Behind the Campaign:

Cisco’s “Connected Course” at Pebble Beach

This campaign was a 2020 B2 Award winner
The 2019 U.S. Open Championship held at Pebble Beach was one of the most iconic, challenging, and dynamic golf tournaments in history. Worldwide leader in IT and networking, Cisco, was a sponsor, and the brand rolled out an activation like no other.

Cisco deployed the first-ever “Connected Course” at a United States Golf Association (USGA) Championship, setting a new standard not only in the golf world but for sporting events in general.
“This campaign was essentially a platform that allowed us to shine a light on the stories that demonstrate who we are and our commitment to connecting people, places, ideas, and things through our technology, our people, and our social initiatives.”

**Kelly Lin** – Global Brand Marketing Manager at Cisco
Cisco’s Four Campaign Objectives

Imagine offering more than 200,000 patrons greater access to scoring, content, and digital experiences while they take in the sixth U.S. Open at a 100-year-old course along the shores of the Pacific Ocean in Monterey, Calif. **Cisco turned that dream into a reality by creating the first-ever fully secure, course-wide Wi-Fi network for the United States Golf Association (USGA) at its marquee Championship event, the 2019 U.S. Open at Pebble Beach Golf Links.**

**This campaign had four main objectives:**

1. Reinforce Cisco’s “Bridge to Possible” campaign and its tagline “If you can imagine it, we will build the bridge to get you there”

2. Increase successful Wi-Fi connections and data consumption

3. Set a new standard for the future of the on-site fan experience by conducting the first-ever major sporting event test of Wi-Fi 6

4. Provide the USGA with Cisco’s networking expertise, the power of Wi-Fi 6, data and analytics, and industry-leading cybersecurity solutions to ensure stability, reliability, and security for the duration of the event
“The new, hyper-connected experiences that our technology was creating...such as the first-ever, full-course, fan-facing Wi-Fi at a USGA championship as well as the first sporting event to test and deploy Wi-Fi 6 was a compelling story that we felt needed to be told to the world – and it was a natural fit for our Bridge to Possible campaign.”

Kelly Lin – Global Brand Marketing Manager at Cisco
On-course Wi-Fi was something that the USGA had been looking at doing for some time, and Cisco was the right partner to help make it happen. Cisco canvassed golfing events to understand connectivity challenges and what solutions were deployed at other events. The company worked closely with its partner and client, the USGA, to understand its goals for improving the fan experience.

"We set out to create truly unique experiences for today’s sports enthusiasts."

Navin Singh, Chief Commercial Officer at the USGA

A big part of that experience was the USGA app, available for Apple TV, Roku, and mobile devices. The 30,000-plus daily patrons at Pebble Beach used the U.S. Open app to enhance their on-site experiences with a wide variety of digital content, such as:

- 360-degree virtual reality feature
- On-site player tracking
- Player analytics
- Scoring updates via push notifications

In addition to the technology, Cisco also executed a social media influencer program with Erik Anders Lang, tech enthusiast and golf fanatic, for increased visibility of the connected course experience and expanded brand awareness. Lang brought a fresh perspective to the golf world, providing a behind-the-scenes view of what was possible with reliable Wi-Fi.
“Our goal with this campaign was to create something that appealed to both a golf-centric audience and a tech-focused audience. We needed to accomplish that by showing the true benefit to golf fans on-site at the U.S. Open, while also pointing to the first-of-its-kind technology deployment that would set a new standard not only in the golf world but for sporting events in general.”

Kelly Lin – Global Brand Marketing Manager at Cisco
How the Campaign Scored

To increase the campaign's reach, Cisco leveraged publications like Forbes and Golf Week, as well as on-premise event signage. The company also executed strategic broadcast buys with Fox Sports and supporting paid media to drive its legacy and future technology influencers further down the purchase funnel.

The campaign was a tremendous success, achieving the following results:

**100,000+**
connections on the Wi-Fi network during the Championship, a three-fold increase compared to the year prior.

**25+**
terabytes of data were consumed, a four-fold increase compared to the year prior.

Most importantly, Cisco and the USGA set a new standard for the on-site fan experience by enabling secure and reliable connectivity, which allowed for real-time sharing, live video streaming, and wayfinding.
“With our partner Cisco, we have built a first-of-its-kind, course-wide Wi-Fi network that gives us the speed and confidence to dynamically deliver content and new experiences to our fans at the 2019 U.S. Open. We’ve been able to stretch our imagination, deliver innovative features in our app, and look forward to helping fans consume, share, and engage with the Championship like never before.”

Navin Singh – Chief Commercial Officer at the USGA
ANA Content Manager Jeff Haber and Kelly Lin, Global Brand Marketing Manager at Cisco, recently discussed the first-ever deployment of course-wide Wi-Fi and how this accomplishment has set a new standard for the on-site fan experience while reinforcing Cisco’s Bridge to Possible campaign.

**Q** Does Cisco plan on running similar executions at other sporting events or for other non-traditional verticals?

**A** Yes, absolutely. Throughout the global COVID-19 pandemic, virtual connectivity has been a huge focus for us with Cisco Webex, our industry-leading video collaboration solution. Webex has been used broadly in the sports and entertainment world to connect events, organizations, and broadcasters in new and unique ways, including The Match: Champions for Charity and ESPN’s annual awards show, the ESPY’s, which was hosted virtually for the first time.

Each of these events – along with many others – has been a powerful showcase for Cisco, demonstrating the ability of technology to create truly memorable moments in challenging environments.

All of this ladders up to our Bridge to Possible campaign, which allows us to tell the world that if you can imagine it, we will build the bridge to get you there.
Q&A

“In this case, on-course Wi-Fi was something that the USGA had been looking at doing for some time, and Cisco was the right partner to help bring it to life.”

Q  Was there any concern about the technology serving as a disruption, distraction, or interruption at the Championship? What measures did you take to offset those risks or to account for issues of data privacy/security?

A  This is always top of mind. How we plan and deploy our technology for any customer, partner, or event are things that our engineers and IT teams take very seriously - with security and data privacy foundational to everything we do at Cisco.

In this case, on-course Wi-Fi was something that the USGA had been looking at doing for some time, and Cisco was the right partner to help bring it to life. We worked closely with the USGA throughout the planning and deployment stages to ensure that the connectivity would be additive to the on-site experience and not detract from the action taking place on the course. At the end of the day, we feel good about what we achieved collectively, as we saw significant traction on the Wi-Fi network, with more than 100,000 connections over the course of the Championship and more than 25 terabytes of data consumed.
Q&A

“What most innovative marketing ideas come from cultures that embrace inclusivity, open minds, and collaboration.”

Q: What role does company culture play when it comes to leveraging innovative marketing ideas?

A: Company culture has one of the most significant roles when it comes to marketing ideas. The most innovative marketing ideas come from cultures that embrace inclusivity, open minds, and collaboration.

Q: How did you appeal to dedicated golfers or golf fans, many of whom might be in an older demographic?

A: We made sure our creative brief was solid and specific enough to provide our creative team the information they needed to concept and write this to appeal to the target demographic.