another. We are initially focusing on data center virtualization. We see virtualization as an exciting technology that enables a green and sustainable solution because it helps in power efficiency in data centers. However, we would continue to invest in our core strengths like switching, routing, security, etc.

**How is the collaboration with Satyam on healthcare progressing?**

Initially, we want to focus on healthcare emergency management and Cisco has some innovative products in this area. We want to combine our strengths and partner with Satyam to go-to-market, and once we do that we

“ We think on a broader prospect than just green. I actually like to think of it as sustainability. Green basically says that your output has to be environment-friendly, and reduce carbon emission ”

can extend bringing in solutions from our side and from their side. We are also looking at engaging in cloud computing. While the cloud is held within an enterprise or on hosted services, we are looking at both these options.

**Is there confusion among enterprises regarding which mobile device to choose?**

There is no particular mobile device for enterprises. It is just like the consumer world, where different people use multiple mobile devices. The market is so massive in the mobile space that there won't be a single device that everybody would use or buy. The case is similar in the PC market. I think the devices itself will vary.

**What are Cisco's green initiatives?**

We think on a broader prospect than just green. I actually like to think of it as to be sustainable. Green basically says that your output has to be environment-friendly, and reduce carbon emission. Sustainability means you are actually consuming less. We have to solve both the issue, ie, consume less while output is more. We are putting efforts on both sides through technology.

From an emission point of view, Cisco has set a goal to reduce green house gas emission by 25% from 2010 to 2012. It is a very aggressive goal and we announced that through Cisco

Live, which is our network conference. We will go after that so that worldwide, we will reduce our total emission.

In addition, through technologies like virtualization, we are building products that consume less power and reduce our carbon footprints. We launched a lot of products that meet these criteria. We are attacking the sustainability problem all the way from the chip-set into the product level.

**What is your SMB strategy?**

Our initial focus was on enterprises, and it still continues to be a very large segment for us because this is where a lot of IT spends happen. So lot of the solutions actually have very stringent requirements in order to support bandwidth, reliability, etc. Our product is build for that market. We also have a fairly substantial business in the commercial (SMB) market.

SMBs can come to the Cisco website, on the small business section, and once you are on a Cisco product it will immediately take you to a chat session where you can chat with somebody at Cisco. It is a three-way connection between the small business to individuals at Cisco and third party partners. Hence, we are looking at very innovative ways of addressing SMB requirements, all the way from go-to-market to product portfolio.

**What's next after TelePresence?**

You can see more from us in the area of video in general. Moving video from one device to another across any network is something users can think about. We are keeping the experience very simple and this is the beauty of TelePresence. We want to make sure that we stay with that level of usability and user experience even as we look at other multiple devices. We have to make our core products video-friendly and video content mobility-friendly. We have a fairly substantial amount of focus here.

—Sudesh Prasad  
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