



NEWS RELEASE

Cisco Canada Launches the Women Entrepreneurs' Circle to Enhance the Digital Capacity and Success of Canadian Women Entrepreneurs

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TORONTO, ON -- (Marketwired) -- 01/14/16 -- Cisco Canada (NASDAQ: CSCO) announced today the launch of the Cisco® Women Entrepreneurs' Circle. Through this program Cisco is championing the success of Canadian women leading high-growth businesses by providing them with increased access to technology knowledge and resources. Research shows that women who participate in entrepreneurship make meaningful economic and social contributions; however, many women business founders struggle to access the capital, technology, networks, and knowledge that they need to successfully start and grow their business. The aim of the Cisco Women Entrepreneurs' Circle is to help bridge this gap working with ecosystem partners including Women of Influence, Completely Managed, Business Development Bank of Canada and Communitech.

There are three main areas of the program that will enable women to power their businesses with the newest technology and effectively map and accelerate their digital strategy.

1. Circle of Learning: Enhancing Digital knowledge through the Cisco Canada Women Entrepreneur Academy. Women will be able to access seven online virtual training courses, totaling over 90 hours of training from the Cisco Networking Academy® offered at no cost to eligible registrants. Courses include: Entrepreneurship, Be Your Own Boss, Get Connected, Cisco Packet Tracer, Introduction to the Internet of Everything, Mobility Fundamentals, and Introduction to Cybersecurity.

2. Circle of Productivity: Powering Your Business with Cisco. Customized by business size, this fully managed service is simple to deploy, with effortless installation and integration. Called The Entrepreneur Xperience, each data center in a box features everything you need to get your business communicating, collaborating, and connected: phones, routers, switches and so much more. Cisco makes it easy to unify your communications with an offer that is simple, Completely Managed, and cost-effective.

3. Circle of Innovation: Bringing your Digital Strategy to Life. A program run by Cisco in collaboration with Communitech and Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC). Internship students from the University of Waterloo will be paired with entrepreneurs to help build the organization's digital

strategy, scale and impact in the marketplace. Interns will work from the new Cisco Innovation Centre in downtown Toronto, will be given access to Cisco's DevNet crowdsourced developer community, and will be provided with Cisco mentoring opportunities throughout the 12-week program. Participant women entrepreneurs will be selected from nominations provided by Communitech and BDC.

Supporting quotes:

"Women led businesses are good for Canada. While only 15 per cent of all Canadian small and medium sized businesses are run by women, research tells us that not only do these businesses boost Canada's GDP, but they also increase national well-being and competitiveness, improve women's employability, empowerment and gender equality," says Bernadette Wightman, President, Cisco Canada. "Cisco has committed to helping women to become more successful entrepreneurs by addressing some of the obstacles they face in building their IT capability and business resilience."

"Women entrepreneurs represent a vital and growing sector of the Canadian economy. Not only are the numbers of female-owned businesses rising, their average net profits are increasing, and statistics show they tend to stay in business longer than their male counterparts," says Stephania Varalli, Co-CEO, Women of Influence. "We have always supported female entrepreneurs, and we're proud to be joining forces with Cisco Canada on the Women Entrepreneurs' Circle, which we believe will be a powerful resource to help this group advance their businesses."

"The Women Entrepreneurs' Circle is an innovative way to support and advance women working in the technology sector. Partnering with Cisco Canada in this capacity allows us to connect business-minded women to world-class resources and opportunities," said Alayne Hynes, Talent Program Manager, Communitech. "The free virtual courses will benefit women in our ecosystem as a self-guided learning tool, and being matched with an intern from the University of Waterloo is a wonderful opportunity for our entrepreneurs and students to grow together."

"BDC is delighted to partner with Cisco and Communitech on the Circle of Innovation program. As Canada's Business Development Bank, we are committed to helping women-owned businesses and women entrepreneurs build growing and profitable companies -- and we believe that working collaboratively will make a huge difference in helping businesses implement innovative solutions," confirms Lesley Lawrence, Senior-Vice President, Financing and Consulting - British-Columbia and North at BDC. "Keeping up with new technology is a challenge and this is certainly an area where BDC can support women entrepreneurs to take their promising businesses to the next level."

For more information on the Cisco Women Entrepreneurs' Circle, visit www.cisco.com/ca/wec

About Cisco

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