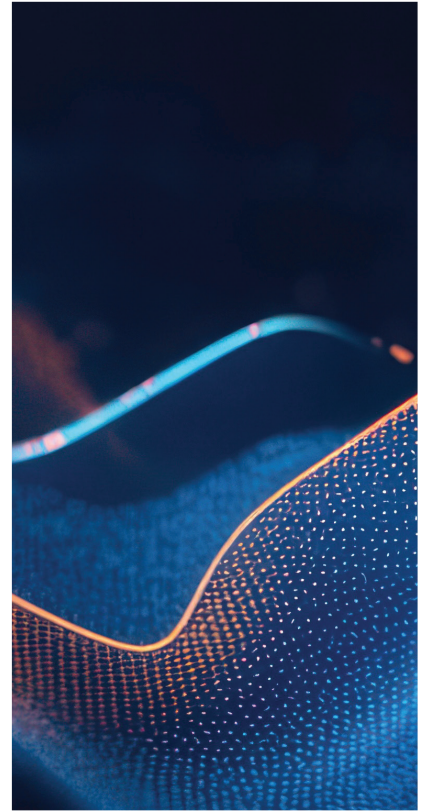
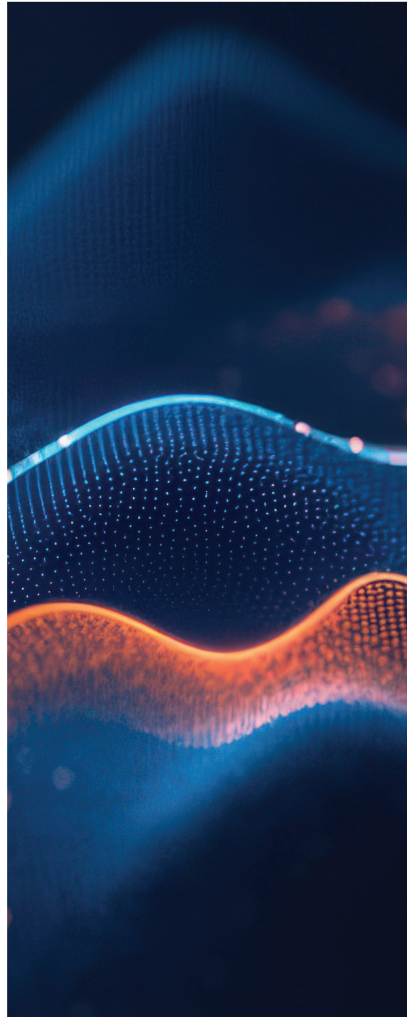


FROST & SULLIVAN
BEST PRACTICES



2026

GLOBAL ENTERPRISE
DESKTOP PHONE

COMPANY OF THE YEAR



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Best Practices Criteria for World-Class Performance

Frost & Sullivan applies a rigorous analytical process to evaluate multiple nominees for each recognition category before determining the final recognition recipient. The process involves a detailed evaluation of best practices criteria across two dimensions for each nominated company. Cisco excels in many of the criteria in the enterprise desktop phone space.

RECOGNITION CRITERIA	
<i>Visionary Innovation & Performance</i>	<i>Customer Impact</i>
Addressing Unmet Needs	Price/Performance Value
Visionary Scenarios Through Megatrends	Customer Purchase Experience
Leadership Focus	Customer Ownership Experience
Best Practices Implementation	Customer Service Experience
Financial Performance	Brand Equity

The Transformation of the Enterprise Desktop Phone Industry

The enterprise desktop telephone device industry is undergoing a structural transformation driven by the convergence of three forces: hybrid work as a normalized operating model, the increasing application of artificial intelligence (AI) at the endpoint, and a rising enterprise mandate to align technology investments with environmental sustainability objectives. Historically, the desk phone occupied a narrowly defined role within corporate environments. It was designed, deployed, and evaluated as a fixed, single-purpose voice instrument, and innovation within the category was incremental rather than architectural. That operating model no longer reflects how enterprises function. As work has become more distributed and collaboration increasingly digital, Frost & Sullivan points out that organizations now require endpoint devices that perform multiple roles simultaneously, supporting communications, integrating with collaboration platforms, and contributing to broader workplace orchestration.

