Total Economic Impact

The Total Economic Impact™ Of Cisco Meraki

Cost Savings And Business Benefits Enabled By Cisco Meraki Cloud-Managed Networking

A FORRESTER TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT™ STUDY COMMISSIONED BY CISCO, MAY 2025

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Executive Summary

As organizations increasingly adopt cloud-native technologies to enhance agility and efficiency, legacy approaches to network management often hinder progress due to their manual processes, siloed systems, and lack of scalability. According to Forrester, cloud-native platforms are critical for businesses seeking to unlock innovation and speed up digital transformation.[1] Cloud-first, AI-powered networking solutions from Cisco managed through Cisco Meraki address these challenges by simplifying network management, enhancing security, and improving overall performance to meet the needs of large-scale enterprise environments. By leveraging the intuitive Meraki cloud-managed networking platform, organizations can reduce costly downtime, streamline IT operations, enhance employee and customer experiences, and strengthen business continuity.

The Cisco Meraki platform simplifies operations across networking, security, and IoT via a single AI-powered dashboard with scalable application programming interfaces (APIs) and a mobile app. The solution can reduce IT complexity, accelerate the deployment of sites and services, and provide real-time visibility and control over networks, which can make it ideal for organizations of all sizes. The cloud-based platform can also integrate hardware, software, and cloud services to deliver connectivity, security, and operational efficiency, empowering businesses to scale and adapt to evolving needs. By leveraging advanced AI-driven analytics, automation, and a user-friendly interface, Cisco can help organizations optimize their IT infrastructure while reducing costs and improving user experiences.

Cisco commissioned Forrester Consulting to conduct a Total Economic Impact™ (TEI) study and examine the potential return on investment (ROI) enterprises may realize by deploying Cisco Meraki.[2] The purpose of this study is to provide readers with a framework to evaluate the potential financial impact of Cisco Meraki cloud-managed networking on their organizations.

89%
Return on investment (ROI) ⓘ

$3.4M
Net present value (NPV) ⓘ

To better understand the benefits, costs, and risks associated with this investment, Forrester interviewed six decision-makers with experience using Cisco Meraki. For the purposes of this study, Forrester aggregated the interviewees' experiences and combined the results into a single composite organization that has a widespread, geographically diverse network with 100 locations, 1,600 Cisco cloud-managed networking devices, and revenue of $1 billion per year.

Interviewees said that prior to using Cisco Meraki cloud-managed networking, their organizations relied on a patchwork of legacy on-premises networking solutions from a multitude of vendors. These environments were often siloed, lacked centralized visibility, and made routine tasks — like pushing firmware updates or troubleshooting device performance — time-consuming and error prone. Prior attempts to streamline or scale these environments yielded limited success, leaving IT teams with slow configuration cycles, minimal visibility, unreliable connectivity, and growing security and compliance concerns. These limitations led to frequent network outages, costly technician dispatches, missed sales from customer-facing disruptions, and over-reliance on high-cost, highly skilled resources to manage basic tasks across distributed sites.

After investing in Cisco Meraki, interviewees described a streamlined, cloud-managed network that enabled centralized visibility, faster troubleshooting, and plug-and-play deployments. Their organizations reduced unplanned downtime, improved IT productivity, avoided expensive and time-consuming site visits, and reallocated work to lower-cost staff. AI-driven features and automation helped the interviewees' organizations proactively detect issues, optimize performance, and standardize changes across distributed locations. The result was a more resilient, scalable infrastructure that improved end-user experience, supported business growth, and allowed the interviewees' organizations to operate more efficiently without adding headcount.

> *"Cisco Meraki lets us focus on what matters — shifting time and effort from basic upkeep to higher-value work."*
>
> **Senior networking engineer, retail**

Key Findings

Quantified benefits. Three-year, risk-adjusted present value (PV) quantified benefits for the composite organization include:

- **A 40% reduction in network downtime.** Cisco Meraki cloud-based network management and centralized visibility allows the composite organization to proactively detect and address connectivity issues before they cause disruptions. As a result, the composite organization avoids lost revenue and business interruption, especially for digital-first or customer-facing operations. This saves it $1.7 million over three years.

- **A 90% reduction in time spent on firmware upgrades.** With Meraki cloud-managed networking in a centralized dashboard, IT teams at the composite organization remotely schedule and automate firmware updates across devices, eliminating time-consuming manual upgrade processes. Devices self-install and revert to prior versions if needed, reducing downtime, avoiding after-hours work, and freeing up IT staff. This results in $838,000 worth of resource savings over three years for the composite.

- **A 90% reduction in time spent on a configuration change.** Configuration changes, such as adjusting virtual local area networks (VLANs), security rules, or service set identifiers (SSIDs), are completed once in a centralized dashboard and pushed to all relevant devices. Compared to the composite's legacy processes, which required manual command-line interface (CLI) entry, Cisco Meraki allows the composite organization to execute changes three times faster by lower-cost staff. As a result, it saves $1.5 million over three years.

- **Savings of $1.4 million over three years from reduced network support.** The composite sees 80% fewer network support tickets and 80% faster resolution times due to real-time diagnostics, remote troubleshooting tools, and centralized telemetry from Cisco cloud-managed networking. Additionally, instead of dispatching onsite technicians, IT teams resolve many issues remotely, reducing labor and travel costs.

- **End-user productivity gains worth $1.7 million over three years from reduced network issues.** Fewer disruptions mean less time spent by end users reporting network problems, waiting for resolution, or working around connectivity issues. On average, each resolved ticket avoids 0.75 hours of disruption for 15 impacted users at the composite organization.

- **Cost savings from retiring legacy solutions of $134,000 over three years.** By consolidating functions into the integrated Cisco Meraki platform, the composite organization retires local controllers, legacy security appliances, and older switching gear. It also eliminates redundant monitoring tools and virtual private network (VPN) concentrators.

Reduced need to send a technician onsite to resolve network issues

75%

Unquantified benefits. Benefits that provide value for the interviewees' organizations but are not quantified for this study include:

- **Improved security.** Interviewees noted Cisco Meraki improved security through centralized policy enforcement, built-in threat detection, and automated firmware updates. Their organizations experienced stronger consistency across sites, fewer misconfigurations, and faster response to vulnerabilities. These enhancements helped reduce risk exposure and support compliance at scale.

- **AI-driven network optimization and policy consistency.** Features like AI radio resource management (RRM) and anomaly detection proactively identified and resolved issues at the interviewees' organizations before they affected

performance. Interviewees reported that configuration templates ensured consistent policies and reduced manual effort. This improved reliability, lowered human error, and streamlined management across locations.

- **Enhanced governance.** The Cisco Meraki dashboard provided detailed inventory management, license status, end-of-life visibility, and centralized configuration auditing to the interviewees' organizations. Their IT teams gained a clear picture of which devices were active, compliant, or in need of attention. Several interviewees said Cisco Meraki enabled their organizations to implement governance processes they previously had no capacity to manage.

Costs. Three-year, risk-adjusted PV costs for the composite organization include:

- **Fees to Cisco.** Cisco Meraki hardware and licensing costs depend on the number of locations, the mix of solutions (e.g., access points, switches, SD-WAN), and selected subscription tiers. For the composite organization, this costs $3.8 million over three years.
- **Cisco Meraki implementation, deployment, and ongoing management costs.** Deployment of Cisco Meraki devices (e.g., switches, access points, and configuration with the Cisco Meraki platform) in Year 0 is more efficient for the composite organization than its legacy network deployments. Overall, network engineers, electricians, and project managers are involved in implementing, deploying, and providing ongoing management of the Cisco Meraki solution. This costs the composite organization a total of nearly $39,000 over three years.

The representative interviews and financial analysis found that a composite organization experiences benefits of $7.3 million over three years versus costs of $3.9 million, adding up to a net present value (NPV) of $3.4 million and an ROI of 89%.

