

The background features a vibrant, multi-colored abstract design. On the left, there are overlapping, wavy bands of color in shades of orange, red, and yellow. On the right, a bright white light source emits a series of colorful rays in shades of blue, green, and yellow, creating a sunburst effect. The overall composition is dynamic and energetic.

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The bridge to possible

Underrepresented but Thriving – A Sponsee's Point of View

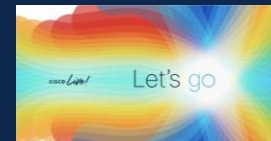
Abby Jefia, Consulting Engineer
@AbbyJefia
BRKIF-1270



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Introduction...



What I Don't Have

- ❌ A CCIE
- ❌ Vast years of technical experience
- ❌ Distinguished engineer status
- ❌ Distinguished speaker status – not yet, at least

What I Do Have

- ✅ **Love** for the work I do
- ✅ **Zeal** to make my mark
- ✅ **Passion** to share my knowledge with others
- ⚠️ This is not a technical session

The Inspiration for this Session...



For a long while, inclusion discussions have been centered around **leaders**.

- Technical engineers
- Early-in-career professionals
- Starters

Which would you rather take?



OR



Those who engage leaders in their career growth journey are...

69%

more likely to
believe they will
advance to a more
senior position

62%

more likely to
receive feedback
on their career
goals

31%

more likely to
receive feedback
on their leadership
style

20%

more likely to feel
they belong in their
work environment
culture.

Just like everything else, this still is a journey!



Being
recognizable



Being
recognized



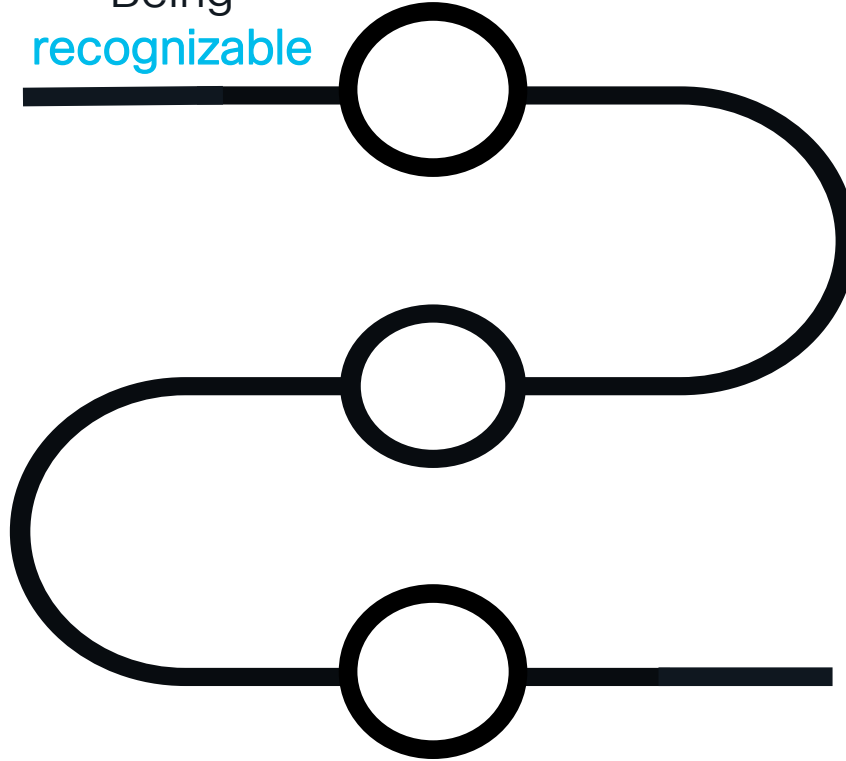
Retaining
recognition



You are here 



Being
recognizable



The Art of Visioning

01 Vision for our lives

02 Vision for others

03 Vision for the world

04 Vision for our contribution

"A vision is not just a picture of what could be, it is an appeal to our better selves, a call to become something more"

- Rosabeth Moss Kanter



Dreaming alone
doesn't cut it

There's always
more



“It is not enough to stare up the steps – we must step up the stairs.”

