

Next-Generation Events Cisco Marketing Product Launches



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October 2010



Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG)

Next-Generation Events

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Overview

With the pressures of globalization, increased competition, and the continually accelerating information explosion, the need for employees, customers, and partners to come together, exchange knowledge, gain fresh perspectives, build networks, and nurture relationships has never been greater. Despite these important benefits, many organizations are questioning whether events deliver business impact commensurate with their costs, especially during an economic downturn. Traditional events suffer from high costs, limited audience reach, low flexibility, and inconsistent outcomes.

Many of the challenges associated with in-person events can be overcome by augmenting a traditional event with a wide range of technology-enabled enhancements. The resulting next-generation event expands options for participation in both space and time, enabling the attendee to choose to attend in person or remotely, live or on a delayed basis, and for the entire program or just selected sessions. This flexibility can help the event organizer attract a wider audience, engage that audience more effectively, and lower costs for both the host and attendees.

Cisco has been a pioneer in creating highly successful next-generation events, and we are sharing our experiences through a series of case studies and a strategic event management framework for getting started.¹ Cisco also provides a wide range of products and services that enable next-generation events under Cisco's Collaboration for Events experience² (see www.cisco.com/go/collaboration4events). In this paper, we profile our experience in evolving our marketing product launches from in-person events to next-generation events employing a wide range of remote collaboration capabilities and social media.

Figure 1. How Next-Generation Events Differ from Traditional Events

From Traditional Events To Next Generation Events
Incur cost, lost productivity, and environmental impact of travel	Reduce costs, lost productivity, and environmental impact from travel
One physical location	Multiple physical locations possible
Must attend in person, limiting participation	Can attend remotely, greatly expanding audience
Must attend in real-time	Can view on delayed basis
One-size fits all agenda	Individually tailored agendas
Experience is limited to event itself	Experience extends before and after event
Audience feedback given after event	Real-time feedback given during event
Personal networking is random process	Interest driven networking via social tools
Awareness generation via traditional marketing	Awareness generation amplified via social media

Source: Cisco IBSG, 2010

Cisco Marketing Product Launch Highlights:

- Reduced cost by 75 percent
 - Expanded attendance by 2x – 5x
 - Increased engagement, creating evangelists
 - Garnered 3x increase in press coverage
 - Sustained momentum long after formal event ended
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Introduction: Marketing Product Launches

Over the last decade, Cisco has transformed its approach to marketing events such as new product launches and solution seminars. These events are a critical component of our overall communications program with customers, partners, analysts, and the media. Cisco was an early adopter of using the web to address these audiences. Starting in the late 1990s, Cisco began to enable virtual participation, both live and on a delayed basis, by:

- Offering virtual events through live webcasts, with audience interaction via text chat for question-and-answer sessions
- Videotaping marketing events and making them available for replay on our website through VoDs (videos on demand)

Challenge

When we first began using webcasts, there remained a clear separation between virtual events and physical events. There were no virtual components for our in-person events, which were still used for major product launches.

Despite success with these early basic webcasts, Cisco recognized the need to take our overall marketing event approach to the next level. It had become increasingly difficult to attract in-person audiences to launch events. And, we wanted to reach our entire global audience at the same time, independent of location. Previously, there had been a significant time lag between our U.S. launch and the launch to the rest of the world.

Also, our traditional approach to generating awareness for product launch events using print ads and direct postal mail had begun to lose impact. Our customers were beginning to turn to new communications channels such as blogs and other social media. In short, we had reached the point of diminishing returns with our traditional approach.

New Marketing Approach: Adding Virtual Capabilities

Seeking to build on the success of these early virtual events and facing increasingly constrained marketing budgets, Cisco decided to increase the use of virtual capabilities significantly. We not only increased the volume of purely virtual marketing events, but also blended virtual and in-person elements in the same event. In fiscal year 2009, Cisco held more than 150 webcast marketing events.

By providing a virtual option, we enabled anyone in the world with a web connection to join the launch event. We held major events at several different times to make attendance convenient for audiences in different time zones around the world.