> *"The network never even comes up in management forums — Cisco just works."*
>
> **Head of IT, retail**

Key Statistics

89%

Return on investment (ROI) ⓘ

$7.3M

Benefits PV ⓘ

$3.4M

Net present value (NPV) ⓘ

13 months

Payback ⓘ

Benefits (Three-Year)

Benefit	Value
Avoided unplanned network downtime	$1.7M
Savings on device upgrades	$838.0K
Savings on ongoing configurations	$1.5M
Savings from reduced network ticket support	$1.4M
End-user time savings from reduced network issues	$1.7M
Cost savings from retiring legacy solutions	$134.3K

The Cisco Meraki Customer Journey

Drivers leading to the Cisco Meraki cloud-managed networking investment

Interviews				
Role	**Industry**	**Region**	**Revenue**	**Cisco Deployment**
Architect lead Product manager Financial analyst	Financial services	North America	$15B	Employees: 50,000+ Locations: 1,600
Director of IT engineering	Hospitality	Global	$3B	Employees: 20,000+ Locations: 2,600
Senior network engineer	Retail	North America	$500M	Employees: 1,000+ Locations: 36
Head of IT	Retail	Global	$150M	Employees: <1,000 Locations: 68

Key Challenges

Prior to implementing Cisco Meraki, the interviewees' organizations relied on a patchwork of legacy on-premises networking solutions, often consisting of traditional on-premises hardware, controller-based wireless systems, and/or switches from multiple vendors. These environments were typically siloed with minimal cross-site visibility and limited remote management capabilities. As a result, their systems lacked the agility and resiliency necessary to successfully operate across a modern network landscape. The interviewees noted how their organizations struggled with common challenges, including:

- **A lack of visibility into overall network health and user experience.** Interviewees noted that their organizations' legacy environments were built from disparate, often unmanaged components that offered little to no centralized visibility. The director of IT engineering at a hospitality organization said: "We had no data, no analytics, no telemetry. We had no clue what was going on in our network." IT teams at the interviewees' organizations struggled to monitor performance across locations and often learned about issues only after end users reported them. Because of this, the senior network engineer at a retail organization described their organization's environment as "ripe for failure." Without a unified platform or real-time insights, diagnosing network health and identifying root causes of performance degradation was difficult and time-consuming.

> *"Each site was its own island. As such, it gave the impression of an unstable or unoptimized environment."*
>
> **Senior network engineer, retail**

- **Limited security and control across the network.** With disparate solutions causing inconsistent policy enforcement and limited monitoring across distributed locations, IT teams found it challenging to detect threats or apply security updates at scale. One interviewee noted that configurations were often not synchronized, increasing risk and compliance concerns. The head of IT at a retail organization noted: "Production and guest traffic were on the same VLAN. Anyone with the Wi-Fi password — including old employees and guests — could access internal systems."

- **Manual and reactive approaches to resolving issues and making changes.** Without centralized management, interviewees noted their IT teams had to log on to individual devices or physically visit locations to troubleshoot and deploy changes. Each vendor's tools and command structures varied, increasing complexity and slowing response

times. Network engineers frequently resorted to Band-Aid solutions, and changes required significant coordination and overhead.

> *"If I needed to implement a new firewall rule in our firewalls, I had to log in to 1,200 devices and make that change. We had no automated system to do it at mass scale."*
>
> **Director of IT engineering, hospitality**

- **Poor end-user experiences due to unreliable performance.** According to interviewees, wireless users experienced slow, inconsistent, or unavailable connectivity, especially at sites with outdated wireless systems. Frequent drops in performance disrupted employee workflows and, in customer-facing environments, negatively impacted the brand experience. The head of IT at a retail organization said: "We had days where our production would be basically offline for about 2 to 3 hours and that would upset our whole supply chain because online orders were not going to customers and internal orders to our shops were not going there. And we didn't receive goods, we didn't ship goods, so you can imagine a 3-hour delay in the shipping and logistics facility has quite a big effect."

> *"Our previous infrastructure was not going to enable us to have any sort of digital presence, so the driver was that we had to get some infrastructure in place that was going to allow us to better support our business and to better be able to have that connectivity to the internet."*
>
> **Director of IT engineering, hospitality**

- **Inability to scale efficiently to meet growing demands.** Legacy network architectures at the interviewees' organizations were rigid and hardware-intensive, making it difficult to expand to new locations or accommodate increased traffic. Scaling required substantial capital investment, manual configuration at each site, and long deployment timelines. Several interviewees cited high costs and operational inefficiencies as key drivers to move away from their organizations' existing on-premises setups. The head of IT at a retail organization explained: "Our CEO and CFO explained the vision of growing by 20% by 2025, and we as IT needed to help take them there. I knew we couldn't do that with our existing infrastructure."

> *"We were spending more time managing the infrastructure rather than optimizing the infrastructure, which is definitely the reverse priority order. We were not able to make forward progress when we were just babysitting the environment."*
>
> **Senior network engineer, retail**

Investment Objectives

The interviewees' organizations searched for a solution that could:

- Provide a comprehensive, unified, and cloud-based network solution.
- Increase visibility into the network environment and issues to improve troubleshooting and IT productivity.
- Improve network predictability and reliability and eliminate disruptions to user productivity and the business.
- Enhance the ease of operations.

To make this decision, each of the organizations leveraged trusted partners, analyst research, and proofs of concept (POCs) to explore the market landscape. In the end, they each selected the Cisco Meraki solution.

> "We have a very lean team, so having a single pane of glass to manage all devices across all locations was critical. Cisco Meraki gave us better visibility, faster change management, improved uptime, and zero-touch deployment. The savings have been incredible."

Director of IT engineering, hospitality

Composite Organization

Based on the interviews, Forrester constructed a TEI framework, a composite company, and an ROI analysis that illustrates the areas financially affected. The composite organization is representative of the interviewees' organizations and is used to present the aggregate financial analysis in the next section. The composite organization has the following characteristics:

Description of composite. The geographically dispersed composite organization has $1 billion in annual revenue, employs 5,000 people, and operates an agnostic, widespread network. With 100 active locations, the composite organization relies on Cisco Meraki to support its distributed infrastructure and streamline IT management across locations. The business supports a diverse range of users and devices, prioritizing visibility, manageability, and scalable operations across its enterprise footprint.

Deployment characteristics. The composite organization implements Cisco Meraki solutions across its 100 sites, leveraging 1,600 Cisco cloud-managed networking devices, including switches, access points, security and SD-WAN appliances, and IoT (cameras and sensors). Its deployment encompasses a broad set of Cisco cloud solutions — APIs, cloud security, such as secure access service edge (SASE) (excluding mobile device management), and full wireless/wired infrastructure management — creating a cloud-managed, centrally visible network environment. The rollout is completed across all sites with Cisco Meraki serving as the primary platform for network operations and monitoring.

📢 KEY ASSUMPTIONS

- $1 billion in revenue
- 5,000 employees
- 100 locations onboarded
- 1,600 physical hardware devices

> "We tested Cisco Meraki and knew we didn't have to look at anything else. It had everything we were looking for. The cloud-based dashboard was so intuitive. It gave us instant visibility, easy management, and powerful telemetry. We could finally see every device across our branches."

Architect lead, financial services

Analysis Of Benefits
Quantified benefit data as applied to the composite

Total Benefits						
Ref.	Benefit	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Present Value
Atr	Avoided unplanned network downtime	$703,542	$703,542	$703,542	$2,110,626	$1,749,605
Btr	Savings on device upgrades	$336,960	$336,960	$336,960	$1,010,880	$837,970
Ctr	Savings on ongoing configurations	$585,936	$585,936	$585,936	$1,757,808	$1,457,136
Dtr	Savings from reduced network ticket support	$566,640	$566,640	$566,640	$1,699,920	$1,409,150
Etr	End-user time savings from reduced network issues	$684,000	$684,000	$684,000	$2,052,000	$1,701,007
Ftr	Cost savings from retiring legacy solutions	$54,000	$54,000	$54,000	$162,000	$134,290
	Total benefits (risk-adjusted)	$2,931,078	$2,931,078	$2,931,078	$8,793,234	$7,289,158

Avoided Unplanned Network Downtime

Evidence and data. Prior to implementing Cisco Meraki, interviewees described frequent and often prolonged unplanned network outages that disrupted operations, created uncertainty, and led to real financial losses.

Troubleshooting was slow and disjointed with IT teams forced to react to issues popping up unpredictably across infrastructure, network, and internet service provider (ISP) layers. In some cases, the interviewees' organizations experienced hours-long monthly downtime, with network performance dipping as low as 70% availability. These disruptions had cascading impacts on everything from supply chain logistics to retail sales.

