

## Cisco Systems Canada: One Million Acts of Green

Source: DMA (US), Silver, ECHO Awards, 2009

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Cisco Systems Canada wanted to encourage participation in the green movement. Its campaign emphasized how small "green acts" every day added up to big change. Beginning with a launch on the country's number-one talk show, the campaign pushed to generate "one million acts of green." A website invited people to register their acts and measured their impact. The site's Act of the Day feature and social networking elements helped make the program viral. Schools, corporations, and communities also received tool kits to encourage group participation. Cisco reached its annual goal of One Million Green Acts in just 105 days.

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## ENTRY INFORMATION

**Category:** Information Technologies

**Country where program ran:** Canada

**Date program started/ended:** 21st October 2008 - 9th June 2009

**Product Description:** Cisco is a leader in technology and innovation. Through our technology, we enable people to make powerful connections and mass collaboration. We call this "The Human Network" - a network of people with the power to change the world in which we live.

**Advertiser/Client Name:** Cisco Systems Canada

**Media Channels:** Email

Insert

Print

TV/Video/Radio

Web Advertising

Web Development

Website: [www.onemillionactsofgreen.com](http://www.onemillionactsofgreen.com)

# STRATEGY

## Marketplace Challenge:

Cisco is an innovator, always looking to lead the way and always looking to collaborate with our employees, customers, and partners to help change the way we live, work, play and learn everyday. Cisco is leading by example, by developing and offering progressive technology that allows people to collaborate on issues of vital importance. Green is not new and it is not a fad. Green is a revolution that is gaining mindshare around the Globe. Cisco knows it is not the first company to think of Green nor do they claim to be 'the greenest'. Cisco's role is to join the evolution of Green solutions by providing technology that is more sustainable and incorporating Green values in its own corporate culture. In Canada the environment is a core issue. 85% are concerned about climate change and a whopping 92% feel government should enforce energy efficient behavior. Globally, 79% of people believe human activity is a core reason for global warming. Cisco believes human activity evolves through dialogue and collaboration. The power and potential of the internet is its ability to build communities with shared interests or agendas overnight. Only through the human network can the individual efforts of all be recognized together as a whole. The result is the human network effect. Believing we are more powerful together than we are apart, Cisco challenged and invited Canadians from all walks of life to join a community and register their acts of environmental responsibility. Cisco set out to show that environmental change is possible, one act at a time, through the human network. This was this philosophy that sparked the idea behind One Million Acts of Green.

**Target audience:** Consumer

Canadians from all walks of life who believe in green and want to make a difference. Green is more than a corporate initiative, it is a social mandate. It is a deep rooted issue for Canadians who are demanding responsiveness and action. But Canadians do not feel government policy is changing quickly enough and they are desperate to do their part today. The human network helps people to collaborate and enables change.

**Size of target audience:** 1,000,000+

## Marketing strategy:

The One Million Acts of Green campaign brings to life the power and potential of the human network — how people can use the internet to connect and collectively work toward a common goal. Cisco wanted to demonstrate that through the collective, real progress could be shown and real goals could be achieved. The marketing strategy for this campaign had 5 major components that lead to overwhelming success:

1. Rally around a Big Ideal™ A societal 'care-about' that has huge emotional meaning to Canadians. The strategy for this campaign was to show that environmental change is possible, one act at a time through the human network.

2. **Brand Relevancy** Cisco is the company that provides the technology that makes the network possible. Cisco provides 80% of the network gear that powers the Fortune 500. The network connects us all. It informs and empowers all of us. And when we come together on the network with a common goal, we can be a force for positive social change. And that is the One Million Acts of Green's message - We are more powerful together than we can ever be apart. That's the human network effect.
3. **Measurability and a sense of personal purpose** The campaign strategy was to illustrate that small Acts of Green are important. Change can start with just one person. One action. And when we combine these individual acts the positive impact on our planet grows. Every Act counts whether big or small.
4. **Keep user-generated content component really, really simple** Ask for too much and nothing will get done. Provide simple registration and clickable icons to track behavior and people will act.
5. **Amplification through social media** This was far more than an advertising campaign. It was a movement. Credible Canadian celebrities and politicians enthusiastically endorsed the campaign. Independent and anti-corporate environmental groups offered support and logos linking to their websites while voluntarily amplifying the message to their members.

