



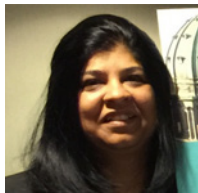
Executive Interview



Jeanne Beliveau Dunn



Katherine Bries



Vandana Malik

WSR: *Today we are speaking with a team from Cisco who is responsible for the development and release of one of their company's newest products, Cisco Collaborative Knowledge. With us for this interview are Jeanne Beliveau Dunn, VP and general manager Cisco, Katherine Bries, senior director and general manager Learning@Cisco, and Vandana Malik, technical product manager, Learning@Cisco.*

Jeanne, *Cisco is considered a thought leader in designing and authoring educational programs. Can you explain what the genesis of Cisco Collaborative Knowledge was and why Cisco felt it was a marketable product?*

Jeanne: At Cisco we have always focused on learning and always deployed systems internally to foster continuous learning. However, about 7 or 8 years ago we decided to change our approach to creating information and knowledge. We wanted to provide an environment where people could learn from one another – it was the basic concept of “social learning,” but long before that idea was popularized in the LMS market space. We knew that people learned in different ways and that learning is a continuous experience, not just the activity of sitting in a classroom or in front of a computer. One of the strongest learning experiences is the opportunity to connect with knowledgeable people. At first we used the product internally for our employees and also with some of our customers. It was extremely successful for both groups, so much so that our customers kept asking us when they could buy it for their own companies. About two years ago we had the opportunity to re-engineer the internal product and build the next generation that would solve the challenge of allowing people to work together in this new agile environment we are living in.

Kathy: There is so much information flowing through an organization and it is incumbent upon us as vendors to digitize the available information in order to create and accommodate a learning generation of users, as well as to provide tools to collaborate and learn. Millennials, as an example, demand and expect that type of virtualized learning. They are also used

to collaborating and sharing information as a consumer so the workplace needs to emulate that approach in order to keep those employees engaged.

WSR: *When new products are introduced, it sometimes is not clear to the marketplace what problem is being addressed. What problem or challenge is Cisco Collaborative Knowledge solving?*

Jeanne: Research has shown that 90 percent of all jobs will change in some fundamental way in the next few years in the digital economy. One of the greatest challenges facing organizations today is not only a shortage of people – it is also a shortage of key skills. Analysts predict there will be an estimated shortage of 38 to 40 million college-educated workers by 2020. Companies are going to have to reinvent their talent in order to close that impending skills gap and remain competitive; we think Cisco Collaborative Knowledge will help them do just that. You want to keep your best people – those that are adept at forming/storming and bringing projects to fruition. One of the best ways to retain that talent is to have an application suite that gives them the versatility to continuously learn how, where, and when they want to so they will be better equipped to solve business challenges.

WSR: *Do you consider Cisco Collaborative Knowledge an LMS? If so, why do you believe the learning market will be receptive to another product in that niche? What are your differentiators and who do you consider your competitors?*

Jeanne: Good question. Cisco Collaborative Knowledge is very innovative – it is a new and different kind of knowledge and learning system. Cisco Collaborative Knowledge is a digital workspace solution designed to connect people to learning and to other people. It brings it to the solution level so that an enterprise does not have to use a mish-mash of multiple products that don't connect with one another. We have integrated other best-in-class Cisco collaboration tools such as Webex and Jabber, and also have over 300 learning partners so

we can bring very rich content to our customers. In that sense we are not just competing in one market area, but rather several related areas such as learning, networking, and analytics. The social element exists across the fully integrated product and we believe is one of the key factors, which will help build a “knowledge-capable” learning organization.

Kathy: One of our major differentiators is how we connect people with human knowledge providers rather than just courses. All employees have a knowledge profile of their level of expertise in specific areas; that expertise rating is a combination of self-rating, peer endorsement, and organization ratings from past projects. Any employee can reach out and connect with a rated expert in real-time using Jabber chat or they can meet them using Jabber and then jump onto a Webex right away with the expert. This creates a very dynamic and supportive learning environment. You can see there is a cultural aspect to this – the organization must be, or must become, willing to collaborate to a very high degree.

WSR: *In the history of HRIS systems, skills databases have been notoriously difficult to set up because internally it was hard to get people to agree on what constituted different skills, as well as how to judge and validate different levels of expertise. How does Cisco Collaborative Knowledge respond to skepticism around that?*

Vandana: First, an essential part of a collaborative organization is trust – and the organization must trust its employees. We believe that people will rate themselves very honestly, knowing that others will come to them for expert advice if they state they have expertise in a specific area. Second, we provide some standard definitions and a library of terminology to describe different levels and components of expertise. We have embedded industry-related ontology libraries that provide formal definitions of domain knowledge. People, not just metadata, can be “tagged” with expertise by others and users can do a contextual search, which uses a semantic engine and a knowledge map. We’ve tested this extensively and believe that all of those tools combine to enable users to mine the “expert” data and connect with the best resources very effectively.

Kathy: In addition to developmental learning, Cisco Collaborative Knowledge is also an excellent tool to use for onboarding and new hire training as well. It supports different learning platform modalities and prescribed learning plans, as well as individual/customized selections.