- For instance, the head of IT shared that production could be offline for hours and disrupt their IT organization's whole supply chain. These disruptions came at a high cost. The head of IT shared, "We estimated the impact at around $30,000 per hour — and that's just for our logistics unit, not even including retail sales."

  With Cisco Meraki, the interviewees reported improvements in uptime and faster issue resolution. Through centralized visibility, built-in LTE failover, and the ability to push firmware updates remotely without needing hands-on reboots or field visits, teams regained control and could proactively manage incidents before they snowballed. The same interviewee stated, "Since using Cisco Meraki, we've had 99.99% uptime and that 0.01% is usually just firmware updates —Meraki makes it seamless."

- Interviewees noted that this improved continuity was particularly critical in industries that rely on real-time digital transactions. The director of IT engineering at a hospitality organization noted how Cisco Meraki's smart failover from primary broadband to LTE kept their organization's restaurant operations running despite unpredictable outages. "If a circuit goes down, Cisco Meraki automatically switches us to LTE. That lets us stay online and continue taking digital orders through apps and delivery services," they explained. "Before, we were completely at the mercy of the carrier. Downtime could last from an hour to days depending on the issue."

- While not quantified, interviewees stated that even planned outages, such as firmware upgrades or configuration changes, became less disruptive. The senior network engineer at a retail organization shared that Cisco Meraki helped their organization cut its upgrade cycles from approximately 12 hours per cluster down to just 2 hours, freeing up engineering time for more strategic work. "It means we can now spend time on initiatives that increase stability or speed up project delivery," said the interviewee.

- Beyond operational improvements, confidence in network reliability also reshaped how the interviewees' organizations designed their environments. The senior network engineer at a retail organization described how

increased wireless reliability meant they could reduce the number of wired connections per site from dozens to just two: "Previously, people insisted on wired drops because they didn't trust wireless. Now, that's changed."

- Interviewees stated that the ability of Cisco Meraki to reduce both the frequency and severity of unplanned downtime allowed their organizations to maintain critical business continuity, avoid costly disruptions, and retain revenue.

Modeling and assumptions. For the composite organization, Forrester assumes the following:

- In the prior state, the composite organization experienced 60 hours of unplanned downtime annually due to Wi-Fi network issues.
- Based on 3,500 hours of annual operations (350 days, 10 hours per day), the composite organization generates $285,714 in revenue per hour.
- Not all revenue-generating activities are equally impacted by network downtime. As the composite organization typically operates across multiple sales and service channels — some of which may continue functioning during an outage — only a portion of total hourly revenue is at risk during network disruptions. As such, 40% of the composite organization's total hourly revenue is directly impacted by unplanned network downtime. This percentage reflects the business functions that are heavily reliant on real-time network connectivity, such as digital transactions, point-of-sale systems, and customer-facing services.
- With Cisco Meraki, the composite reduced unplanned network downtime by 95%.
- The composite organization's operating margin is 12%.

Risks. Profit gains from avoided unplanned network downtime may vary depending on the following:

- The number of network downtime hours per year in the prior state. This will vary depending on the type of legacy Wi-Fi networking solution and the relative sophistication of the network operations (NetOps) team.
- The organization's annual revenue and the percentage of revenue affected by downtime.
- The organization's operating margin.

Results. To account for these risks, Forrester adjusted this benefit downward by 10%, yielding a three-year, risk-adjusted total PV (discounted at 10%) of $1.7 million.

95%

Reduction in net downtime

Avoided Unplanned Network Downtime					
Ref.	Metric	Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
A1	Unplanned network downtime per year (hours)	Interviews	60	60	60
A2	Revenue per hour	Composite	$285,714	$285,714	$285,714
A3	Percentage of revenue affected by downtime	Interviews	40%	40%	40%
A4	Net downtime reduction with Cisco Meraki	Interviews	95%	95%	95%
A5	Operating margin	Composite	12%	12%	12%
At	Avoided unplanned network downtime	A1*A2*A3*A4*A5	$781,714	$781,714	$781,714
	Risk adjustment	↓10%			
Atr	Avoided unplanned network downtime (risk-adjusted)		$703,542	$703,542	$703,542
	Three-year total: $2,110,626		Three-year present value: $1,749,605		

Savings On Device Upgrades

Evidence and data. Prior to implementing Cisco Meraki, interviewees noted firmware upgrades were a time-consuming and labor-intensive process that often required IT teams to manually access each individual device, upload firmware files, initiate upgrades, and monitor progress to ensure success. This process typically took an hour per device depending on connection speed and required staff to remain onsite or on-call during off hours to oversee updates. For interviewees' organizations that had dozens — or even thousands — of devices, this translated to significant downtime and lost productivity.

Interviewees stated that Cisco Meraki simplified the firmware upgrade process. Their organizations' updates were managed centrally through the cloud-managed dashboard, where IT teams could schedule firmware pushes in batches during off-peak hours. Devices automatically downloaded and installed the latest version, reducing the need for hands-on intervention. If an issue occurred, interviewees noted that the devices were designed to revert to the last known good firmware, minimizing user disruption.

- The director of IT engineering in a hospitality organization explained how this automation was transformative for their organization: "The firmware upgrade process is so simple with Cisco Meraki, it's been a game changer and one of the top three benefits we've seen from the solution. Before, someone had to manually do it and babysit the process. Now, I just schedule it and walk away." Each of this interviewee's organization's devices were updated three to four times a year, resulting in meaningful operational savings.

- Interviewees at a financial services organization echoed this sentiment, noting that even with over 12,000 Cisco cloud-managed networking devices, upgrades were completed in a week or two due to centralized templates and cloud-based management.

- Similarly, the senior network engineer at a retail organization emphasized that scheduled firmware pushes could run automatically overnight. The interviewee said: "Previously, someone would've had to upgrade the controller and validate each access point manually. Now, we push the update, go to bed, and it's done by morning."

- The interviewees also reported that the Cisco Meraki cloud-first architecture not only streamlined the upgrade process for their organizations but also reduced the operational burden on their IT teams. This enabled their organizations to reallocate time and talent toward more strategic initiatives.

> *"Before Cisco Meraki, I would need to dedicate at least one evening per location and hope the device came back online. Now, I select all networks, schedule the upgrade, and by morning, everything is updated. One person can do it all — no need to be onsite."*
>
> **Head of IT, retail**

Modeling and assumptions. For the composite organization, Forrester assumes the following:

- The composite organization upgrades all 1,600 of its Cisco cloud-managed networking devices four times per year.
- It took the composite organization 1 hour to upgrade a device prior to implementing Cisco Meraki.
- After implementing Cisco Meraki, it reduces the time spent on device upgrades by 90%.
- The fully burdened hourly rate for a network/IT engineer full-time employee (FTE) is $65.

Risks. Savings on device upgrades may vary depending on the following:

- The number of physical hardware devices at the organization.
- The time spent on device upgrades and the number of upgrades per year in the prior environment.
- The salary of affected FTEs.

Results. To account for these risks, Forrester adjusted this benefit downward by 10%, yielding a three-year, risk-adjusted total PV (discounted at 10%) of $838,000.

Savings On Device Upgrades					
Ref.	**Metric**	**Source**	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
B1	Physical hardware devices	Composite	1,600	1,600	1,600
B2	Upgrades per year per device	Interviews	4	4	4
B3	Time spent on update per device before Cisco Meraki (hours)	Interviews	1	1	1
B4	Reduction in time spent per upgrade with Cisco Meraki	Interviews	90%	90%	90%
B5	Fully burdened hourly rate for a network/IT engineer FTE	TEI standard	$65	$65	$65
Bt	Savings on device upgrades	B1*B2*B3*B4*B5	$374,400	$374,400	$374,400
	Risk adjustment	↓10%			
Btr	Savings on device upgrades (risk-adjusted)		$336,960	$336,960	$336,960
	Three-year total: $1,010,880			**Three-year present value: $837,970**	

Savings On Ongoing Configurations

Evidence and data. Interviewees reported substantial time and cost savings when managing ongoing configuration changes and firmware upgrades through the centralized Cisco Meraki platform. In the interviewees' organizations' legacy environments, configuration changes — such as modifying VLANs, firewall rules, SSIDs, or access policies — were manual, repetitive, and required deep technical expertise. These tasks had to be performed on a device-by-device basis, often using CLI or locally hosted management software, which made consistency and efficiency difficult to maintain at scale.

