

Guillermo Diaz, Jr.

My grandmother could snap her *chancla* (slipper) off of her foot faster than anyone I knew and throw it with uncanny precision at my brother and me when we were fighting. Luckily, these slippers had soft rubber soles, or they could have caused serious damage; but they did the trick and caught our attention, enabling her to diffuse the situation.



As vice president of Information Technology at Cisco Systems, Guillermo Diaz, Jr., no longer has to duck slippers thrown at him. But he did volunteer this year to have 40 cream pies hurled into his face to raise funds at a March of Dimes campaign carnival event. Volunteers, including his family, friends, and Cisco colleagues, actually raised more than quadruple the fundraising goal that they had set for themselves.

“It was one of the proudest moments I have experienced,” says Diaz, “and it demonstrated how a team aligned to one vision can truly change the lives of others.”

Visionary teamwork goes with the territory for Diaz, who sets the technology agenda for Cisco’s Services Business Unit – which contributes approximately \$8 billion in annual revenue to Cisco’s bottom line. In that capacity, he is responsible for approximately 600 employees and consultants, with a budget

of \$130 million per year, and personally drives the IT strategy.

But demonstrating a mastery of the technology is not the biggest obstacle in his industry, says Diaz. “Being able to champion your vision of where that technology can take you – and driving consensus – that is what is most challenging.”

Diaz learned how to be a team player when he entered the Navy right out of high school to be trained as a telecommunications and networking specialist, a career foundation that has served him well. By the age of 22, he had already visited 15 different countries, learning discipline and focus, and meeting and appreciating diverse individuals from many cultural backgrounds.

So, it is only natural that he has been actively involved with inclusion and diversity efforts since the day he joined Cisco 10 years ago. “I have seen this effort evolve from just a set of

diversity clubs into part of our DNA here at Cisco,” he explains. “As we globalize, leveraging the eco-system of diverse talent in direct or matrixed organizations will be the only way we can scale to meet the demands of our goals in every region of the world.”

With respect to leadership, Diaz believes, it all comes down to individuals. “What matters? People matter,” he emphasizes, “people who are passionate about what they do every day and are inspired to take action and accomplish their goals.”

For that reason, he says that his key to professional success is his focus on ROI – which, to Diaz, stands for Relationships Over Issues. “When you treat people with respect and provide them with opportunities to make a difference, they will run through walls to do the right thing and support the success of the business,” he says.

Diaz was nominated for the Eagle award by Marilyn Nagel, Chief Diversity Officer at Cisco Systems.

“When I think of Guillermo Diaz,” says Nagel, “I think of his enthusiasm, commitment, innovation, and consistent drive to improve not only the success of the business but also the success of each and every individual he touches. He is a man of the highest integrity, who leads by example and brings out the best in everyone around him.”

CareerFOCUS Magazine[™] and the National Eagle Leadership Institute[®] salute 2010 Eagle Award winner Guillermo Diaz Jr.

The Leadership Promise at Cisco

Cisco has a unique collaborative-leadership framework, consisting of cross-functional Councils, Boards, and Working teams designed to accelerate growth in our markets. These groups, many of which are virtual, provide opportunities for exposure, learning, and development for all participants, relying heavily upon diversity and inclusion for better decision making.

Cisco’s leadership-development programs support this collaborative-leadership framework by transforming our leaders so that they, in turn, can transform our business. Customized programs have been created to strengthen leadership capabilities, which we define as *Collaborate, Learn, Execute, Accelerate, and Disrupt* (C-LEAD). These programs include:

- Customized Executive Assessment and Development
- Executive Action Learning Forum
- Cisco Center for Collaborative Leadership
- CEO Forum for High-Potential Leaders

These programs and our culture of inclusion are helping develop our leaders for the future.

Guillermo Diaz, Jr. At-a-Glance

Nominating Company

Cisco Systems

Current Position

Vice President of Information Technology

Professional Milestones

- Member, Cisco’s Inclusion and Diversity Board
- Hispanic IT Executive Council’s “Top 100 Latinos”
- *CIO Magazine*’s “Ones to Watch Award”

Community Leadership

- Executive Leader, Conexion Employee Resource Group
- Council Member, Hispanic Association for Corporate Responsibility
- Volunteer, March of Dimes Campaign

Leadership Principle

Focus on ROI – Relationships Over Issues.

Education/Training

- B.S., Regis University
- CIO Institute Program, University of California, Berkeley

Birthplace

Pueblo, CO

Current Home

Hayward, CA