– Dr. Vance Havner



- I want to have risen in the field of _____
- I want to have attained the title of _____
- I want to be earning at least _____
- I want to have skills/certificates in _____
- I want to have experience in _____

The Visioning Equation

BIG DREAMS

=

Passion/Purpose + Motivation

Passion and Purpose

FAQs

How do I discover my purpose?

Is my purpose the same as my passion?

Purpose

- Your purpose is an anchor.
- It is devoid of SELF.
- It rides on your passion(s).

Passion

- It is a compelling feeling/emotion.
- It is a value with significant meaning to you.
- Compensation is not the driving force.

Ask yourself these questions...

What makes me feel like I am being true to myself?

What am I great at?

What do I want from my career?

How do I tie my passion/purpose to my career?

What is holding me back?

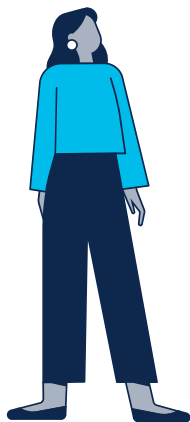
Where do I need to make improvements?

What skills or training do I need to help me grow or develop?

Motivation



How does this all fit in?



Mary
Engineer at XYZ Inc.

Motivation

She is motivated by a chance to empower others and a more impressive title, which would enable her capture the attention of her target audience.

Vision

Mary has a vision of becoming a prominent technical leader in the sales industry. She has crafted out her 3-, 5- and 10-year goal to achieve this vision.

Purpose

She thrives in her ability to create tangible opportunities for others, leveraging her passion of inspiring young professionals

Passion

She has a burning passion for inspiring/empowering young professionals, so she engages in volunteering and mentoring initiatives.





Being
recognizable



You are here




Being
recognized



Let's debunk some myths...



“I will be **matched** with potential leaders”

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a maroon hoodie, is seated at a wooden table in a kitchen. She is looking down at a white sheet of paper she is holding with a blue pen. On the table in front of her are several other papers, a spiral notebook, a blue mug, and a glass of dark liquid. In the background, there is a kitchen sink, a stove, and various kitchen items on shelves and counters. A sign on the wall reads "HOME".

“I will be provided with a **list of leaders** to choose from”

A photograph of two men sitting at a table in a modern office or cafe. The man on the left, wearing a dark green shirt and a green lanyard, is smiling and pointing at a laptop screen. The man on the right, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a blue lanyard, is looking at the laptop. A third person's head and shoulder are visible in the foreground on the right. The background shows a large window with a view of a city street and a brick building. A vertical garden with green plants and red flowers is visible on the right side of the window.

“I can just ask any Executive to invest
their time in me”



Start by getting proximate to potential leaders. Build rapport and showcase what you have to offer.