Beyond the time required, interviewees emphasized that this manual effort introduced significant risk: Small errors in configuration could lead to widespread outages, prolonged troubleshooting, or devices arriving onsite with incorrect settings — issues that one IT leader described as "bricking the equipment." The lack of centralized visibility and automation in these environments not only slowed operations but also increased the likelihood of costly missteps.

> *"Before Cisco Meraki, I had to take each device, hook it to my computer, copy the config over, then ship it out. If you fat-fingered a store number or missed something unique to a location, you were done for."*
>
> **Director of IT engineering, hospitality**

Interviewees noted that centralized configuration capabilities from Cisco Meraki enabled faster, more accurate updates across distributed networks, while allowing their organizations to shift responsibility for these tasks from senior engineers to lower-cost support roles, delivering both operational and financial efficiency.

- The director of IT engineering at a hospitality organization noted that even small environment-wide changes, such as updating firewall rules or URL allow lists, required manual updates across up to 1,200 devices. They said: "That's 5 minutes per device — around 100 hours total. Now, I just make one change to the template, and it pushes it to all restaurants. It's fantastic."
- The senior network engineer at a retail organization noted that their configuration changes once involved writing site-specific code and copying it across locations, introducing potential human error and taking days to complete. The interviewee said: "Maybe it's a few days of someone's week. Now, we write it once, validate it in the lab, and push it to production via the API — start to finish in under an hour."
- The product manager for a financial services organization explained that applying configuration updates across 1,600 sites used to be a weeks-long process, stating: "Before, we had to send firmware to each switch manually.

Now, one person tests, schedules the upgrade, and it's done in a week."

- The head of IT at another retail organization emphasized how Cisco Meraki helped eliminate the need for high-cost technical labor during configuration: "In our previous environment, configuration could take one to two full days, even with an experienced technician. Now we just use templates. A first-tier support person or even an electrician can plug in the device and the configuration is pulled automatically from the dashboard."

- The interviewees also noted that Cisco Meraki reduced the frequency of manual configuration errors through automation, improved standardization across sites, and allowed senior IT staff to reallocate their time to higher-value work. The architect lead at a financial services organization explained: "There's no error now. Each device pulls the correct configuration from the template automatically. I don't even have to touch it."

> *"We've transitioned routine configuration to our support team — it no longer requires engineering."*
>
> **Senior network engineer, retail**

Modeling and assumptions. For the composite organization, Forrester assumes the following:

- The composite organization performs one to two configuration changes per week per device. As such, the model assumes 1.5 configuration changes on average per device.

- A network/IT engineer spent 5 minutes on a configuration change per device prior to implementing Cisco Meraki.

- Once Cisco Meraki is implemented, the time spent per configuration change reduces by 90%.

- The organization is also able to reallocate this task to a network technician. The fully burdened hourly rate for a network technician is $24.

Risks. Savings on ongoing configurations may vary depending on the following:

- The number of physical hardware devices at the organization.

- The time spent on device configurations and the number of configurations per year in the prior environment.

- The salary of affected FTEs.

Results. To account for these risks, Forrester adjusted this benefit downward by 10%, yielding a three-year, risk-adjusted total PV (discounted at 10%) of $1.5 million.

Savings On Ongoing Configurations				
Ref.	Metric	Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
C1	Physical hardware devices	Composite	1,600	1,600	1,600
C2	Configuration changes per year per device	Interviews	78	78	78
C3	Time spent on configuration changes per device before Cisco Meraki (minutes)	Interviews	5	5	5
C4	Fully burdened hourly rate for a network/IT engineer FTE	TEI standard	$65	$65	$65
C5	**Subtotal: Costs related to configuration changes without Cisco Meraki**	**C1*C2*C3*C4/60 minutes**	**$676,000**	**$676,000**	**$676,000**
C6	Reduction on time spent per configuration change with Cisco Meraki	Interviews	90%	90%	90%
C7	Fully burdened hourly rate for a network technician FTE	TEI standard	$24	$24	$24
C8	**Subtotal: Costs related to device configuration changes with Cisco Meraki**	**C1*C2*C3*(1-C6)*C7/60 minutes**	**$24,960**	**$24,960**	**$24,960**
Ct	Savings on ongoing configurations	C5-C8	$651,040	$651,040	$651,040
	Risk adjustment	↓10%			
Ctr	Savings on ongoing configurations (risk-adjusted)		$585,936	$585,936	$585,936

Three-year total: $1,757,808   **Three-year present value: $1,457,136**

Savings From Reduced Network Ticket Support

Evidence and data. Interviewees across all four organizations reported that the Cisco Meraki platform reduced their network support burdens — most notably through a decrease in the number of tickets, faster resolution times, and fewer technician dispatches to remote locations. The interviewees noted these outcomes were made possible through the Cisco Meraki dashboard's diagnostic capabilities, real-time visibility, and centralized remote management tools.

- In the interviewees' organizations' legacy environments, support teams were frequently operating blind. Without centralized visibility, identifying whether an issue was network-related often required hours of manual troubleshooting or a technician visit. The director of IT at a hospitality organization stated, "One of the biggest issues we had was 'how do I troubleshoot something I can't see?'" With unmanaged switches and daisy-chained hardware, the interviewees' teams would oftentimes send third-party techs onsite, which would end up costing hundreds of dollars each visit.

  Cisco Meraki eliminated the need for many of those site visits by centralizing diagnostics in the cloud dashboard. Interviewees noted IT teams could now use built-in tools like remote packet capture, historical event logs, and real-time client monitoring to identify and resolve issues from anywhere. The director of IT noted: "Now I just log on, see which port someone is plugged into, and tell them to move the cable. Magic starts working. No need to send anyone out."

- The senior networking engineer noted the shift to Cisco Meraki at their retail organization changed both the internal support load and user trust. They explained: "Pre-Cisco Meraki, it could take a couple of days just to figure out what was going on. Now it's under an hour. We can show users exactly what's happening and that builds confidence that if it's a network issue, we'll catch it — if not, we can prove it quickly." They added that escalations to the networking team dropped from daily to a handful each month.

- The head of IT reported that their retail organization experienced a dramatic drop in ticket volume overall. They said, "As of this year, across all our locations, we've had only 13 network-related tickets. That is all due to comprehensive visibility and reliability from Cisco Meraki, which allows us to quickly identify whether a problem stems from coverage, client roaming behavior, or physical hardware — all from the dashboard."

- Several interviewees also said their organizations avoided additional staffing as their environment grew. The head of IT stated, "We've expanded our network footprint, but we haven't added engineers."

By reducing ticket volume, accelerating root-cause identification, and removing the need for most onsite troubleshooting, interviewees stated that Cisco Meraki cloud-managed networking enabled leaner, more agile support operations and delivered measurable cost savings across the board.

> *"We would've had to grow our network team three-fold if we didn't have Cisco Meraki as we scaled our environment."*
>
> **Director of IT engineering, hospitality**

Modeling and assumptions. For the composite organization, Forrester assumes the following:

- In the prior state, the composite organization encountered 40 network-related IT tickets per week for the 50 weeks of operations (2,000 per year).
- It took a network IT engineer an average of 2 hours to resolve each ticket in the prior state. This average is influenced by the time taken to resolve tickets that require a field visit.
- For 40% of these tickets, a technician had to be sent onsite to address the network issue. The cost of a technician trip equates to $500.
- With the improved visibility and enhanced diagnostic capabilities of Cisco Meraki, the composite organization reduces the number of network tickets by 80% and a network IT engineer resolves the remaining tickets 80% faster.
- By being able to resolve issues from anywhere, the composite organization reduces the need to send a technician onsite by 75%.

80%

Reduction in number of network-related tickets

Risks. Savings from reduced network ticket support may vary depending on the following:

- The number of network-related IT tickets per year in the prior environment.
- The time required to investigate and remediate network-related IT tickets in the prior environment.
- The number of tickets for which a technician had to be sent onsite and the cost per technician trip.
- The salary of affected FTEs.

Results. To account for these risks, Forrester adjusted this benefit downward by 10%, yielding a three-year, risk-adjusted total PV (discounted at 10%) of $1.5 million.