## Marketing Tactics:

One Million Acts of Green is a collaborative environmental campaign intended to harness the acts of individuals to show how much of a difference we can all make together. Cisco asked Canadians to commit to One Million Acts of Green in just over 8 months - by June 30, 2009. Cisco partnered with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and developed a unique opportunity for people to come together on the human network to work toward a greener Canada. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Canada's number one talk show *The Hour* with George Stroumboulopoulos helped drive the discussion, facilitate debate and raise awareness amongst Canadians, all in an effort to reach One Million Acts of Green (OMAOG). Other CBC programming such as *Steven and Chris* added to the discussion by turning their show Green as well. An interactive website developed and hosted by CBC, features George Stroumboulopoulos, Green Experts, and Green resources. [Onemillionactsofgreen.com](http://Onemillionactsofgreen.com) invites Canadians to register Acts of Green and see their impact in real time via a GHG Emissions Calculator provided by GreenNexus. Acts of Green can be something small like washing your clothes in cold water or walking to work. Or something big like covering your roof in solar panels. They all count. To make this program viral, the website features an Act of the Day and many social networking elements such as user profiles, friends, groups, messaging, blogs, challenges, and the ability to upload photographs and videos of Acts of Green. There is the ability to share the program by emailing a friend or posting links to Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and Digg. 8 not-for-profit green organizations supported the program driving credibility for Cisco in this space. They also put the One Million Acts of Green logo on their websites and sent out emails to their members about this great new program. The program officially launched on Oct 21, 2008. Two weeks before a teaser spot ran on CBC raising awareness and buzz. On launch day the website went live and *The Hour* featured an hour long program about One Million Acts of Green featuring Green celebrities Mike Holmes and David Suzuki. Cisco launched television, newspaper ads and online banners. They announced the program on their website and sent e-newsletters out to all their employees, customers and partners. Cisco developed TTC Digital signage in the Toronto Transit system and time sensitive elevator ads through Captivate and also leveraged other marketing partnerships to cross promote. These included NHL All-star game and NBA program extensions. Individuals, schools, corporations and communities were sent tool kits and were encouraged to form a group and add their Acts of Green. A full PR campaign was launched targeting all major

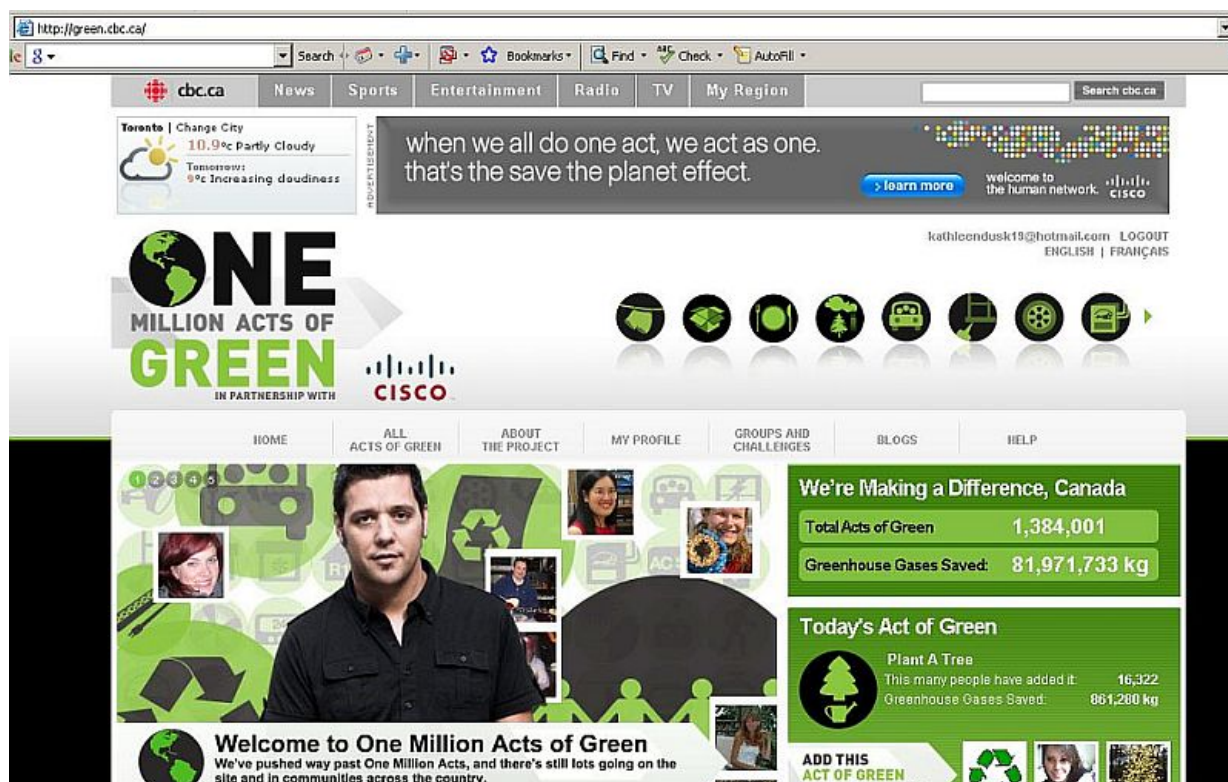
national and regional media outlets. PR played a significant role throughout this campaign.

