

Global Employee Headlines /

How You Can Give Away \$10,000

(5) (3)

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By Jerry Soverinsky



Savanna Circuit Tech won the Cisco Global Problem Solver Challenge 2020 Grand Prize of \$100,000. Their solar chilling in-transit system, shown here, helps dairy businesses in Africa cut post-harvest losses.

pressing social and environmental challenges.

That's not an aspirational musing, either.

Over the past four years, Cisco has recognized highly inventive and practical developments that address real-world problems, providing entrepreneurs with generous cash awards that support production and promotion of their inventions.

"The ideas and innovations are mind blowing," said Vijay Jagannathan, leader, Customer Delivery, and an early-round judge for this year's competition.

"Some of them have the potential to disrupt and change the future."

Real people. Real progress

The 2020 grand prize winner did just that. Emmastella Gakuo and Percy Lemtukei won last year's \$100,000 grand prize for their company, Savanna Circuit Tech. They developed a solar chilling in-transit system that helps dairy businesses in Africa cut post-harvest losses.

Perhaps the only thing better than winning a \$10,000 cash prize — or that runs a close second — is bestowing the award on someone else.

This year's Cisco Global Problem Solver Challenge is empowering you to do just that: Vote for your favorite finalist. The one with the most votes wins a \$10,000 Cisco Employees' Choice award.

It's an enticing opportunity to get involved with one of Cisco's most ambitious competitions, which seeks innovative solutions to solve



It's a critical, last-mile solution that prevents milk spoilage and maximizes profits for local dairy producers, who can lose up to 30 percent of their farms' milk production to waste.

For entrepreneurs Gakuo and Lemtukei, the award will provide tangible benefits that fuel their company's growth.

"This will majorly help in strengthening the business," Emmastella said. "We will be able to acquire new talent, finalize our manufacturing process by having all the tools and equipment in place, and all the machinery installed into the new manufacturing facility."

A commitment to caring

The fifth annual Cisco Global Problem Solver Challenge is integral to Cisco's purpose to power an inclusive future. Recognizing the power of today's tech, the Challenge aims to inspire and empower a generation of global problem solvers to leverage technology and produce a positive impact on society.

And Cisco backs up its mission with \$1 million in prize money, spread across 20 different award categories, to accelerate the adoption of breakthrough technologies, products, and services.

More than 1,700 applicants from dozens of countries entered this year's competition (see sidebar), with 42 moving to the final round.

Now that's where *you* come in.

Counting on you

For the first time, Cisco employees will play an essential role in reviewing the finalist submissions and choosing one that stands above the rest.

Gaining early access to the ideas from some of the brightest minds around the world is a compelling opportunity to foster genuine societal change.

"I loved being able to participate and was so humbled by some of the solutions and the associated problems they were trying to solve," said Chris McGuyer, business operations manager, one of over 150 employees from around the world who volunteered to evaluate the entries and help narrow them down to the current finalist pool.

"It's amazing to see great ideas with huge potential for other regions or even other use cases," added Socorro Guerrero, a technical solutions architect, and another early judge.

So, what are you waiting for?

The Cisco Global Problem Solver Challenges *needs* your help. Make a difference to those who are trying to make a difference.

Vote now



Related links

- [Cisco Global Problem Solver Challenge](#)
- [Meet Savanna Circuit Tech](#)



By the numbers

In just five years, Cisco's Global Problem Solver Challenge has engaged some of the brightest minds around the world, generating strong competition and a reputation for excellence.



The numbers tell a compelling story around this year's competition:

- 1,745 team submissions

- 93 semifinalists
- 126 countries represented
- \$1 million in prize money

The experience offers rewards far behind the cash variety, too.

“The Cisco Global Problem Solver Challenge is a [major] opportunity for any business,” 2020 Grand Prize winner Emmastella Gakuo said.

“Not just for the prize money part of it, but also for networking and the business development support.”

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Ellen Thornton

I just voted! This is awesome.

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Monique Rose

I love that so many of the finalists are focused on providing clean water and sustainable agriculture practices.



Mon Jun 07 2021 14:56:33 GMT-0400 (Eastern Daylight Time)

Alexis Raymond

These innovators are so impressive, and their solutions are having real impact on people's lives and the planet. Thank you for the opportunity to participate!

Thu Jun 03 2021 12:56:35 GMT-0400 (Eastern Daylight Time)

Alexis Raymond

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