	Savings From Reduced Network Ticket Support				
Ref.	**Metric**	**Source**	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
D1	Network-related tickets prior to Cisco Meraki	Composite	2,000	2,000	2,000
D2	Average time to resolve a ticket (hours)	Interviews	2.0	2.0	2.0
D3	Fully burdened hourly rate for a network/IT engineer FTE	TEI standard	$65	$65	$65
D4	Percentage of tickets for which a technician had to be sent to a location to address a network issue	Interviews	40%	40%	40%
D5	Times a technician had to be sent to a location to address a network issue	D1*D4	800	800	800
D6	Cost per one technician trip	Interviews	$500	$500	$500
D7	**Subtotal: Costs of resolving network-related tickets without Cisco Meraki**	**D1*D2*D3+D5*D6**	**$660,000**	**$660,000**	**$660,000**
D8	Reduction in number of network-related tickets with Cisco Meraki	Interviews	80%	80%	80%
D9	Network-related tickets with Cisco Meraki	D1*(1-D8)	400	400	400
D10	Time savings from resolving network-related tickets faster with Cisco Meraki	Interviews	80%	80%	80%
D11	Reduction in the need to send a technician with Cisco Meraki	Interviews	75%	75%	75%
D12	**Subtotal: Cost of resolving network issues with Cisco Meraki**	**D9*D2*(1-D10)*D3**	**$10,400**	**$10,400**	**$10,400**
D13	**Subtotal: Cost of network-related technician trips with Cisco** Meraki	**D9*D4*(1-D11)*D6**	**$20,000**	**$20,000**	**$20,000**
Dt	Savings from reduced network ticket support	D7-(D12+D13)	$629,600	$629,600	$629,600
	Risk adjustment	↓10%			
Dtr	Savings from reduced network ticket support (risk-adjusted)		$566,640	$566,640	$566,640
	Three-year total: $1,699,920		**Three-year present value: $1,409,150**		

End-User Time Savings From Reduced Network Issues

Evidence and data. Interviewees' organizations saw fewer disruptions to end-user productivity when using Cisco Meraki, primarily due to a reduced volume of network-related support tickets. Interviewees shared that prior to Cisco Meraki, network issues — ranging from poor connectivity to intermittent application access — frequently required end users to stop working, document the issue, and submit a ticket. During that time, not only was their own productivity impacted, but coworkers also often experienced the same issue before a resolution was in place.

With Cisco Meraki, interviewees said their IT teams proactively monitored network performance and resolved many issues before end users were even aware of them. Real-time diagnostics across access points, switches, and security appliances — viewable in the Cisco Meraki dashboard — enabled rapid root-cause detection. Additionally, automated alerts, anomaly detection, and built-in assurance tools helped the interviewees' organizations' IT teams respond faster and more precisely, reducing the need for manual intervention. These AI-powered capabilities minimized downtime, reduced ticket volumes, and improved overall user experience, particularly in environments with limited IT staff.

The senior networking engineer at a retail organization noted visibility into user experiences helped shift the internal culture from reactive support to proactive assurance. The interviewee said, "We don't get pinged nearly as often anymore because we see things in the dashboard before they become an issue."

> *"It used to be that everything was blamed on the network. Now, we can confidently show it's not a network issue — or fix it right away if it is. People trust the system more and that means fewer interruptions."*

Product manager, financial services

Modeling and assumptions. For the composite organization, Forrester assumes the following:

- The number of tickets that are automatically or expediently identified and resolved with the help of Cisco Meraki is 1,600 tickets.
- In the prior state, end users spent an average of 45 minutes dealing with reporting, waiting for, and incorporating fixes related to these tickets.
- Fifteen end users are impacted by a given IT ticket.
- The average fully burdened hourly rate for a business user FTE is $40.

Risks. End-user time savings from reduced network issues may vary depending on the following:

- The number of network-related IT tickets per year in the prior state.
- The time end users spend dealing with the logistics and resolution of network-related tickets.
- The number of users affected by the issue being reported.
- The salary of affected FTEs.

Results. To account for these risks, Forrester adjusted this benefit downward by 5%, yielding a three-year, risk-adjusted total PV (discounted at 10%) of $1.7 million.

	End-User Time Savings From Reduced Network Issues				
Ref.	**Metric**	**Source**	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
E1	Tickets avoided with Cisco Meraki	D1-D9	1,600	1,600	1,600
E2	Disruptions to end-user productivity resulting from submitting a ticket (hours)	Interviews	0.75	0.75	0.75
E3	Average number of users affected by an issue	Composite	15	15	15
E4	Average fully burdened hourly rate for a business user FTE	TEI standard	$40	$40	$40
Et	End-user time savings from reduced network issues	E1*E2*E3*E4	$720,000	$720,000	$720,000
	Risk adjustment	↓5%			
Etr	End-user time savings from reduced network issues (risk-adjusted)		$684,000	$684,000	$684,000

Three-year total: $2,052,000   Three-year present value: $1,701,007

Cost Savings From Retiring Legacy Solutions

Evidence and data. Interviewees reported that implementing Cisco Meraki allowed their organizations to retire multiple legacy networking solutions, resulting in direct cost savings from hardware, licensing, and third-party service fees. While the dollar amounts varied, all interviewees highlighted the financial and operational efficiencies gained by consolidating tools into the Cisco Meraki dashboard.

- The interviewees from a financial services organization shared that prior to Cisco Meraki, they were paying for both dedicated multiprotocol label switching (MPLS) connections and individual site changes managed by a third party. The architect lead stated: "We paid each intervention on each site for each switch. Now we're just paying for one change but it modifies thousands of devices at the same time." With the switch to internet-based connectivity and SD-WAN policies enabled through Cisco Meraki, they were able to decommission their MPLS and internet protocol

(IP) VPNs, reducing monthly connectivity costs by over two-thirds, from roughly $2,000 per site to just a few hundred dollars. "Way less expensive and way more bandwidth," added the financial analyst.

- The head of IT at a retail organization added that when their organization migrated to Cisco Meraki, no additional third-party tools were required to support the deployment, stating, "It's just Cisco Meraki." The interviewee noted this further eliminated the need for bolt-on management or monitoring tools.
- Interviewees also noted that consolidating multiple tools and retiring outdated hardware allowed their organizations to realize both hard savings and operational efficiencies. With fewer contracts to maintain, fewer systems to manage, and lower ongoing support costs, Cisco Meraki enabled a simplified and more cost-effective network infrastructure.

> "We decommissioned all our local wireless controllers and configuration backup software, eliminating tens of thousands a year in contract and licensing fees."
>
> **Senior networking engineer, retail**

Modeling and assumptions. For the composite organization, Forrester assumes it shuts down its previous network management and monitoring systems when it rolls out the Cisco Meraki solution.

Risks. Cost savings from retiring legacy solutions may vary depending on the following:

- The type of legacy tools and systems used to manage the network.
- The organization's timeline for its adoption of the Cisco Meraki solution and its commitment to transitioning away from previous systems.

Results. To account for these risks, Forrester adjusted this benefit downward by 10%, yielding a three-year, risk-adjusted total PV (discounted at 10%) of $134,000.

Ref.	Metric	Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Cost Savings From Retiring Legacy Solutions					
F1	Cost savings from retiring legacy solutions		$60,000	$60,000	$60,000
Ft	Cost savings from retiring legacy solutions	F1	$60,000	$60,000	$60,000
	Risk adjustment	↓10%			
Ftr	Cost savings from retiring legacy solutions (risk-adjusted)		$54,000	$54,000	$54,000
	Three-year total: $162,000			**Three-year present value: $134,290**	

Unquantified Benefits

Interviewees mentioned the following additional benefits that their organizations experienced but were not able to quantify:

