



The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

Final Copy of Case Study

YEAR:
2012

STATUS:
Laureate

Organization name:
Cisco Systems

Organization URL:
<http://www.cisco.com>

Project Name:
Cisco Internship Training Program

What social/humanitarian issue was the project designed to address? What specific metrics did you use to measure the project's success?

The social benefits of this program were in the area of developing much needed workforce development skills sets for youth. Undergraduates were put through a 6-month internship program with a pre-program boot camp to train them on technology delivery, monthly meetings to keep track of projects via video conferencing solutions, bi-monthly in-person sessions to track progress on the internship, connected to Cisco Systems Engineers who played their mentors and eventually ended with a business ICT road map proposal which was submitted by each student as a competition. Pre- and post-surveys with the 3 stakeholders -- student, firm and university -- were used to keep track of metrics, which included learning put into place, firms benefiting from interns' skills and passion, and universities being able to attract even more students to the course via their partnership with a leading MNC.

Please describe the technologies used and how those technologies were deployed in an innovative way. Also, please include any technical or other challenges that were overcome for the successful implementation of the project.

Internetworking technologies were primarily utilized during this project. Students were taught how to manage, maintain and defend the networks within the companies using routers and switches. Students were also taught how to use and conduct meetings using video conferencing solutions like Cisco WebEx, Cisco TelePresence. Students also used social media platforms like Facebook to create their group page and connect with Cisco mentors.

Please list the specific humanitarian benefits the project has yielded so far.

Students in the university are much more aware of career options. They have been given an opportunity to put themselves into the role of a junior network engineer. In this capacity, they have been tested on the ability to act responsibly, proactively, independently and with some amount of accountability. People participating in the program as project managers, supervisors and mentors noticed the growth in the students over the 6-month period. Average academic students started showing real promise in technical aptitude, which resulted in much more enthusiasm to conquer academics!

Please provide the best example of how the project has benefited a specific individual, enterprise or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work.

Helping Interns Apply and Develop Their Talents: A lack of preparation and monitoring often leads to disappointing internship programs that provide little benefit to the participating interns and companies. Fortunately, one internship program in Malaysia, the Cisco Industrial Training Program (CiTP), seeks to ensure that small to medium enterprises (SMEs) gain access to the talent they need while giving students an opportunity to hone their skills and gain valuable experience. The program is a collaboration between the Malaysian Cisco Networking Academy team, the University of Malaya, and Malaysia's state-owned Multimedia Development Corporation (MDeC). Regional Networking Academy manager Christina Anthony points out that this is not a simple internship program. "These interns will not be making coffee and doing the photocopying," she explains. First, the interns take part in an intensive 10-day boot camp to prepare them for work in a business environment. "We give the interns a heads-up about the realities of work life and how to make the most of the experience," says Mohammed Norzi Ibrahim, area academy manager for Malaysia. Intensive Learning Program: The internship program is six-months long. After working with a company for two months, the interns participate in a workshop where they explain their role, identify challenges and opportunities, and explain how they are benefiting the host company. In the following two months, the interns focus on maximizing their experience, and in the final two months, they develop a business case to improve an aspect of the company, which counts toward their final grade. One of the interns who participated in the pilot program, Chiew Ming Tat, 22, says, "I can now better understand the business and technical challenges and the solutions required to help these companies."