

# Dell Networking Success Story:

## Dell Networking surgically removes Cisco at Cleveland Clinic



**Customer:** Cleveland Clinic  
**Competition:** Cisco  
**Value:** \$100K + growth potential  
**Team Lead:** Joelle Benson, Ian Ciemania

### Key Elements of Success:

1. Engage with financial decision maker early
2. Build credibility with POC
3. Leverage other Dell sales teams
4. Stay consistent and on- message

**Caution:** Cisco will spread FUD. Stay on top of it!

### Background

Cleveland Clinic is an internationally renowned hospital system recognized not only for outstanding medical care but also as a pioneer in using information technology to improve healthcare delivery.

Cleveland Clinic has been a long-time customer of Cisco and their IT professionals are Cisco advocates. In fact, the Clinic's CIO sits on the Cisco Global Customer Advisory Board and has frequent contact with Cisco's top executives. Breaking the Cisco stranglehold presented a huge challenge.

### Identifying the opportunity

Approximately two years ago, the Dell account team identified the need for a network refresh at Hillcrest Hospital, a leading institution in the Cleveland Clinic system. The need was driven by a growth in campus telemetry and patient monitoring, and the Dell team identified that the refresh project called for a simple but dependable edge solution.

### Engaging with the financial decision maker

Joelle Benson, the Dell Account Manager, identified the Clinic's senior networking director as the key to winning against Cisco. Early on, Joelle stressed that Dell could provide the best solution at a lower cost than Cisco. She advised that the hospital should consider Dell even if only to obtain a much lower price from Cisco. Joelle also shared the Gartner paper suggesting that customers should strongly consider a multi-vendor solution.

### Building trust within the organization

In order to get a foothold in this traditionally Cisco-centered market, the Dell team, led by Ian Ciemania, had to build trust over time. An innovative move by the team was to seed a S4810

switch to support a Dell HPC solution. This step opened the door to the datacenter and started discussions with the Clinic's CCIE's. After the success of the HPC solution, the team seeded 2 N-3048s, 2 S4810s and 2 S6000s to the Clinic's networking group so that Clinic staff could test and configure their existing templates in their lab. Sales Engineer Bob Okony worked closely with the CCIEs on this phase, and his leadership was vital to positioning Dell as a Cisco alternative.

As time progressed, key customer contacts confided that they were unimpressed with Cisco's recent innovations and that they could no longer justify paying a premium for Cisco. The result of the Dell team's strategic vision and customer focus was a ground-breaking sale of N3000 and N4000 switches. Dell is now positioned for numerous campus and data center sales over the next two years.

### Leveraging Dell resources

As expected, Cisco fought hard until the bitter end. One tactic was to tell the customer that the Dell switches were not certified with the GE healthcare devices that are critical to the Clinic's infrastructure. Ian arranged for Dell's GE ISV account team to speak with the customer to dismiss the false allegations. It should be noted that the Dell teams that support ISVs (Independent Software Vendors) such as GE and Cerner can be very helpful in complex enterprise sales situations.

### Staying consistent

A final lesson in this story is the importance of consistency. The Dell account team remained in place for the entire sales cycle, enabling them to execute a great strategy while building credibility with the customer.