- **Improved security.** Prior to implementing Cisco Meraki, the interviewees' organizations frequently struggled with fragmented or manual approaches to network security. These environments often relied on multiple point solutions, such as separate routers, firewalls, and filtering systems, that required extensive manual configuration and offered limited scalability. Security policies were not applied uniformly across locations, leading to inconsistencies and potential vulnerabilities.
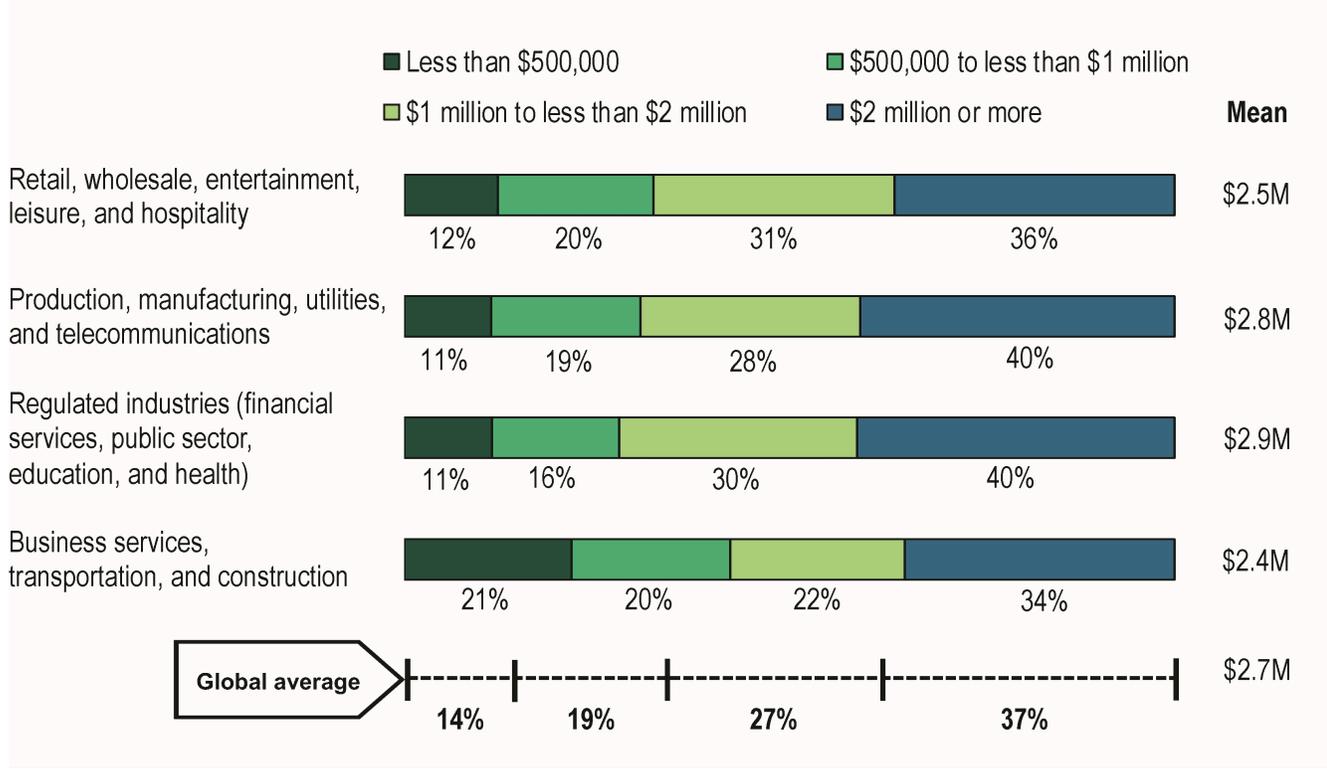
Interviewees noted Cisco Meraki helped their organizations improve their security posture through centralized policy management, built-in threat detection, and seamless integration with broader security tools like Cisco Umbrella and Cisco ISE. The director of IT engineering at a hospitality organization shared: "I can do my web filtering. I can do my IDS [intrusion detection system] and IPS [intrusion protection system]. I need to make a change, and it goes — I don't have to log on to each device." This not only reduced the time spent managing security configurations for the interviewees' organizations, but it also reduced the risk of misconfigurations and noncompliant local changes.

Interviewees noted their organizations also benefited from faster threat mitigation. With automated firmware updates, cryptographic firmware signing, and mutually authenticated device-cloud communication, Cisco Meraki delivered security without burdening the interviewees' organizations' teams with operational overhead.

These security enhancements could also help reduce the risk of costly breaches. According to *Forrester's Security Survey, 2024*, Security decision-makers reported that, on average, their organization incurred $2.7 million in total cumulative costs for all the breaches they experienced in the past 12 months.3 Furthermore, breach-related costs have been steadily rising, driven by more complex attack surfaces and the increasing cost of response and recovery. By improving policy consistency, automating firmware security, and enabling proactive threat detection, Cisco Meraki helped the interviewees' organizations mitigate these risks while maintaining agility at scale.

Average Cost Of All Breaches Over The Past 12 Months By Industry

"Using your best estimate, what was the total cumulative cost of all breaches experienced by your organization in the past 12 months?"

	Less than $500,000	$500,000 to less than $1 million	$1 million to less than $2 million	$2 million or more	Mean
Retail, wholesale, entertainment, leisure, and hospitality	12%	20%	31%	36%	$2.5M
Production, manufacturing, utilities, and telecommunications	11%	19%	28%	40%	$2.8M
Regulated industries (financial services, public sector, education, and health)	11%	16%	30%	40%	$2.9M
Business services, transportation, and construction	21%	20%	22%	34%	$2.4M
Global average	14%	19%	27%	37%	$2.7M

Base: 341 to 1,701 security decision-makers
Note: "Don't know" responses have been omitted; base size varies by industry
Source: Forrester's Security Survey, 2024

- **AI-driven network optimization and policy consistency.** Interviewees reported that AI-powered capabilities — such as AI-radio resource management (AI-RRM), Intelligent Capture, AI Packet Analyzer, and anomaly detection — proactively surfaced unusual behavior and optimized wireless performance before it became a business disruption.

Meanwhile, templates and configuration automation from the Cisco Meraki dashboard ensured that consistent policies and segmentation rules were applied universally, not manually reconstructed site by site.

For many interviewees' organizations, Cisco Meraki consolidated security capabilities into a single appliance. As the architect lead at a financial services organization noted, "We probably had to deploy a router, firewall, maybe another system. … Now, it's concentrated in one box." This consolidation resulted in improved visibility, easier management, and fewer points of failure.

> *"We've been able to shorten the amount of time it takes to do things like code upgrades. So, if there is a vulnerability that comes out in a version of code we're running because that running window is shorter, it puts us in a much better position as opposed to having a potential vulnerability linger and we're able to address it very quickly with Cisco Meraki. We've had several internal and external assessments, and we have not been dinged on anything specifically to connectivity or the platforms due to Cisco Meraki."*
>
> **Senior network engineer, retail**

- **Enhanced governance.** The Cisco Meraki dashboard provided the interviewees' organizations with a single pane of glass for managing devices, configurations, lifecycle status, and user access across sites. This visibility enabled IT teams to enforce consistent segmentation, track end-of-life hardware, quickly verify that device settings are aligned with internal policies or regulatory expectations, and essentially standardize governance across thousands of devices. The financial analyst at a financial services organization said: "The inventory is clear. … We know how many devices we have and when the software or hardware is end-of-life."

  Another interviewee stated their organization used policy controls in the Cisco Meraki dashboard to implement security-driven segmentation across its network, isolating sensitive systems, such as point-of-sale terminals, from less critical infrastructure. The director of IT engineering stated: "We're able to segment our networks so one set of computers can't talk to another. If one segment gets compromised, it can't take down the rest of the business."

  The senior network engineer noted their retail organization highlighted how improved consistency and policy enforcement helped in strategic contexts like negotiating cybersecurity insurance. The interviewee shared: "We've been able to demonstrate how we consistently deploy, keep up on best practices, and address vulnerabilities. That puts us in a stronger position when we go to negotiate rates. More insurers are willing to work with us."

Flexibility

The value of flexibility is unique to each customer. There are multiple scenarios in which a customer might implement Cisco Meraki and later realize additional uses and business opportunities, including:

- **Increased analytics resulting in better business decisions.** Interviewees noted that using the Cisco Meraki platform's extensibility through APIs, turnkey applications, and integrated analytics tools unlocked new business outcomes and more data-driven decision-making. In many cases, these capabilities allowed small or resource-constrained IT teams to extend the value of their network infrastructure beyond traditional connectivity.

  The head of IT at a retail organization reported that Cisco cloud-managed MV smart cameras became a foundation for retail intelligence. By integrating the cameras with EveryAngle, a Cisco Networking App Marketplace partner, the interviewee's organization was able to obtain precise foot traffic and customer demographic data. Previously, their legacy system would overcount visitors, registering employees or customers reentering multiple times. With EveryAngle's analytics layered on the Cisco Meraki platform, they could train the system to exclude such noise. The head of IT said: "Now we're only focusing on actual paying customers coming into the store. That number is what we can base our retail decisions on — whether a location is successful or not."

