

From Hardware Provider to Bridge of Transformation



How understanding the gap between functional perception and emotional truth means adding **\$1.56 billion in brand value in a single year.**

THE PROBLEM

Cisco, a worldwide technology leader, faced a **critical brand perception problem**. Despite their technical excellence and market dominance, they were seen as a complex, functional, hardware-focused company. Leadership recognized that emotional engagement, not just technical specifications, drives customer behavior and loyalty.

The company needed to **reframe their brand identity to connect** with various audiences.

THE DISCOVERY

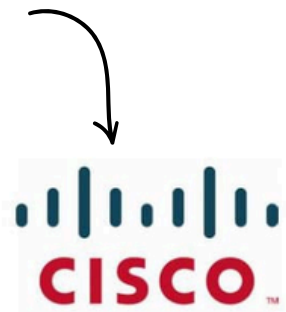
Through ZMET® (Zaltman metaphor elicitation technique) research, something interesting emerged: **Cisco is a bridge to opportunities that transform the world.**

This insight **fundamentally reframed Cisco's role**. Rather than being "the hardware company that supported the backbone of the internet", Cisco became **the enabler of human transformation** and progress. The bridge metaphor simplified complexity while **elevating meaning**. It acknowledged Cisco's connecting function while shifting emphasis from the infrastructure itself to the possibilities that infrastructure unlocked.

THE STRATEGIC PIVOT

Armed with this insight, Cisco developed The Human Network campaign, **centering their entire brand strategy** on the idea that Cisco serves as the bridge to opportunities that transform the world. The company made bold creative decisions reflecting this new positioning:

- Dropped "Systems" from their brand architecture
- Emphasized bridge imagery throughout visual identity
- Refocused messaging from technical specifications to human outcomes and transformation



The Business Impact

The repositioning delivered measurable results across brand perception and financial performance.

35%

Increased stock price

9th

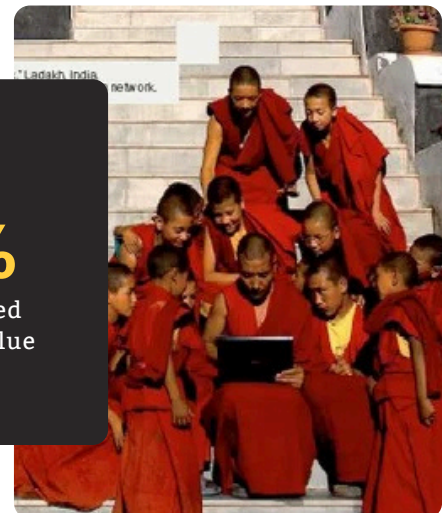
most respected company (up from 30th)

80%

Tech leader perception

9%

Increased brand value



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