Ways to get **proximate** to potential leaders

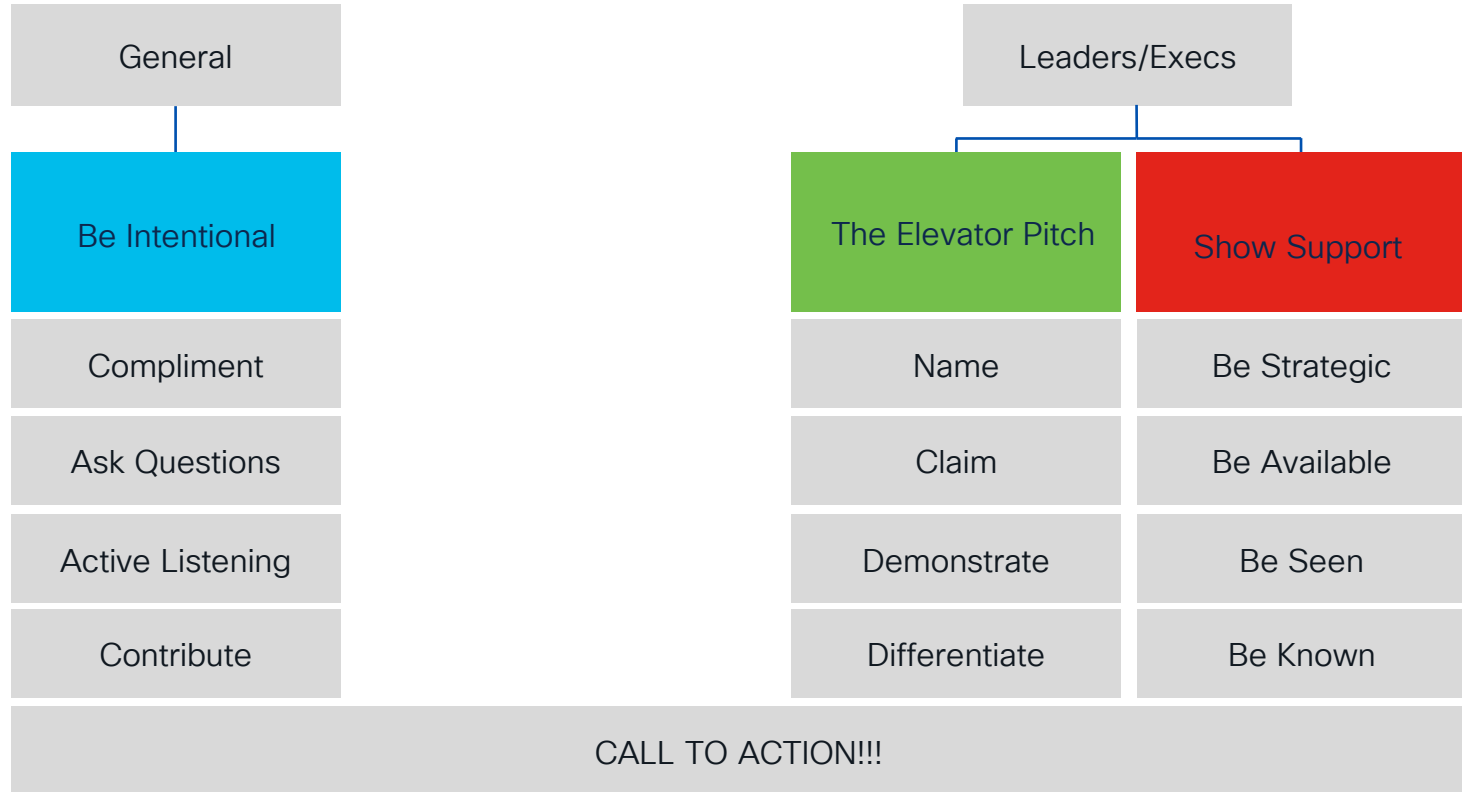


Build
your visibility

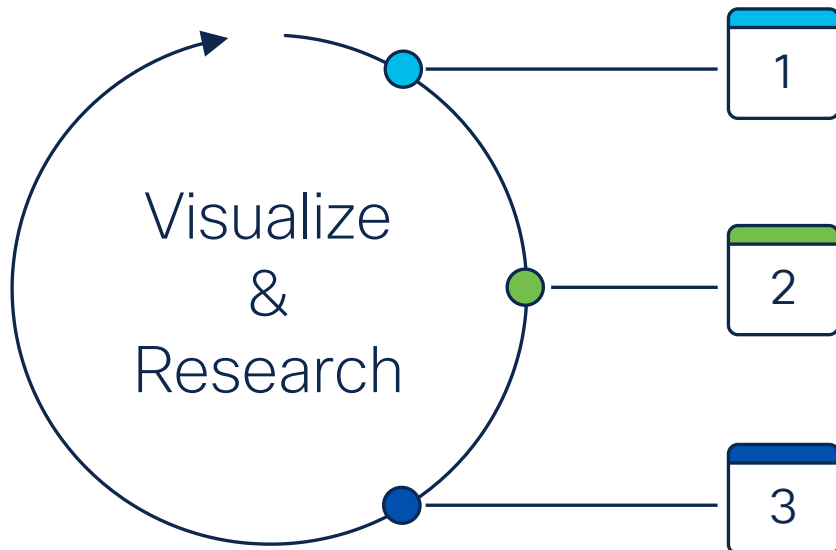


Expand
your network

Tips for Engaging



Choosing your Leader



Values

Determine the ideals or beliefs that motivate the leader to excel.

