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STAR Awards

2026

2026 TSIA STAR Awards
Featured Application

Outcome – Based Offer of the year

Overview

For enterprise customers, great support means the **right engineer at the right time**—aligned to the **Basic, Standard, or Signature** experience they purchased. At global Cisco Technical Assistance Center (TAC) scale, manual queue assignment drove misroutes, uneven workloads, and handoffs that slowed resolution and eroded the **customer support experience**.

Smart Case Assignment (SCA) replaces that model with **offer-aware intelligent routing**—matching each case to the best-fit Technical Consulting Engineer (Engineer) using real-time availability and offer parameters, not queue position. SCA now routes an average of **4,000+ customer cases** and **4,900+ TCE assignments per day** across global **24x7x365** TAC, shifting focus from ticket throughput to **outcomes**: qualified TCEs, timely engagement, and consistent ownership.

What have we solved for?

SCA unifies global TAC routing into one platform that assigns **Engineer** from **entitlements**—so customers receive the support experience their contract entitled to. Each decision applies **Engineer capability, live availability, and offer context** in one integrated model.

Derived Proficiency (DP) scores true case-solving ability through machine learning, refreshed every **30 days**, combined with manager-certified **offer skills**. **Real-time availability** and **offer-aligned matching** ensure customers receive qualified Engineer who can engage without interruption.

Entitlement decoding translates contract terms into consistent routing rules—so cases reach Engineer qualified for the purchased tier. SCA **dynamically expands** eligible Engineers during surges to protect wait times and experience. **ORBIT** (Operational Routing and Business Insights Tool)—the AI management console—explains **10,000+ daily routing decisions**, giving leaders transparency and deeper insights. Together, these capabilities deliver the **right Engineer, for the right offer, at the right time**.

CX Product Management leadership, who designs customer offers, frames how SCA enables differentiated delivery:

> *"delivers the infrastructure to intelligently route cases to the best available engineer"*
>
> *"enabling CX to deliver on our brand promise—helping customers maximize value from their technology investments with operational agility"*
>
> *"every interaction personalized, proactive, and trusted"*
>
> — CX Product Management leadership

Customer Impact

SCA is turning integrated routing into **measurable customer experience**—starting with how every case is assigned. Three operational measures show whether customers receive Engineers **aligned to their purchased offer**, whether the **best-fit Engineer** is placed on the **first routing attempt**, and whether **ownership is sustained** through resolution.

These measures **quantify delivered experience** as SCA scaled enterprise-wide—summarized below. **Offer Match Rate** and **Initial Assignment Success** both exceed the **80% baseline**, reflecting differentiated delivery at scale. Together with sustained ownership, customers see less delay, rework, and repeated context-sharing.

Three operational measures of customer impact (FY26)

Offer Match Rate	**Initial Assignment Success**	**Single Ownership**
Offer-tier qualified	Best-fit TCE, first attempt · IMLS 3	One TCE through resolution
FY26 **84.2%**	FY26 **84.9%**	H2 FY26 **75.6%**
Baseline: **80%** · Exceeding expectations	Baseline: **80%** · Exceeding expectations	Sustained ownership through resolution
TCEs aligned to purchased offer	Fewer misroutes · faster engagement	More continuity · fewer handoffs

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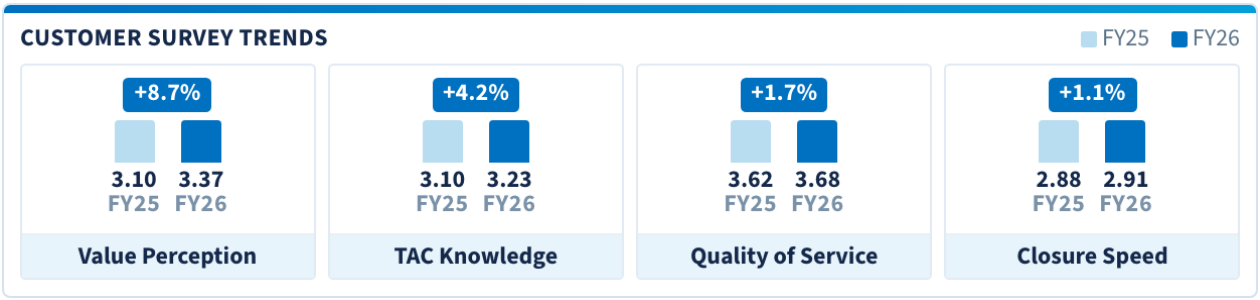
Beyond assignment performance, **independent customer surveys** show improving sentiment as SCA scaled across TAC—with significantly higher response volumes in FY26. Gains in **value** and **knowledge** align with offer-aligned routing: customers experiencing Engineers matched to what they purchased.



Customers describe that difference in their own words—using anonymized verbatim excerpts from recent feedback. They cite **fast response**, the **right engineer with the right knowledge**, and **one person available straight away**. Others note **quicker assignment**, **clear case ownership early**, **knowledge sharing** that built **confidence during upgrades**, and support that **already knows what to do** from the case description—**no back and forth, no time wasted**.

> *"fast response and we directly had the right engineer with the right knowledge" · "one person for assistance was available straight away"*
>
> *"quicker assignment to the right engineer," "clear confirmation of case ownership early," "the support already knows what to do based on the description of my case"*
>
> *"no back and forth of unwanted emails and no time wasted" · "really fast on taking action after raising the ticket"*
>
> — Cisco TAC customers (anonymized)

Together, routing performance, improving survey scores, and direct customer feedback show SCA closing the gap between **what customers purchase and what they experience**—outcome-oriented support from first assignment through resolution.

Business Impact

SCA gives TAC **automated routing, manager visibility, and balanced workload distribution**—redirecting leadership effort from queue administration to **customer resolution and leadership**. The capacity freed is a **conservative modeled estimate**, summarized below.

Two measures of business impact (FY26)



Last mile intervention and **Workload Distribution**—supported by **ORBIT** visibility—reduce manager firefighting and match **case complexity** to **Engineer skill** via **Derived Proficiency**. That transparency builds **trust in the system** and shifts TAC toward **outcome-oriented collective delivery**.

Lessons Learned

Scaling SCA and **ORBIT** enterprise-wide surfaced three lessons: monitor data sync proactively to prevent stale routing inputs, reassess **ORBIT** UX impact as requirements evolve, and validate routing in simulation before production scale—reducing rework and post go-live surprises.

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