

**Crystal Winner:** Maritz Travel

**Client:** Cisco

**Program:** "Cisco Chairman's Club"

**Partners:** MC&A, American Express Corporate Travel, Four Seasons Resort Hualalali, Kona, Hawaii, OnStage Talent Group



## Maritz Travel Helps Cisco Celebrate Outstanding Performance with Unique Local Hawaiian Experience

Cisco Systems, Inc. is the worldwide leader in networking that transforms how people connect, communicate and collaborate. Focused on creating unprecedented value and opportunity for customers, partners and employees around the globe, Cisco understands, in order to maintain strong customer loyalty, they need to have an exceptional sales organization. Cisco strives to have its Chairman's Club accomplish many of their sales-related retention and motivation objectives: motivating and recognizing top sales people, enabling networking, and ensuring winners have exposure to senior leaders.

Cisco engaged Maritz Travel to create a unique motivational experience that would inspire salespeople to strive for extraordinary business results and recognize them for their hard work and success. Top-performing sales individuals and their guests were invited to attend Chairman's Club and, along with Cisco Executives, took over the Four Seasons Resort Hualalali, Kona, Hawaii - an ideal venue to offer winners an exclusive experience. The hosts for the week were leaders from Cisco's global geographies, theaters, and market segments. The low ratio of hosts to winners facilitated small group interactions and one-to-one conversations. Spirited roundtable discussions, hosted by the Cisco Executives and focused on topics selected by the winners, was a very popular activity.

Chairman's Club had been held in Hawaii for five years and Maritz Travel and Cisco had built strong relationships with partners at Four Seasons Resort, DMC MC&A, and OnStage Talent Group. With the event budget remaining the same as previous years', the team was challenged to create an even more exceptional experience than the previous years. Creativity and innovation in program design were top priorities, as well as finding as many ways as possible to maximize the budget and increase winners' satisfaction with the event. Cisco encouraged the planning team to challenge all budgetary decisions to make sure that every investment would result in increased winners' satisfaction with the event.



*"The overall experience made me even more motivated to qualify for Chairman's Club in the future and made me more convinced than ever that Cisco is a great company and the best place to work!"*

— Cisco Chairman's Club winner

The team was able to maximize the budget by sourcing locally as many items as possible. This decision not only contributed to the local economy, it also kept shipping costs to a minimum. Every menu was planned to include farm-to-table ingredients. A local, keiki hula troupe provided entertainment and education. The activities were designed to provide winners an exclusive, once-in-a-lifetime experience that highlighted all things native to Hawaii. Each activity included a learning component with a local, expert guide leading the experience.

The recognition reception and dinner played a pivotal role in ensuring that winners were recognized and motivated. One of the biggest challenges was creating an event venue that was unique to previous years. Maritz worked with local suppliers to construct an elegant, temporary pavilion on the hotel property designed to encourage increased networking between winners and senior leaders and provide a perfect atmosphere for celebrating winners' successes. The location of the pavilion, several hundred feet from the resort's kitchens, created a challenge for the food and beverage team. The resort built

a kitchen adjacent to the pavilion and prepared, plated, and served several hundred meals in less than 36 minutes. The evening was filled with the celebration of success for the worldwide sales team and provided a unique experience that winners were able to share with leadership and peers.

Kona had been the Chairman's Club destination for the past three years, so Cisco had the desire to discover new ways to give back to this special community. Maritz rose to the challenge, creating an experience that was the very definition of a sustainable motivational event. Working with the Hawaiian Legacy Reforestation Initiative and Hawaiian Legacy Hardwoods (HLH), program participants were engaged to help restore native koa trees to the historic site of Mauna Kea, once a majestic forest. Koa is a magnificent and revered tree native to Hawaii. Since the outside world discovered the prize wood, more than 90% of the koa forests have been cleared. Chairman's Club winners made a significant contribution to this effort by planting 200 young, koa trees. The unique aspect of the CSR project was that each tree was RFID tagged with an exact set of geographic coordinates. Chairman's Club winners now have an even stronger personal connection to the island as they locate their specific tree on a map and keep track of it as it grows and matures.

Cisco was thrilled with the results, feeling the event achieved all of its objectives. Company leaders and salespeople recognize that Chairman's Club is a key driver to realizing their business goals, which is evident in the perfect score of 5.0 in the post-event survey. Chairman's Club exceeded expectations and set the bar as a rewarding, exciting and environmentally and socially friendly motivational experience.