Passion

Relationships blossom when a shared passion exists.

Potential Level of Impact

Understand that a leader's level/title does not determine the magnitude of impact in your career journey.




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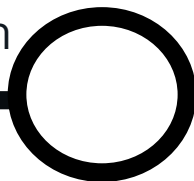
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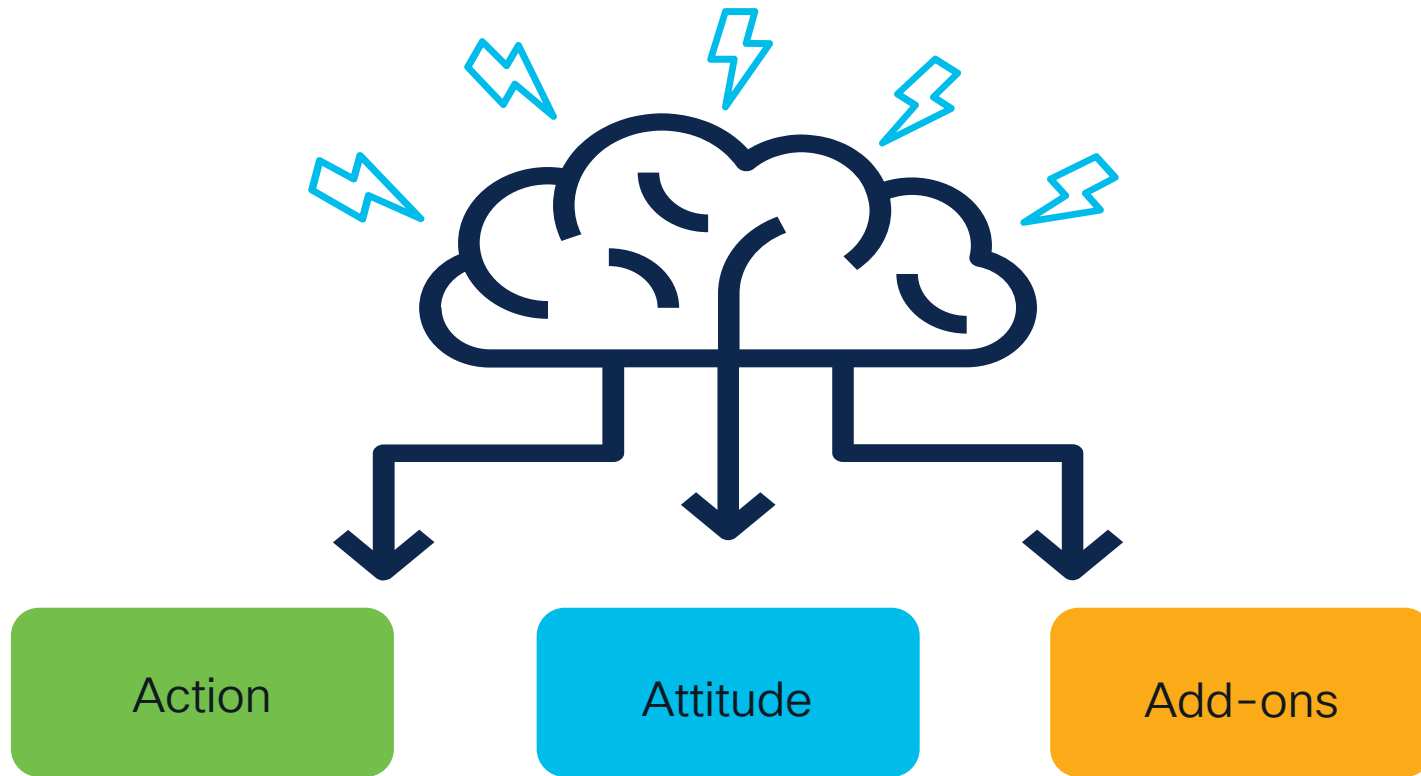


