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# In-House Innovation Made Quite the Impact. Literally.

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## What's in it for you?

- A Hollywood-worthy event was what our sales team deserved
- Multiple teams worked together to pull off a miracle
- The new platform delivered a flexible, innovative, home-grown solution



Gerri helps Chuck recognize the Chairman's Club winners.

The ocean tide was virtually ebbing and flowing over the soft white sand.

Gerri had just showed off her impressive surfing skills and walked over to join Chuck.

There, past the palm trees and on the horizon, was a sea of smiling faces reflecting back at them in delight.

The smiles on those faces belonged to this year's Chairman's Club winners.

But what you can't see — and what this story is about — are the people who made our annual sales event, Cisco IMPACT, happen by branching out of their teams to work in a new way.

We can do this.

“What we just pulled off was nothing short of a miracle,” said Kerry Chalmers, director of sales and partner events, shortly after the event had ended.

IMPACT was an entirely in-house production effort. It pushed the boundaries of innovation to create an engaging experience that included Hollywood-worthy special effects that were nothing short of stunning.

Besides the seaside chat, there were giant cabanas, the Golden Gate Bridge, and even a packed sports arena. And it all came together — literally and figuratively — through the close collaboration of the IT and Global Events planning teams.

The deadline was set in stone, but how they approached the event wasn't.

The Global Events team knew immediately after last year's IMPACT that they wanted to do something different. But there was nothing on the market that could meet their needs. The only option was a customized, home-grown solution.

So they reached out to the software and IT teams.

“We needed more than a minimum viable product, and there was no flexibility with the delivery dates. We needed the entire “product” and all features fully tested and functional by a specific date with no wiggle room,” explains Kerry.

Oh, and by the way, everything had to come together for a *live, interactive* production.

The challenge was accepted, and the teams got to work.

“We knew the system would have to manage a jump from zero to 15,000 users in an instant and be available for nearly four days, crossing every continent and a follow-the-sun model across the globe,” said Director, Demand Generation and Lead Management Ash Mehta.

Functionality was also key. And gamification would play a central role.

“The seller community is competitive but thrives on teamwork, so we created a way that they could set up teams to compete,” said Sean Curtis, director of technology experiences.

“And because folks couldn't meet in person, it had to allow for messaging.”

Behind the scenes in the television studio.

Teamwork handled any surprises that popped up.

“The biggest surprise for me was the number of congratulatory messages sent to the different Sales winners,” said Sean.

More than 1.8 million real-time comments of support came flooding in. The pressure was on.

There were so many messages that the team had to make adjustments for the demand this had on the infrastructure. But everyone jumped in, and they were agile enough to update the platform in real time.

Disaster avoided.

## A true Cisco-on-Cisco story.

The technical challenges were significant, but all were addressed successfully. Ash shared, “Our first approach is always to look for Cisco-on-Cisco solutions first. Secondly, look for out-of-the-box-solutions, which we can leverage with APIs and connectors.”

“We built and hosted IMPACT on the most robust enterprise network and globally distributed data center, configured and monitored by the best IT team in the industry,” added Sean.

“The team used AppD and ThousandEyes to monitor performance, Stealthwatch to detect network threats, and Umbrella to protect every one of the attendees, wherever they were in the world.”

## This is where it all begins.

“It was a new platform, with a new set of requirements both teams were managing on the fly — and that is how it should work. We had to be flexible, innovative, and quick about changing our direction when needed,” reflected Kerry.

The team did what they set out to do.

Cisco IMPACT was presented with cutting-edge graphics and a seamless virtual experience that gave every attendee a front-row seat to the action.

Multiple teams working together, each complementing the other’s expertise with an innovative mindset.

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