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## Success Stories

### Cisco Systems Turns to Lasselle-Ramsay for Reliable, Long-Term Outsourcing Solutions

Cisco Systems is one of the fastest-growing and most profitable companies in the history of the computer industry. This San Jose-based global provider of end-to-end networking solutions reported revenues of \$18.93 billion for fiscal 2000—a 55 percent increase over the previous year. John Chambers, president and CEO, stated in the company's 2000 annual report that Cisco benefited from exceptional returns because it successfully increased customer satisfaction.

Cisco recognizes that one of the key components of customer satisfaction is accurate, up-to-date information. However, with its growing product line supported by thousands of manuals and release notes, managing technical documentation is challenging. To meet project deadlines, several of Cisco's business units are outsourcing technical documentation projects to Lasselle-Ramsay.

### Outsourcing Helps Relieve Staffing Problems

David Trousdale, manager of documentation for Cisco's Multiservice Switching Business Unit, was one of the first to consider outsourcing significant portions of his department's technical documentation workload to Lasselle-Ramsay. He needed a solution that would help him ramp up quickly to the demands that rapid growth presented to his business unit. Over the past 18 months, Trousdale has added 21 technical writers to his original staff of 9 to keep up with the volume of projects. Even at that rate, he found it difficult to stay on top of the 400-percent increase in the number of projects.

"Finding really good people, particularly with networking backgrounds, is very hard. I went with Lasselle-Ramsay because they have the staff to do the job and experience with a wide range of projects," said Trousdale.

### Doing it the Cisco Way

Trousdale points out that a vendor who wants to work with Cisco must be totally committed to following the company's very precise internal technical documentation process and defined standards.

"Lasselle-Ramsay's team was willing to dedicate themselves to learning our tools and procedures," he noted. "A real plus is that they are solely in the outsourcing business and understand how to work with us and to adjust to our processes."

Lasselle-Ramsay's teams take responsibility not only for providing content, but also for facilitating the entire project and the final quality of the deliverables, which have included software and hardware product manuals, feature modules, product release notes, web-based and online help systems, and application notes. In addition to technical writers, editors, and production specialists, Lasselle-Ramsay provides project managers who track schedules to meet deadlines and monitor budgets, as well as a dedicated client relations manager to ensure Cisco's continued satisfaction.

### Providing a Transparent Solution

Trousdale notes that at Cisco, as in most internal technical publications departments in large corporations, a number of issues must be resolved during the course of a project. "It's those little things that take a lot of time, and it's good to know that I can rely on Lasselle-Ramsay to do whatever is necessary get the job done. They participate in the meetings and have made an excellent impression with the Cisco Release Teams of which they've been members," said Trousdale.

Mira Wooten, client relations manager with Lasselle-Ramsay, explained, "Quite often we work directly with release teams that are made up of representatives from several groups such as engineering, marketing, and manufacturing. Documentation is critical to the release of Cisco products, and we're very responsive to any request from the teams to ensure that the information is accurate, usable, and available on schedule. Our goal is to not be thought of as a contract service, but to provide a solution that is so transparent our clients consider us part of the team. Most team members don't even realize that we are a vendor."



Sample Projects

Trousdale agrees. "I don't have to worry about them delivering on time. They handle all the reviews with the subject matter experts and teams."

### **Outsourcing Provides Scalability and Flexibility**

In the last year alone, Cisco has increased its investment in internal product development by 61 percent and expects to continue on a path of exponential growth. Fortunately, outsourcing to Lasselle-Ramsay makes it easy for Cisco to expand its writing staff when the workload is heavy, and cut back during less busy times without having to hire and then lay off employees. By outsourcing, Cisco documentation managers can also save their most experienced technical writers for high-profile, cutting-edge projects.

Like Cisco, Lasselle-Ramsay is also expanding its outsourcing services to support Cisco around the country. In addition to the Multiservice Switching Business Unit, Lasselle-Ramsay is working with Cisco's IOS Group, Worldwide Training, and the Service Provider Line of Business on both the west and east coasts.

"They really seem to understand how to work with companies. Outsourcing to Lasselle-Ramsay is an adaptable, scalable solution for technical publications," concludes Trousdale.