Retaining
recognition

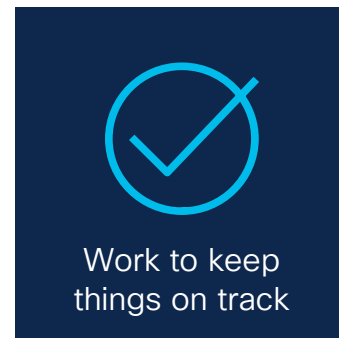
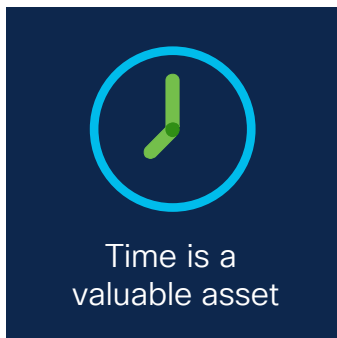




Alert: Increased Brainpower Utilization



Be ready to take action...



“ Understand that this needs to be experienced by the leader as a lightening of the load – not as a new set of heavy chores ”

Display the right attitude

Volunteer to do
low-level tasks

Lead with
a 'yes'

Leave your ego
at the door

Add-ons

Refine your must-haves



Stellar Performance

- ✓ Display stand-out ability
- ✓ Demonstrate consistent excellence
- ✓ Deliver wins, break obstacles



Trustworthiness

- ✓ Support their brand
- ✓ Be a truth-teller, even if it's at some risk to you
- ✓ Show your support publicly



Values

- ✓ Diversity matters
- ✓ Leverage expertise not possessed by the leader
- ✓ Itemize unique differentiators



Bonus Tip

Studies show that Executive Presence rests on three pillars:

Gravitas: How you act

Communication: How you speak

Presentation: How you present yourself

Seek Feedback on how you can improve in these areas



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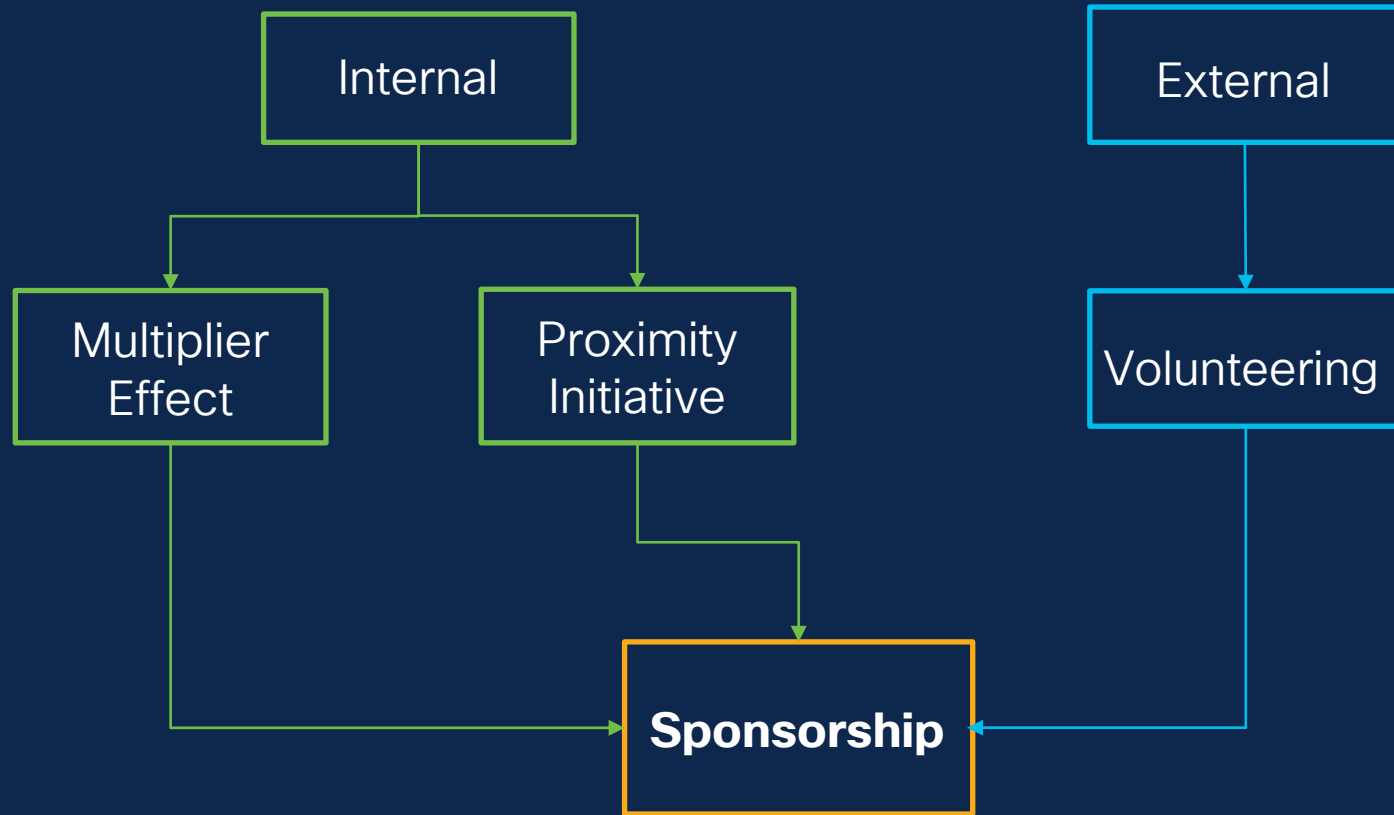


Finally



Platforms that changed my life





Mentors

versus

Sponsors

- **Support** and **encourage**
- Boost confidence and self-esteem
- Act as a sounding board
- Provide helpful hints on career
- Do not expect anything in return
- Take on any employee who expresses an interest

- **Advocate** and **advance**
- Open doors
- Provide access to next big opportunity
- Provide Executive Presence coaching and candid feedback
- Expect a great deal in return
- Take on high-performing employees with proven track record



People with sponsors are **23%** more likely to advance in their careers than those without sponsors.

Leadership Research Institute and Center for Talent Innovation

Fast tracking your career goals is all about **Sponsorship**

Internal



Koen Jacobs

Vice President, Sales
Systems Engineering

Karen Fredrich

Leader, Customer
Delivery

External



Hannatu Adegboyega

Senior Director, Oracle

Is your choice still valid?



OR



Fill out your session surveys!



Attendees who fill out a minimum of four session surveys and the overall event survey will get **Cisco Live-branded socks** (while supplies last)!



Attendees will also earn 100 points in the **Cisco Live Game** for every survey completed.



These points help you get on the leaderboard and increase your chances of winning daily and grand prizes

Continue your education



- Visit the Cisco Showcase for related demos
- Book your one-on-one Meet the Engineer meeting
- Attend the interactive education with DevNet, Capture the Flag, and Walk-in Labs
- Visit the On-Demand Library for more sessions at www.CiscoLive.com/on-demand