This shift has meaningful implications for how enterprises procure, deploy, and manage communications endpoints at scale. The desk phone is being reclassified from a peripheral accessory to a component of workplace infrastructure, altering competitive dynamics among vendors and raising expectations around interoperability, manageability, security, and lifecycle value. For device manufacturers, Frost & Sullivan notes that this evolution creates a clear strategic requirement to re-architect the desk phone as a flexible, software-enabled platform, one capable of supporting smart workspace management, personalized user interactions, and seamless operation across both on-premises and cloud-based environments.

“Cisco helps employees address a real and persistent frustration: arriving at an office only to waste time finding a suitable workspace, and solves it with a friction-free, technology-enabled workflow.”

**– Chris Pennell,
Industry Principal**

In parallel, sustainability and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) accountability have moved from secondary considerations to core decision criteria for enterprise buyers. Regulatory pressure around carbon disclosure, combined with internal corporate sustainability targets, is increasingly shaping procurement frameworks for workplace technology. As a result, the telephone devices industry faces heightened scrutiny around electronic waste reduction, material sourcing, energy efficiency, and the ability to provide measurable

environmental impact data over the device lifecycle. These pressures do not operate independently of broader technology transformation; rather, they intersect directly with design, manufacturing, and management decisions.

Within this context, Cisco clearly differentiates itself by having anticipated these converging requirements and introducing a purpose-built product family, the Cisco Desk Phone 9800 Series, developed with the explicit intent to address functional evolution and sustainability obligations in parallel - rather than as sequential or competing priorities.

Redefining Enterprise Telephony to Address Unaddressed Customer Needs

Enterprise organizations have long grappled with inefficiencies derived from procuring separate, siloed devices for different functions: one for voice calling, another for meeting room management, another for desk booking, and yet another for emergency notifications. This fragmentation adds unnecessary complexity, costs, and operational burdens, creating persistent frustration for IT teams and users alike. Cisco properly identified this systemic gap and added the 9800 Series to its desk phone portfolio in response.

The Cisco 9800 phone lineup runs from basic, shared-space desk phones (9811) at the low end to fully featured, touchscreen models (9871) at the top, adding larger displays, more line keys, wireless connectivity, and expansion support as you move up the range. Rather than asking organizations to buy separate devices for calling, hot desking, meeting rooms, and emergency notifications, the 9800 Series combines secure enterprise calling, meetings, desk reservations, sustainability, and emergency notifications into a single device.

Cisco helps employees address a real and persistent frustration: arriving at an office only to waste time finding a suitable workspace, and solves it with a friction-free, technology-enabled workflow. The 9800 Series gives users multiple options to find and confirm a desk space; by combining on-phone hot desking, desk reservation (reserve a desk in advance or on arrival directly from a Cisco 9800 phone or via Cisco Spaces/Webex), and visual confirmation cues (the LED indicator changes depending on desk status, green for available, white for desk booked and in use, and amber for desk reserved). Where rivals offer either app-based desk booking or QR code check-in as discrete features, Cisco delivers all three modalities within a single, natively integrated device experience.

Crucially, the 9800 Series also addresses the often-overlooked enterprise need for workplace safety infrastructure at scale. The configurable “Action Button” specifically tackles the need for workplace safety:

each phone is equipped with a customizable Action Button that can be configured for anything critical to an organization, with top use cases including emergency calls, alert notifications to security to come to the associated desk area, one-touch connection to IT support, and broadcasting announcements. Programmable buttons on desk phones are not new. However, Frost & Sullivan points out that Cisco's approach combines the breadth of unmet-need resolution within a single, coherent device architecture, making Cisco desk phones a uniquely compelling proposition for enterprise buyers seeking to simplify their workplace technology estate - without compromising on functionality.

Visionary Alignment with the Megatrends Shaping the Future of Work

The enterprise telephony market is being shaped not only by today's operational demands, but also by several powerful megatrends that will determine the competitive landscape for the decade ahead. Three of the most significant forces identified by Frost & Sullivan are intelligent workspaces, AI integration, and environmental sustainability.