Figure 2. Edge Quest Game for ASR 1000 Product Launch



We also changed our awareness-generation approach by harnessing new social media channels. We began to cultivate an audience months in advance of each event via an interactive dialogue on Cisco.com and external social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. We proactively reached out to bloggers, and enabled them to easily syndicate our content by providing widgets. The content itself was designed differently than in the past—to be lighter and more engaging so that others would want to forward it to others within their personal networks. We have found that videos and games are especially popular and likely to be recommended on social networks. We carefully integrated social media with traditional marketing efforts to ensure consistent messaging. We also integrated elements within our social media approach—for example, using interactive games and humorous videos across multiple channels.

Figure 3. ASR 1000 “Uber Users” Pre-Event Buzz Generation via Integrated Social Media

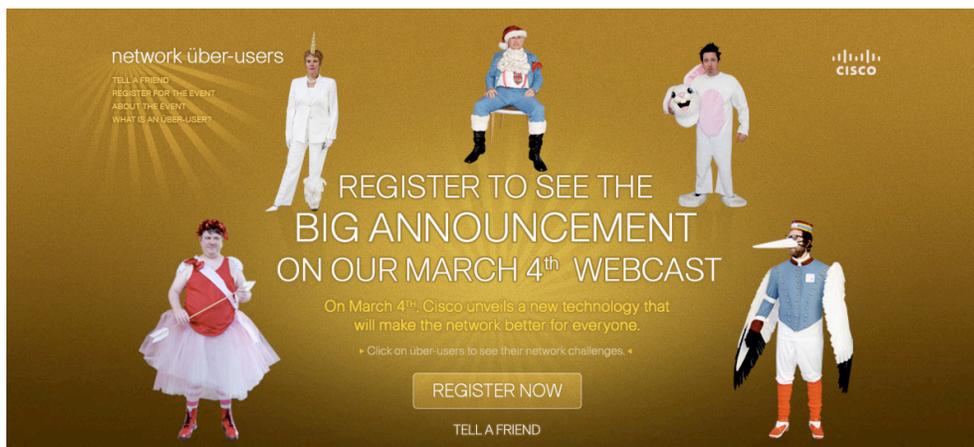


Figure 4. Cisco Blog for ASR 1000 Product Launch

Join the Conversation

The Platform

- Channels
- Collaboration
- Data Center Networks
- DigitAll Consumer
- DigitMediaRev
- Ecolibrium
- Emerging Countries
- High Tech Policy
- Innovation
- Inside Cisco IT
- Mobility
- Security
- SP360: Service Provider
- Virtual Environments
- Web Experience

Cisco Featured Posts

Recent Posts

- How Fast Are You? There's an App for That.
- John Chambers Closes Partner Summit, Demonstrates New Ways to Collaborate
- Fans Define the Online Content Experience
- Enabling Kenyan and US Connections Across the Human Network with TelePresence
- How Do You Extend WAN Optimization to Reach 30,000 Mobile Users?

March 05, 2008

Web 2.0 Marketing Campaign for the ASR 1000 Series

Suraj Shetty, senior director of service provider marketing at Cisco discusses the importance of web 2.0 marketing as both a component of the launch and a driver for adoption of the platform itself.

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Results

Perhaps the best way to convey the power of virtual events is by comparing recent product launches to the traditional process. While Cisco conducts a wide range of marketing events of varying scale, we can isolate the impact of our new approach by comparing products of roughly comparable revenue aimed at similar customer segments. Three product launches by our service provider marketing group chronicle this evolution over a five-year period:

- The CRS-1 was launched in May 2004 using a traditional approach. Cisco rented out the Computer History Museum near our San Jose headquarters, installed a great deal of demonstration equipment, and flew in (at our expense) 125 key influencers for the event. We also connected three remote sites around the world via satellite TV. While there was a web component as well, it was not the primary focus. We attracted 1,625 participants, at a cost of \$9.6 million, or \$5,900 per attendee. We received solid coverage from the traditional press for this event, garnering 87 articles.
- The ASR 1000 was launched in March 2008. This launch was entirely virtual (there was no in-person component) and we used social media to build the audience and amplify our messaging. For example, we attracted more than 1,000 members to a Facebook group dedicated to this product. We spent only \$2.6 million and yet attracted more than 7,000 people to register for the event, and approximately 3,100 to attend the live event. Compared to the CRS-1, we reduced the cost per attendee by a factor of seven, to just \$830. Many more viewed the launch materials after the event itself. Because of pre-event buzz created through social media, we received much

greater coverage by the traditional press, amassing 245 articles, a 3x increase versus the CRS-1. And, more than 1,000 blog postings helped spread awareness.