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Women of
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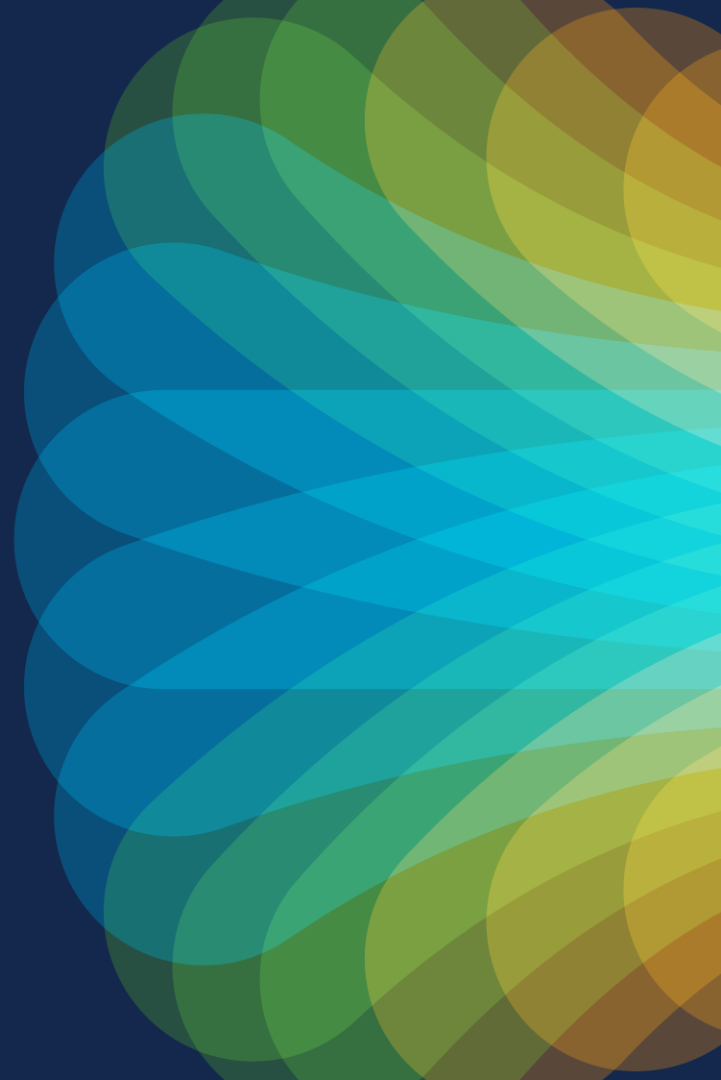


The bridge to possible

Thank you



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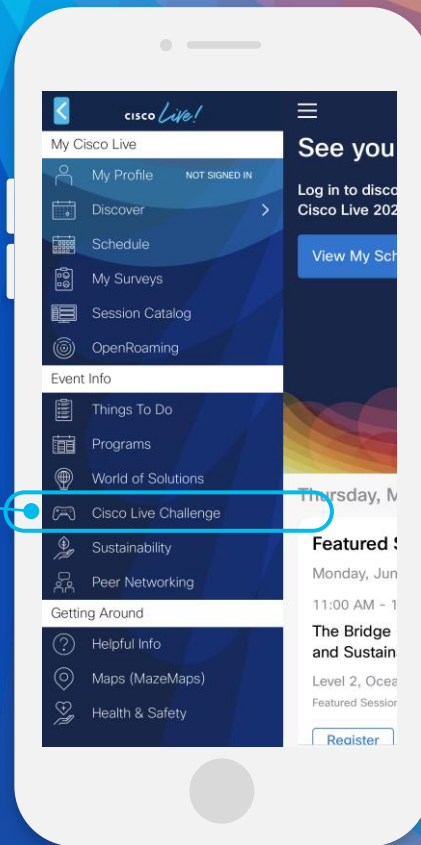


Cisco Live Challenge

Gamify your Cisco Live experience!
Get points for attending this session!

How:

- 1 Open the Cisco Events App.
- 2 Click on 'Cisco Live Challenge' in the side menu.
- 3 Click on View Your Badges at the top.
- 4 Click the + at the bottom of the screen and scan the QR code:



The background of the slide is a vibrant, abstract graphic. It features a series of overlapping, wavy bands of color in a rainbow spectrum, transitioning from red and orange on the left to yellow and green on the right. On the right side, there is a bright, multi-colored sunburst or starburst effect that radiates outwards, with colors ranging from blue and purple to yellow and orange. The overall composition is dynamic and energetic.

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