Cisco desk phone solutions are designed to address the trend toward "smart buildings and workplace intelligence" by integrating with Cisco Spaces, a cloud-based platform that delivers real-time analytics, location insights, and occupancy data to enable real-time desk reservations and wayfinding. This positions the desk phone as an active component of the intelligent workplace ecosystem and Cisco's telephony hardware as a strategic component of enterprise facilities management.

On the AI megatrend, Cisco has made a bold architectural decision. Each phone has AI-powered background noise removal for both the near and far-end parties in calls, meaning the near-end person does not transmit their background noise, and noise distractions from the far-end person are likewise removed and not transmitted. This is an active, real-time AI capability, not a passive feature.

In terms of sustainability, the 9800 Series phones use high percentages of post-consumer recycled plastics and are engineered for energy efficiency, reducing both carbon footprint and electronic waste. Manufacturing processes are also optimized to minimize environmental impact and packaging that uses more recyclable materials than before. Taken together, these three megatrend alignments signal that Cisco is not merely responding to market pressures; it is actively shaping the trajectory of the global enterprise desk phone market.

Setting the Global Industry Benchmark for Security and Best Practices

Enterprise communications security has never been more critical. As organizations increasingly rely on connected endpoints for sensitive business conversations, regulatory compliance, and emergency response, the vulnerability surface of every networked device has expanded dramatically. Legacy desk phones, often built on aging firmware without hardware-level security safeguards, have become a growing liability for IT and security teams worldwide.

Cisco's 9800 Series embodies hardware and software best practices across security, manageability, and platform design. On security, the 9800 Series ensures unparalleled end-to-end encryption, as the first phones in the industry to feature Trusted Platform Module (TPM) 2.0 hardware as a separate chipset, providing a hardware root of trust and protecting against hardware tampering, hardware spoofing, counterfeit devices, and supply chain attacks. The 9800 Series also features TLS 1.3, including secure boot,

image authentication, a built-in stateful firewall, runtime defense, and chip protection that make the 9800 Series suitable for regulated industries. On manageability and operational excellence, a near-field communication tag is built into each phone, enabling provisioning without even opening the box. From there, configurations and troubleshooting can happen directly in Control Hub (Cisco's all-in-one mission control for managing every user, device, and security setting across the Webex environment), and

"The ability to integrate Cisco phones with Cisco Spaces and Control Hub simplifies IT management and provides insights that enable IT and corporate real estate teams to make informed decisions about workplace technology investment, reducing the complexity of purchasing, deploying, managing, and training. This level of management integration is a structural differentiator that competing solutions cannot replicate without assembling multiple separate tools."

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integration with ThousandEyes (Cisco's network and application performance monitoring service) provides in-depth visibility into network performance and device health.

The unified "PhoneOS" firmware provides a single firmware across the entire portfolio, simplifying management and ensuring consistent performance at any scale. Flexibility allows every device to work seamlessly with both on-premises and cloud calling solutions, so organizations can adapt as their needs evolve. Critically, unlike the Cisco 7800 and 8800 Series, the 9800 Series's support for PhoneOS eliminates requirements for firmware migration when moving between environments, a significant

operational simplification that reduces both IT overhead and the risk of configuration errors during platform transitions.

A Superior Ownership Experience Across the Full Device Lifecycle

The true measure of any enterprise technology investment is the quality of the experience across the entire lifecycle, from procurement and deployment through daily use, management, and eventual refresh. Most competing enterprise desk phone solutions address one or two stages of this arc effectively; however, few address all of them.

The ability to integrate Cisco phones with Cisco Spaces and Control Hub simplifies IT management and provides insights that enable IT and corporate real estate teams to make informed decisions about workplace technology investment, reducing the complexity of purchasing, deploying, managing, and training. This level of management integration is a structural differentiator that competing solutions cannot replicate without assembling multiple separate tools.

