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STAR Awards

2026

2026 TSIA STAR Awards
Featured Application

Cisco Customer Experience

Cisco AI Support Fabric

Enablement delivered inside the product, measured by what customers can do next rather than by the content they complete.

Award Category	The Outcome Accelerator
Case Study Name	Cisco AI Support Fabric: In-Product Enablement That Accelerates Time to Value and Customer Proficiency
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Overview

A customer facing a field notice or security advisory does not need another course. They need to know right now whether they are affected and what to do next. Cisco AI Support Fabric treats that moment as the unit of enablement, delivering the training path where the customer can act on it and measuring success by what they can do next, not by the content they complete. Where the usual answer to a proficiency gap is more courseware and certification tracks, Cisco put the training path inside the product itself, and cut time to a validated answer from days to under two minutes.

The curriculum is written by customers. What ships as guidance is set by where customers actually get stuck. Cisco resolves 1.7 million support cases a year, and over the last decade it has codified that record into validated, reusable remediations, operationalizing case experience rather than training models directly on raw case data. The Fabric delivers that knowledge inside the workflow and now reaches nearly 297,000 users, up from 24,734 in May 2025, with 78,840 returning as repeat power users.

What have we solved for?

Before the Fabric, product proficiency was acquired through escalation. A customer met an unfamiliar symptom, left the product to search documentation, interpreted a field notice without context, collected logs by hand, and waited for a Cisco engineer to explain what had gone wrong. Learning arrived after failure, which is the slowest and most expensive way to teach. The Fabric replaces that with a milestone path the customer moves through inside the product:

- **Milestone 1, receive guidance in context:** a homegrown digital adoption platform (DAP) delivers guided tours, onboarding checklists, tooltips, and proactive banners scoped by product area, user context, and schedule, so a new user reaches a first successful outcome without leaving the product or opening a case.
- **Milestone 2, apply a recommended action:** the AI Assistant and AIOps turn 1.7 million annual cases and telemetry from hundreds of thousands of devices into best-practice, field notice, vulnerability, and degradation guidance, refreshed every 30 minutes so the next action reflects current conditions.
- **Milestone 3, demonstrate proficiency:** guided remediation turns an insight into a completed configuration or policy improvement without specialist help.
- **Milestone 4, escalate with context:** when human help is needed, one click captures logs, configuration snapshots, diagnostics, and a reasoning trace, opening a Technical Assistance Center (TAC) case that shows the customer the diagnostic path and not only the answer.

The milestone is not a video viewed or a course completed. It is the customer action that follows: guidance understood, a recommendation applied, a risk reduced, or an escalation prepared.

The path runs on 79 intent-routed production agents and extends across the portfolio without each product team rebuilding its own training experience. On measurement: adoption is tracked portfolio-wide, while performance results come from the most mature deployment, the AIOps layer in Secure Cloud Control (firewall included).

Customer Impact

Two outcomes decide whether enablement worked: how fast a customer reaches first value, and how much that customer can do unaided afterward. Each milestone below carries the evidence that customers reached it and the change in performance that followed.

Milestone	Adoption evidence	Measured gain in customer performance
Receive guidance in context	296,577 total users (up from 24,734 in May 2025); 78,840 repeat power users; 100,000+ monthly in-product engagements; 4.8/5 customer satisfaction (CSAT)	Customers begin resolving issues without leaving the product or waiting on support

Milestone	Adoption evidence	Measured gain in customer performance
Apply a recommended action	53,594 guided field notice and security advisory workflows started; 37,774 carried through to a customer interaction	23,000+ policies optimized; bug-encounter rate reduced to 12.1%
Demonstrate proficiency	34,918 workflows concluded with the analysis or solution delivered, 92.4% of those with a customer interaction	Median 70 to 120 seconds to a validated answer, against 2 to 16 days through a support case; high-severity configuration cases, install-base adjusted, fell 30%+ then 40%+ year over year
Escalate with context	Diagnostics and reasoning attached before TAC engagement	Escalation rate down 29% (5.5% to 3.9%); TAC CSAT +2.4 points

From content completion to demonstrated proficiency

A customer who works through a guided field notice or advisory reaches a validated answer in a median of 70 to 120 seconds. The same question routed through a support case resolves in 2 to 16 days. Between July 2025 and July 2026, 53,594 of these workflows were started, 37,774 carried through to a customer interaction, and 34,918 concluded with the analysis or solution delivered and no case opened, 92.4% of every workflow a customer engaged with. Following Best Practice Recommendations reaching general availability in April 2025, high-severity configuration cases, adjusted for install-base growth, fell more than 30% and then more than 40% year over year.

“This solution delivers a complete in-product support and adoption experience. It accelerates time to value for customers, drastically reduces the operating cost of our products, and improves the user experience. It is critical that we continue investing in these programs.” Pramod Chandrashekar, Vice President, Security Engineering, Cisco.

External recognition includes the ISSIP Excellence in Service Innovation Award and 4 Stevie Awards, and TSIA covered the work in its own industry blog: Redefining Services and Delivery with AI and Innovation.

Business Impact

The same enablement path that returns customers to work faster also changes Cisco's economics. Each figure below is drawn from its own measured dataset, named inline.

- **Return on knowledge:** 34,918 field notice and advisory workflows concluded with the customer holding the answer and no case opened. At Cisco's approved internal case-avoidance rate, that is approximately $3.4M in avoided support cost over the measured period. These are avoided cases, not closed ones: no TAC request was created during the tracked interaction.
- **Enablement economics:** the homegrown DAP replaces third-party tooling, removing a significant recurring annual cost as contracts renew.
- **Built once, delivered across the portfolio:** each Business Unit inherits guidance, targeting, and onboarding from the same platform rather than rebuilding its own, and new products onboard to what already exists.
- **Expert capacity redirected:** with routine questions answered in product, the cases that do reach engineers arrive with diagnostics and reasoning already attached, so specialist time concentrates on genuinely complex work.

Lessons Learned

- **Teach at the moment of need.** When knowledge arrives while the customer is still holding the problem, it converts into action rather than into something saved for later.
- **Measure action, not attendance.** Content completion told us little. Policy optimization, guided remediation, escalation rate, and clicks to diagnosis told us whether customers had actually learned something.
- **Let customer failure patterns write the curriculum.** Cases, telemetry, and engineer judgment become enablement only once codified into validated, continuously refreshed recommendations.
- **What we would do differently: instrument proficiency from day one.** We built delivery first and measurement second, then reconstructed the link afterward. The next phase gives each path its own time-to-value baseline.


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