Figure 5. Evolution of Cisco Service Provider Marketing Product Launches

	Traditional Event	Next-Generation Event	
Product	CRS-1	ASR 1000	ASR 9000
Date	May 2004	March 2008	Nov. 2008
Next-Generation Event Elements	Limited video (satellite), VoDs	Broadly available web video (On24), text Q&A, VoDs, Second Life, TelePresence	Web reveal (not live event), VoDs
Social Media Elements	NetPro (Cisco Community)	Facebook, Second Life, YouTube, Cisco blog, outreach to bloggers, interactive game	Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Cisco blog, outreach to bloggers, addictive game, website for social media content
Physical Locales	1 main, 3 remote via satellite	0	0
Number of Sessions	1	4 (follow the sun)	0
Number of Attendees:			
- In-person attendees	125	0	0
- Remote—web live	1,500	3,100	0
- Remote—web reveal (registered)	0	0	9,150
- Total	1,625	3,100	9,150
Print Advertising	Yes	No	No
Market Impact:			
- Traditional press articles	87	245	250+
- Total impressions (web and print)	-	40M	45M
Cost:			
- External expenditures	\$7.9M	\$1.3M	\$1.0M
- Internal resources	\$1.7M	\$1.3M	\$1.3M
- Total cost	\$9.6M	\$2.6M	\$2.3M
- Cost/event attendee	\$5,926	\$830	\$254
- Cost/1,000 impressions (CPM)	-	\$64	\$52

Source: Cisco IBSG, 2010

- The ASR 9000 was launched in November 2008, again using a virtual approach and social media. This was not an “event” where everyone comes together at the same time; rather, it was a web “reveal” in which the audience came to a special website at a time of their convenience throughout the day of the launch. To access the launch website, attendees registered in advance, and were treated to teaser videos to build anticipation. More than 9,150 people registered in advance for the web reveal. At a cost of \$2.3 million, the cost per “registered participant” was just \$250, or 23 times less than for the CRS-1. We also attracted more than 40,000 website visitors on the day of the launch. While not “live” in the traditional sense, Cisco had experts standing by to answer questions submitted via text chat. This event generated more than 250 articles in the traditional press, as well as a high level of postings from bloggers.

Using this new approach, we also significantly extend launch events in time. The launch no longer ends at the conclusion of our live program, but rather lives on through material available on our website and through our continued interaction via social media. This market cultivation helped amplify the impact of the traditional press, and generated a total of 40 million impressions for the ASR 1000 and 45 million for the ASR 9000. This translated into costs per 1,000 impressions (CPM) of \$64 and \$52, respectively, for the ASR 1000 and ASR 9000.

The use of Next-Generation Events for Cisco’s product launches has been repeatedly proven effective, and we plan to continue to enhance the format with additional capabilities.

References

1. “Cisco’s Experience with Next-Generation Events: Enhancing Meetings and Events with Collaboration Capabilities To Improve Business Impact and Reduce Costs,” Cisco IBSG, July 2010; series of additional white papers and case studies will be available under the “Featured Content” and “Experience” sections of <http://www.cisco.com/web/about/ac79/innov/index.html>
2. Overview of products and services offered by Cisco Collaboration for Events experience, www.cisco.com/go/collaboration4events

Acknowledgements

The author would like to recognize the invaluable contributions of Cisco’s LaSandra Brill, Melissa Mines, Petra Neiger, and Doug Webster in making this chronicle of Cisco’s next-generation event experiences a reality.

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More Information

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