> *"We can now say, 'This shop gets a lot of traffic, but it's not generating revenue — why? Is it a tourist street? A mall? Are certain products being picked up but never purchased?' That insight wasn't possible before."*
>
> **Head of IT, retail**

The interviewees from a financial services organization reported that telemetry data from Cisco cloud-managed wireless and switching infrastructure helped surface underused wired ports, prompting potential decommissioning of redundant ethernet switches. The financial analyst explained: "The data helped us see how many people were using the ethernet cables. We haven't acted on it yet, but it's something we wouldn't have been able to detect with the previous infrastructure."

Meanwhile, the director of IT engineering said their hospitality organization used robust Cisco Networking APIs to develop an internal provisioning portal. This enabled zero-touch provisioning and lifecycle management for restaurant locations without relying on third-party platforms. The interviewee said: "When a new restaurant opens, we hit 'go' in our portal and it provisions the entire network in the Cisco Meraki dashboard automatically. We also use it to decommission locations, which helps us stay clean and lean."

Flexibility would also be quantified when evaluated as part of a specific project (described in more detail in Appendix A).

Analysis Of Costs

Quantified cost data as applied to the composite

	Total Costs						
Ref.	**Cost**	**Initial**	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Total**	**Present Value**
Gtr	Fees to Cisco	$2,670,000	$460,000	$460,000	$460,000	$4,050,000	$3,813,952
Htr	Cisco Meraki implementation, deployment, and ongoing management costs	($119,868)	$63,788	$63,788	$63,788	$71,495	$38,762
	Total costs (risk-adjusted)	$2,550,132	$523,788	$523,788	$523,788	$4,121,495	$3,852,714

Fees To Cisco

Evidence and data. Interviewees noted that their organizations' Cisco Meraki cloud-managed networking hardware and software licensing costs were based on the number of locations, the number and types of Cisco cloud-managed networking solutions in place (access points, switches, SD-WAN, etc.), and the types of subscriptions in use.

Modeling and assumptions. For the composite organization, Forrester assumes the following:

- The composite organization purchases all the hardware necessary for its Cisco Meraki deployment to 100 locations, including wireless, switching, security and SD-WAN, cellular gateways, cameras, and sensors.
- The annual software subscription fees are $460,000 per year for Cisco Meraki usage and the Cisco Secure Connect solution for SASE.

Risks. Fees to Cisco may vary depending on the following:

- The scope of the project and deployment in terms of volume of hardware, types of capabilities in use, and number of locations.
- The Cisco licenses, subscriptions, and enterprise agreements in place.

Results. As the composite organization was priced directly with Cisco, this cost has not been adjusted for risk, yielding a three-year, total PV (discounted at 10%) of $3.8 million.

	Fees To Cisco					
Ref.	**Metric**	**Source**	**Initial**	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
G1	Cisco Meraki hardware costs	Composite	$2,670,000	$0	$0	$0
G2	Cisco Meraki networking subscription fees	Composite	$0	$460,000	$460,000	$460,000
Gt	Fees to Cisco	G1+G2	$2,670,000	$460,000	$460,000	$460,000
	Risk adjustment	0%				
Gtr	Fees to Cisco (risk-adjusted)		$2,670,000	$460,000	$460,000	$460,000

<div align="center">Three-year total: $4,050,000   Three-year present value: $3,813,952</div>

Cisco Meraki Implementation, Deployment, And Ongoing Management Costs

Evidence and data. Interviewees reported that deploying Cisco Meraki across their organizations' environments was a significantly smoother and more efficient process than previous solutions.

- Across interviewees, deployment was described as streamlined and largely automated with the Cisco cloud-managed architecture and centralized dashboard allowing for plug-and-play functionality and remote provisioning. The architect lead at a financial services organization explained: "With templates, we just install the device and everything is downloaded. It's plug-and-play. … We definitely have cost savings and time savings."

- This shift away from manual configuration for deployments resulted in meaningful time savings for the interviewees' organizations and reduced dependency on expensive technical resources. The head of IT at a retail organization emphasized that Cisco Meraki enabled deployments to be handled by electricians rather than network technicians, noting, "In terms of effort, it's about 5 hours total … with electricians deploying and then Cisco Meraki doing the rest." This change produced not only labor savings for the interviewees' organizations but also improved deployment consistency and speed.

> *"A shop deployment takes maybe 4 to 5 hours total — most of that time is just the electrician pulling cables."*
>
> **Head of IT, retail**

- The interviewees' organizations also saw improved flexibility in deployment timelines. While the director of IT engineering mentioned their hospitality organization rolled out to 600 locations in about a year, the senior network engineer noted their retail organization was able to refresh its retail wireless environment across all stores in approximately two months, stating: "Previously, a new site would take a week or two. Now it's a day. Just plug it in and validate."

> *"With Cisco Meraki, it's plug-and-play. We just install the device, and everything is downloaded automatically from the template."*
>
> **Product manager, financial services**

- On an ongoing basis, organizations benefited from reduced management overhead. Interviewees stated that ongoing maintenance was minimal and often limited to code reviews and minor changes. The senior network engineer at a retail organization shared, "There's not a lot of care and feeding involved in the environment at all, frankly, which is really nice."

- Additionally, automated configuration tools and API integrations supported greater efficiency for the interviewees' organizations. The director of IT at a hospitality organization described building an internal portal leveraging Cisco Networking APIs to automate location provisioning and deprovisioning: "It's heavily automated. We just hit 'go,' and it does its thing."

Overall, the interviewees noted that combination of faster, lower-cost deployment, reduced reliance on high-cost technical staff, and minimal ongoing management requirements drove operational efficiencies for their organizations after implementing Cisco Meraki.

Modeling and assumptions. For the composite organization, Forrester assumes the following:

- In the initial eight-month period, 4 network/IT engineer hours and 8 electrician hours are required per location to implement and deploy Cisco Meraki cloud-managed networking.

- A project manager is also involved for the full eight-month period to oversee deployment across all locations.

- The fully burdened hourly rates for a network/IT engineer, electrician, and project manager are $65, $35, and $53, respectively.

- Row H7 captures the time and resource savings for deploying the organization's Cisco cloud-managed networking devices and configuring them for initial deployment with Cisco Meraki across the 100 locations compared to a less-efficient deployment with the alternative solution.

- Three network/IT engineers are involved in the ongoing management of Cisco Meraki for 15% of their time.
- The fully burdened annual salary for a network/IT engineer FTE is $135,000.

Risks. Cisco Meraki implementation, deployment, and ongoing management costs may vary depending on the following:

- The complexity and scope of the transition from previous network solutions to the Cisco Meraki solution.
- The number of FTEs dedicated to the adoption and management of the platform.
- The salaries of FTEs.

Results. To account for these risks, Forrester adjusted this cost upward by 5%, yielding a three-year, risk-adjusted total PV (discounted at 10%) of $38,762.

> *"We were able to refresh our entire retail wireless environment in just over two months — that would've taken twice as long before."*
>
> **Senior network engineer, retail**

Ref.	Metric	Source	Initial	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	**Cisco Meraki Implementation, Deployment, And Ongoing Management Costs**					
H1	Network/IT engineer effort for implementation (hours)	Composite	400	0	0	0
H2	Fully burdened hourly rate for a network/IT engineer FTE	TEI standard	$65	$65	$65	$65
H3	Electrician effort for deployment (hours)	Composite	800	0	0	0
H4	Fully burdened hourly rate for an electrician FTE	TEI standard	$35	$35	$35	$35
H5	Project manager effort for implementation	Composite	1,280	0	0	0
H6	Fully burdened hourly rate for a project manager FTE	TEI standard	$53	$53	$53	$53
H7	Cost savings for initial deployment configurations	TEI standard	($236,000)	$0	$0	$0
H8	Network/IT engineers providing ongoing management of Cisco Meraki	Composite	0	3	3	3
H9	Percentage of network/IT engineer time dedicated to supporting Cisco Meraki	Composite	0%	15%	15%	15%
H10	Fully burdened annual salary for a network/IT engineer FTE	TEI standard	$135,000	$135,000	$135,000	$135,000
Ht	Cisco Meraki implementation, deployment, and ongoing management costs	(H1*H2)+(H3*H4) +(H5*H6)+(H7)+ (H8*H9*H10)	($114,160)	$60,750	$60,750	$60,750
	Risk adjustment	↑5%				
Htr	Cisco Meraki implementation, deployment, and ongoing management costs		($119,868)	$63,788	$63,788	$63,788