WSR: *You released Cisco Collaborative Knowledge at the end of April this year. What has the market reaction been?*

Jeanne: Customers we’ve spoken to are very excited about Cisco Collaborative Knowledge. We’ve taken advantage of emergent technologies such as mobile optimization and the timing is right – millennials and actually the great majority of the workforce now, regardless of age, are demanding products like this that emulate the social experience they have as a consumer of technology in their homes. The corporate sphere really has to step up and exceed those expectations.

WSR: *What are some of the main features of Cisco Collaborative Knowledge?*

Jeanne: Cisco Collaborative Knowledge is a SaaS-based suite, scalable, and designed for mobile at the core. Analytics is a key component both for management to better understand how their workforce learns, as well as for employees to see and understand the profiles of the knowledge experts and how to effectively expand their personal knowledge maps and further their careers.

Vandana: We wanted the system to be intuitive, easy-to-use, and smart. There is a keyword search, which produces results across all knowledge aspects related to the keyword on a common platform, and that can include white papers, peer communities, relevant courses, blogs and discussions, and knowledge experts. Knowledge content is selected and sent to you based on the knowledge communities you belong to. You can also save Web articles to your device without ads or other extraneous material to read later and share. The user can, of course, organize any extracted material the way they want to and also share it. Cisco Collaborative Knowledge incorporates graphics throughout – the Knowledge Map that shows you whom to reach out to for expertise in a particular area is shown graphically so you can see the knowledge paths. This graphic map also helps you

with your own performance and career development because you can see the components that comprise an “expert rating” and therefore learn what some of your next steps must be if you want to climb the knowledge ladder.

Kathy: The capabilities are designed to address an intergenerational workforce and provide different ways to be able to connect with various knowledge sources. With Cisco Collaborative Knowledge, we’ve leveraged various technologies with the goal of helping to create an agile and intelligent organization. Using the Knowledge Map, as an example, that not only shows employees who know what and how they can take steps to expand their own level of knowledge, but from an analytics perspective, upper management can also see those knowledge paths and understand who the experts are in different topics and how they learn. That’s valuable insight and can truly help to align an enterprise’s talent strategy with its overall market and product strategy.

WSR: Jeanne, do you have any closing thoughts?

Jeanne: If I were to describe it in one sentence, I’d say Cisco Collaborative Knowledge integrates best-in-class consumer and business technologies to enable capabilities such as highly secure knowledge sharing, expert identification, continuous learning, social networking, and analytics into one complete and end-to-end enterprise knowledge exchange. We’re very proud and excited to bring this product to market. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to introduce it to the WSR audience.

** Interview conducted by Freddy Silverman, principal at Silver Bullet Solutions and WSR editor.*

Jeanne Beliveau-Dunn is vice president and general manager of the Business Enablement and Strategy team within Cisco Services. In this role, she leads Learning@Cisco, Technical Services strategy and operations, and the Center of Excellence for innovation, globalization, and commercialization. Beliveau-Dunn is a recognized expert and award-winning executive on workforce education, the social enterprise, cloud, and Software-as-a-Service, collaboration software, and knowledge systems, and brought the first social education system in the industry to market, the Cisco Learning Network. Under the leadership of Beliveau-Dunn, Learning@Cisco has grown from a \$60 million annual business into a \$245 million education service that leads the industry in growth, profits, and thought leadership. In her first role of her 20-year career at Cisco, she created the Cisco channels sales team and strategic alliances program, and the Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG). Beliveau-Dunn is the founder of the IOT World Forum for Talent and serves on advisory boards for CareerBuilder, Arizona State University, New York Academy of Sciences - STEM, Chico University, Technical Services Industry Association (TSIA), and advises many universities and companies globally on innovation and talent. She holds a bachelor’s degree in management from the University of Massachusetts.

Kathy Bries, senior director and general manager at Cisco joined Learning@Cisco two years ago from Cisco’s CDO (Chief Development Office)/Technology group to lead the Learning@Cisco operations team. She currently oversees Learning@Cisco’s operations, IT infrastructure investments and overall P&L management. Bries started out at Cisco in 1995 and before taking her current role, she was the director of operations for Cisco’s \$6 billion business unit — High end modular switching and the Datacenter Switching Security technology group. Under her leadership, the business unit successfully passed both ISO and TL9000 audits, is on track to meet its multi-billion dollar annual goal while surpassing overall profitability goals. She had managed the technology group’s overall planning, operational, R&D investments, and strategy review process, and was instrumental in implementing various Cisco-wide initiatives. She also served as the director of Operations for Cisco’s Service Provider Business Council and helped create and communicate Cisco’s overall service provider strategy, goals and long-term business plans. She is a graduate of the Harvard Business School.

Vandana Malik, Business Operations manager at Learning@Cisco, has more than 18 years of experience in Product and Program Management specializing in products in the portal, collaboration, commerce, training, and learning space. She has been successfully providing vision, architecture and roadmaps, as well as design standards and support for learning and training solutions. Her past experience includes industries such as insurance, financials, health care, technology, education, professional services, and specializes in product management, social learning, social media, learning technology strategy, e-learning standards, and agile methodology. Malik holds a master’s degree in Computer Applications and an associate degree in Program Management.