From a total cost of ownership (TCO) perspective, the financial advantages of the 9800 Series are equally compelling. The 9800 Series reduces deployment and manageability complexities by providing IT admins and facilities with a single device for desk reservation and enterprise calling, delivering a more connected, manageable, and affordable solution. For large-scale deployments, this consolidation is a major TCO advantage.

Delivering a Differentiated Service Experience at Enterprise Scale

In the enterprise telephony market, post-sale service quality is a decisive differentiator. Organizations deploying hundreds or thousands of endpoint devices cannot afford support models that are reactive,

siloes, or slow to resolve issues. The service and support infrastructure surrounding desk phones, especially the 9800 Series, reflects Cisco's enterprise-grade commitments. The intelligence from ThousandEyes means that issues can be proactively identified before they become service outages, shifting the support experience from reactive to predictive.

Cisco Control Hub also centralizes energy and carbon emissions monitoring alongside device management, giving enterprise customers a single pane of glass that reduces support overhead and improves responsiveness. This predictive, intelligence-led service model represents a meaningful structural advance over competing solutions, which typically rely on device-level diagnostic tools that lack ThousandEyes's depth of network path monitoring and real-time resolution capability.

Cisco's unified communications capabilities include back-end calling, messaging, meetings, contact center, communications platform as a service, observability services, hardware endpoints, room meeting systems, and media gateways. For enterprise customers, this holistic service environment is a powerful advantage: issues can be diagnosed, escalated, and resolved within a common support and observability framework, rather than being routed among multiple vendors with separate service agreements and differing response standards.

This positioning reflects Cisco's understanding that enterprise service value is not measured by device cost alone, but by the operational efficiency, reduced complexity, and measurable workplace productivity that a well-integrated communications solution delivers across its entire installed base.

Unrivaled Brand Equity Rooted in Decades of Enterprise Trust

Brand equity in the enterprise technology sector is earned over decades of consistent delivery, technical leadership, and trusted partnership, and in the enterprise telephony market, Cisco's standing is arguably unmatched in scale and longevity.

From the 7900 Series to the innovative 9800 Series, users benefit from a design that feels familiar and intuitive every time. The brand carries decades of trust, particularly among IT professionals who associate Cisco hardware with reliability and security. Cisco device users benefit from a design that feels familiar with a recognizable silhouette and a consistent button layout, while gaining access to a wholly modernized feature set. This reduces training burden and accelerates adoption. The 9800 Series actively reinforces that equity rather than coasting on it.

Sustainability also feeds brand equity. Cisco has adopted circular design principles in its products, including the use of post-consumer recycled (PCR) plastics. The Desk Phone 9800 Series uses more than 74% PCR across all models, is Energy Star certified, and supports energy-saving modes. This signals to enterprise buyers, particularly those with ESG commitments of their own, that choosing Cisco aligns with their values and technical requirements.

IT teams can also get carbon emission estimates directly in Webex Control Hub, providing organizations with hard data to support their ESG reporting. For an enterprise buyer community increasingly measured on sustainability outcomes, Cisco's ability to deliver hard emissions data at the device level is a brand-equity differentiator.

Conclusion

Cisco's desk phone portfolio, particularly the 9800 series, represents a rare and genuinely transformative achievement in the global enterprise desktop telephone devices industry, one that simultaneously advances security, sustainability, user experience, AI-powered audio intelligence, and operational manageability within a single, cohesive product architecture. The 9800 Series stands out in the way it simultaneously advances multiple dimensions of a mature product category to provide customers with a rich feature set, simplicity, security, and sustainability in a single, cohesive device.

With its strong overall performance, Cisco earns the 2026 Frost & Sullivan Global Company of the Year Recognition in the enterprise desktop phone industry.

What You Need to Know about the Company of the Year Recognition

Frost & Sullivan's Company of the Year Recognition is its top honor and recognizes the market participant that exemplifies visionary innovation, market-leading performance, and unmatched customer care.

Best Practices Recognition Analysis

For the Company of the Year Recognition, Frost & Sullivan analysts independently evaluated the criteria listed below.

