

Ryan DeFranco

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PROFILE

Customer facing business leader at Cisco since 2012, spanning engineering and sales roles across public sector institutions and commercial organizations, including some of the world's most iconic brands. Deep technical experience paired with the ability to translate complexity into business outcomes. Has led specialist teams and represented Cisco on national stages. Executive MBA candidate at the University of Florida, graduating April 2027, and ready to take on broader commercial leadership.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Cisco Systems, Inc. | San Jose, Chicago, & Louisville | July 2012 – Present

Solutions Engineer (SE) | Louisville | July 2023 – Present

Owns technical strategy and solution design for U.S. Commercial accounts across the Louisville and Lexington metropolitan areas, spanning the full Cisco portfolio. Customers include Churchill Downs Incorporated, Valvoline Global Operations, and Papa John's.

- Led the technical design behind Cisco's multi-year Churchill Downs Incorporated partnership, announced April 2026 as Official Enterprise Networking and Network Infrastructure Partner of the Kentucky Derby. Refresh spans more than 7,000 switches and a modernized routing fabric across 12 casinos and 18 racing venues.
- Region SE of the Year and four-time SE of the Quarter across the Ohio Kentucky Trails region and Central East operation.
- Delivered 120% of a \$20.9M plan in FY26.

Meraki Product Sales Specialist (PSS) | Chicago | May 2022 – July 2023

Carried a quota selling the Cisco Meraki portfolio to state, local, and education customers across five states in the North Central and Upper Midwest regions, owning both the number and the technical sale.

- Delivered 106% of plan in FY23 Q1 and grew the territory 351% year over year in Q2.
- Accounts included Huntley Community School District 158 and Bethel University.

Enterprise Networking Technical Solutions Architect (EN-TSA) | Chicago | Oct. 2018 – May 2022

Portfolio specialist for Cisco's switching, wireless, Catalyst Center, and network automation business, brought into the largest and most complex enterprise networking pursuits across the territory. Scope grew from Midwest public sector, SLED and federal, to the western U.S. and Canada across all verticals.

- Exceeded plan for four consecutive halves, including 200% of goal in FY21 H2.
- Led a team of TSAs that built Cisco's DNA Center demand generation program, delivering the product overviews and demonstrations used across the region.
- Built the enterprise networking response to COVID-19 in spring 2020, giving customers a path to rework connectivity for remote operations.
- Accounts included Coca-Cola, Nike, Allstate, Circle K, U.S. Capitol Police, Northwestern Medicine, and UW Health.

Systems Engineer (SE) | Chicago | April 2014 – October 2018

Covered public sector customers across the Chicagoland area on the full Cisco portfolio, with technical depth in routing, switching, wireless, and digital network architecture.

- Supported the City of Chicago across its agencies, including the Chicago Police Department, the Office of Emergency Management and Communications, and O'Hare International Airport.
- FY17 Sales Champion and SE of the Year for the SLED Central operation.
- Accounts included Navy Pier, McCormick Place, the University of Chicago, and UChicago Medicine.

Associate and Virtual Systems Engineer | San Jose | July 2012 – April 2014

Graduated from the Cisco Sales Associates Program (CSAP), specializing in enterprise networking.

LEADERSHIP & RECOGNITION

SE Transformation and Leadership Development Program (STLDP) | August 2024 – Present

Selected for Cisco's development program for future SE leaders in FY25, then selected as a mentor for FY26.

Central AI Tiger Team | September 2024 – Present

One of a small group of engineers selected across a 17-state area.

Americas Demo Advisory Board | June 2025 – Present

Appointed to define the customer facing demo narratives used across the theater.

Cisco Connect U.S. | October 2018 – Present

Five-time presenter on Catalyst Center and SD-WAN.

Cisco PRIDE Employee Resource Organization | Spring 2019 – June 2023

Led the Cisco Chicago chapter.

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

University of Florida, Warrington College of Business, Gainesville, FL

Executive Master of Business Administration, April 2027

Duke University, Pratt School of Engineering, Durham, NC

Master of Engineering Management, May 2012

University of Iowa, College of Engineering, Iowa City, IA

Bachelor of Science in Engineering, Industrial Engineering with Honors, May 2011

Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP) Enterprise

Renewed in January 2025; expiration January 2028

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

Technical: Enterprise network architecture, solution design, routing and switching, wireless, SD-WAN, and network automation

Platforms: Cisco Catalyst Center, Cisco Meraki, Catalyst switching and wireless, Splunk Observability

Commercial: Technical sales strategy, executive presentations, demand generation, Salesforce, Cisco Commerce Workspace

Analytical: Advanced Excel, Python and C exposure