## CREATIVE

### Creative strategy:

The creative strategy for this campaign was to express in a minimalist way how each simple act added up to a greater good. One Million Acts of Green, one act at a time. And when we all do one act, we act as one. We are more powerful together than we can ever be apart. That's the human network effect. The creative for this campaign had 3 objectives. It needed to:

1. Show why Cisco has taken on this initiative Environmental change is possible, one act at a time through the human network. Cisco is the company that provides the technology that makes the network possible. The internet connects us all. It informs and empowers us. And when we come together on the network with a common goal, we can be a force for positive social change.
2. Illustrate how easy it is to act Every Act of Green, whether big or small, are equally important when added to the website. Change can start with just one person. One action. And when we combine these individual acts the positive impact on our planet grows.
3. Be positive and motivating Ensure Canadians know that with their participation we can reach our goal of One Million Acts of Green and inspire them to go to the website and add their acts with nothing in it for them except to feel good about what they had done.



John Chambers, chairman and CEO of Cisco.

John Chambers, chairman and CEO of Cisco, introduces the One Million Acts of Green program.



John Chambers, chairman and CEO of Cisco, explains how taking action through One Million Acts of Green can impact the environment in a positive way. And in coming together to form the human network, we create the power to change the world where we work, live, learn, and play.

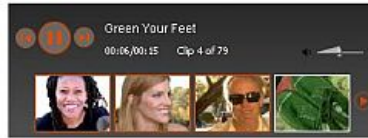
#### The Human Network Effect

We are stronger together than we can ever be apart.  
That's the Human Network Effect.

The Internet is no longer just a network of computers, it's a network of people. And, when we come together wonderful things happen. Innovative and sustainable solutions are born.

#### One Act at a Time

Change can start with just one person. One action.  
One Million Acts of Green.



#### Green Scene



Find out what green experts, celebrities and thousands of Canadians are doing to make Canada a greener place.

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## RESULTS

In just 105 days (or 15 short weeks) we accomplished one giant goal. 260 days ahead of schedule. On February 5, 2009, Cisco officially registered our One Millionth Act for our One Million Acts of Green program. We were months ahead of schedule and were blown away by the unbelievable support this program has received. From October 21 - March 20 we:

- Motivated one in one thousand Canadians to go on the site and add their acts.
- Generated 5.2 million page views
- Produced over 5 million brand engagements for Cisco
- Averaged over 15 minutes per person for time spent on the site
- Resulted in over 15,600 search requests through Google
- Had over 10,000 participants join in a Facebook community group
- Had over 100 blogs and over 700 Twitter followers
- Received 479 percent more PR versus year ago after being featured in:
  - 161 newspaper and magazine articles
  - Over 50 television and radio segments

- Featured major celebrity Acts of Green including Alanis Morissette, Mike Holmes, Steve Nash, Toronto Mayor David Miller David Suzuki, National Hockey League players, Former Prime Minister Paul Martin, Environment Minister Jim Prentice, Erin Brockovich, Sir Richard Branson, Tim Robbins and even Oscar the Grouch
- Were spoofed by comedy show 'This Hour Has 22 Minutes' and actors from Canadian television show 'Trailer Park Boys' on You Tube Communities, universities, business and schools actively promoted One Million Acts of Green including Tim Hortons, Bank of Montreal, MTS Allstream, and Home Depot through their own out-reach programs. Cities such as Toronto, Calgary, Winnipeg, North Bay, Mississauga, Edmonton and Vancouver all took part by challenging and encouraging their community to be greener, as well a massive number of elementary schools, high school and universities.

**Total Cost:** Rollout - 1,000,000+

## ADDITIONAL REASONS FOR RECOGNITION

One Million Acts of Green established 5 fundamentals of social media:

1. Rally around a Big Ideal TM
2. Credibly link your brand to the Ideal
3. Allow users to monitor their contribution
4. Keep the UGC ask really simple
5. Amplify with social media There are currently 1,544, 415 million Acts registered. 50% above the objective. 50% faster than expected.

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# WARC