Visionary Innovation & Performance

Addressing Unmet Needs: Customers' unmet or under-served needs are unearthed and addressed to create growth opportunities across the entire value chain

Visionary Scenarios Through Megatrends: Long-range scenarios are incorporated into the innovation strategy by leveraging megatrends and cutting-edge technologies, thereby accelerating the transformational growth journey

Leadership Focus: The company focuses on building a leadership position in core markets to create stiff barriers to entry for new competitors and enhance its future growth potential

Best Practices Implementation: Best-in-class implementation is characterized by processes, tools, or activities that generate consistent, repeatable, and scalable success

Financial Performance: Strong overall business performance is achieved by striking the optimal balance between investing in revenue growth and maximizing operating margin

Customer Impact

Price/Performance Value: Products or services offer the best ROI and superior value compared to similar market offerings

Customer Purchase Experience: Purchase experience with minimal friction and high transparency assures customers that they are buying the optimal solution to address both their needs and constraints

Customer Ownership Excellence: Products and solutions evolve continuously in sync with the customers' own growth journeys, engendering pride of ownership and enhanced customer experience

Customer Service Experience: Customer service is readily accessible and stress-free, and delivered with high quality, high availability, and fast response time

Brand Equity: Customers perceive the brand positively and exhibit high brand loyalty, which is regularly measured and confirmed through a high Net Promoter Score®

Best Practices Recognition Analytics Methodology

Inspire the World to Support True Leaders

This long-term process spans 12 months, beginning with the prioritization of the sector. It involves a rigorous approach that includes comprehensive scanning and analytics to identify key best practice trends. A dedicated team of analysts, advisors, coaches, and experts collaborates closely, ensuring thorough review and input. The goal is to maximize the company's long-term value by leveraging unique perspectives to support each Best Practice Recognition and identify meaningful transformation and impact.

VALUE IMPACT			
STEP		WHAT	WHY
1	Opportunity Universe	Identify Sectors with the Greatest Impact on the Global Economy	Value to Economic Development
2	Transformational Model	Analyze Strategic Imperatives That Drive Transformation	Understand and Create a Winning Strategy
3	Ecosystem	Map Critical Value Chains	Comprehensive Community that Shapes the Sector
4	Growth Generator	Data Foundation That Provides Decision Support System	Spark Opportunities and Accelerate Decision-making
5	Growth Opportunities	Identify Opportunities Generated by Companies	Drive the Transformation of the Industry
6	Frost Radar	Benchmark Companies on Future Growth Potential	Identify Most Powerful Companies to Action
7	Best Practices	Identify Companies Achieving Best Practices in All Critical Perspectives	Inspire the World
8	Companies to Action	Tell Your Story to the World (BICEP*)	Ecosystem Community Supporting Future Success

*Board of Directors, Investors, Customers, Employees, Partners

About Frost & Sullivan

Frost & Sullivan is the Growth Pipeline Company™. We power our clients to a future shaped by growth. Our Growth Pipeline as a Service™ provides the CEO and the CEO's growth team with a continuous and rigorous platform of growth opportunities, ensuring long-term success. To achieve positive outcomes, our team leverages over 60 years of experience, coaching organizations of all types and sizes across 6 continents with our proven best practices. To power your Growth Pipeline future, visit Frost & Sullivan at <http://www.frost.com>.

The Growth Pipeline Generator™

Frost & Sullivan's proprietary model to systematically create ongoing growth opportunities and strategies for our clients is fueled by the Innovation Generator™.

[Learn more.](#)

Key Impacts:

- **Growth Pipeline:** Continuous Flow of Growth Opportunities
- **Growth Strategies:** Proven Best Practices
- **Innovation Culture:** Optimized Customer Experience
- **ROI & Margin:** Implementation Excellence
- **Transformational Growth:** Industry Leadership



The Innovation Generator™

Our 6 analytical perspectives are crucial in capturing the broadest range of innovative growth opportunities, most of which occur at the points of these perspectives.

Analytical Perspectives:

- Megatrend (MT)
- Business Model (BM)
- Technology (TE)
- Industries (IN)
- Customer (CU)
- Geographies (GE)