Three-year total: $71,495   Three-year present value: $38,762

Financial Summary

Consolidated Three-Year, Risk-Adjusted Metrics

Cash Flow Chart (Risk-Adjusted)

Legend: Total benefits • Total costs • Cumulative net benefits
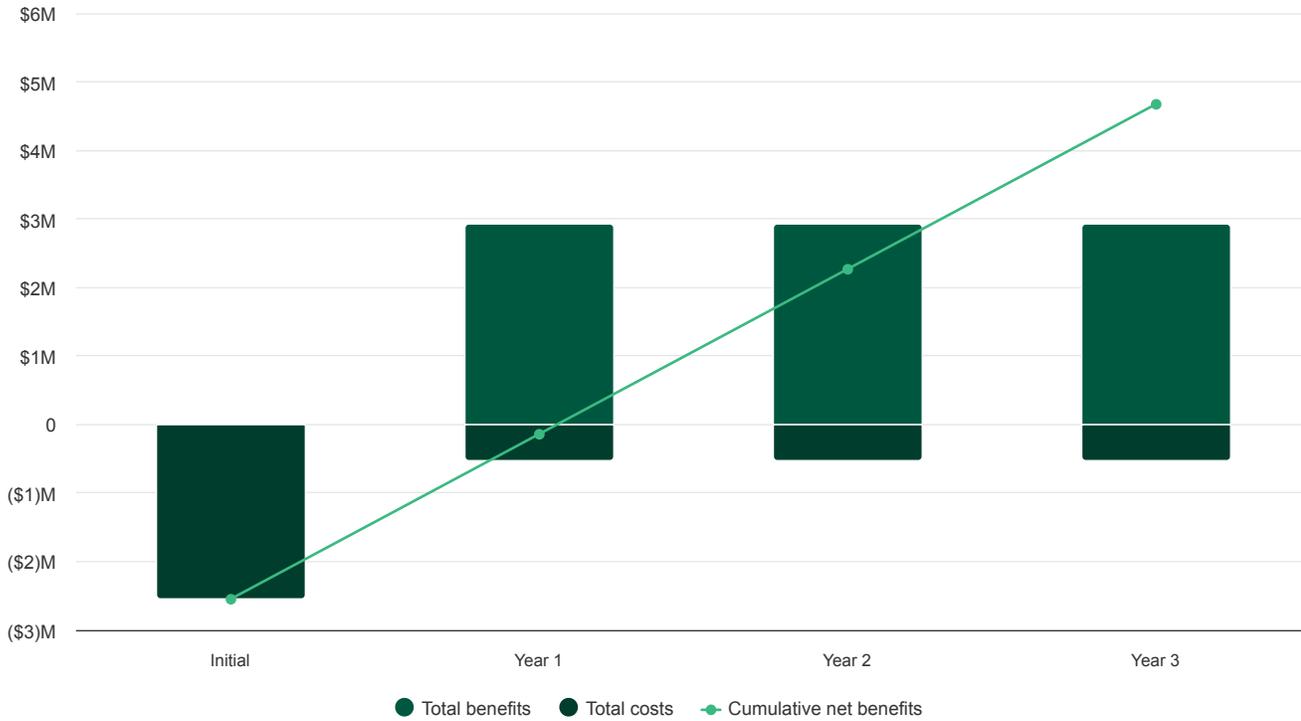
Cash Flow Analysis (Risk-Adjusted Estimates)						
	Initial	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Total**	**Present Value**
Total costs	($2,550,132)	($523,788)	($523,788)	($523,788)	($4,121,495)	($3,852,714)
Total benefits	$0	$2,931,078	$2,931,078	$2,931,078	$8,793,234	$7,289,158
Net benefits	($2,550,132)	$2,407,291	$2,407,291	$2,407,291	$4,671,740	$3,436,444
ROI						89%
Payback						13 months

ⓘ **Please Note**

The financial results calculated in the Benefits and Costs sections can be used to determine the ROI, NPV, and payback period for the composite organization's investment. Forrester assumes a yearly discount rate of 10% for this analysis.

These risk-adjusted ROI, NPV, and payback period values are determined by applying risk-adjustment factors to the unadjusted results in each Benefit and Cost section.

The initial investment column contains costs incurred at "time 0" or at the beginning of Year 1 that are not discounted. All other cash flows are discounted using the discount rate at the end of the year. PV calculations are calculated for each total cost and benefit estimate. NPV calculations in the summary tables are the sum of the initial investment and the discounted cash flows in each year. Sums and present value calculations of the Total Benefits, Total Costs, and Cash Flow tables may not exactly add up, as some rounding may occur.

TEI Framework And Methodology

From the information provided in the interviews, Forrester constructed a TEI framework for those organizations considering an investment in Cisco Meraki cloud-managed networking.

The objective of the framework is to identify the cost, benefit, flexibility, and risk factors that affect the investment decision. Forrester took a multistep approach to evaluate the impact that Cisco Meraki can have on an organization.

Due Diligence

Interviewed Cisco stakeholders and Forrester analysts to gather data relative to Cisco Meraki.

Interviews

Interviewed six people at organizations using Cisco Meraki to obtain data about costs, benefits, and risks.

Composite Organization

Designed a composite organization based on characteristics of the interviewees' organizations.

Financial Model Framework

Constructed a financial model representative of the interviews using the TEI methodology and risk-adjusted the financial model based on issues and concerns of the interviewees.

Case Study

Employed four fundamental elements of TEI in modeling the investment impact: benefits, costs, flexibility, and risks. Given the increasing sophistication of ROI analyses related to IT investments, Forrester's TEI methodology provides a complete picture of the total economic impact of purchase decisions. Please see Appendix A for additional information on the TEI methodology.

Glossary

Total Economic Impact Approach

Benefits

Benefits represent the value the solution delivers to the business. The TEI methodology places equal weight on the measure of benefits and costs, allowing for a full examination of the solution's effect on the entire organization.

Costs

Costs comprise all expenses necessary to deliver the proposed value, or benefits, of the solution. The methodology captures implementation and ongoing costs associated with the solution.

Flexibility

Flexibility represents the strategic value that can be obtained for some future additional investment building on top of the initial investment already made. The ability to capture that benefit has a PV that can be estimated.

Risks

Risks measure the uncertainty of benefit and cost estimates given: 1) the likelihood that estimates will meet original projections and 2) the likelihood that estimates will be tracked over time. TEI risk factors are based on "triangular distribution."

Financial Terminology

Present value (PV)

The present or current value of (discounted) cost and benefit estimates given at an interest rate (the discount rate). The PV of costs and benefits feed into the total NPV of cash flows.

Net present value (NPV)

The present or current value of (discounted) future net cash flows given an interest rate (the discount rate). A positive project NPV normally indicates that the investment should be made unless other projects have higher NPVs.

Return on investment (ROI)

A project's expected return in percentage terms. ROI is calculated by dividing net benefits (benefits less costs) by costs.

Discount rate

The interest rate used in cash flow analysis to take into account the time value of money. Organizations typically use discount rates between 8% and 16%.

Payback

The breakeven point for an investment. This is the point in time at which net benefits (benefits minus costs) equal initial investment or cost.

Appendixes

APPENDIX A

Total Economic Impact

Total Economic Impact is a methodology developed by Forrester Research that enhances a company's technology decision-making processes and assists solution providers in communicating their value proposition to clients. The TEI methodology helps companies demonstrate, justify, and realize the tangible value of business and technology initiatives to both senior management and other key stakeholders.

APPENDIX B

Endnotes

[1] Source: Lee Sustar, The Era of Cloud-Native Transformation Is Here, Forrester Blogs.

[2] Total Economic Impact™ is a methodology developed by Forrester Research that enhances a company's technology decision-making processes and assists solution providers in communicating their value proposition to clients. The TEI methodology helps companies demonstrate, justify, and realize the tangible value of business and technology initiatives to both senior management and other key stakeholders.

[3] Source: Forrester's Security Survey, 2024.

Disclosures

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