How to Prepare Your Network for AI

3 ways to fuel growth, simplicity, and security at scale



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QUESTION:

How do you refresh infrastructure without slowing down business?

Answer: **Assess security vulnerabilities from the ground up.**

Unmanaged equipment creates unpatched vulnerabilities, compliance gaps, and legal exposure. Parts become scarce, outages get more disruptive, and the risk to your business increases.

12%

of companies are ready for modern threats[3]

Answer: **Don’t rely on an aging foundation.**

Hybrid work and distributed apps push aging infrastructure to the limit. Because more than half of workloads now run off premises, most IT leaders say they aren’t equipped to support innovation.[5]

34%

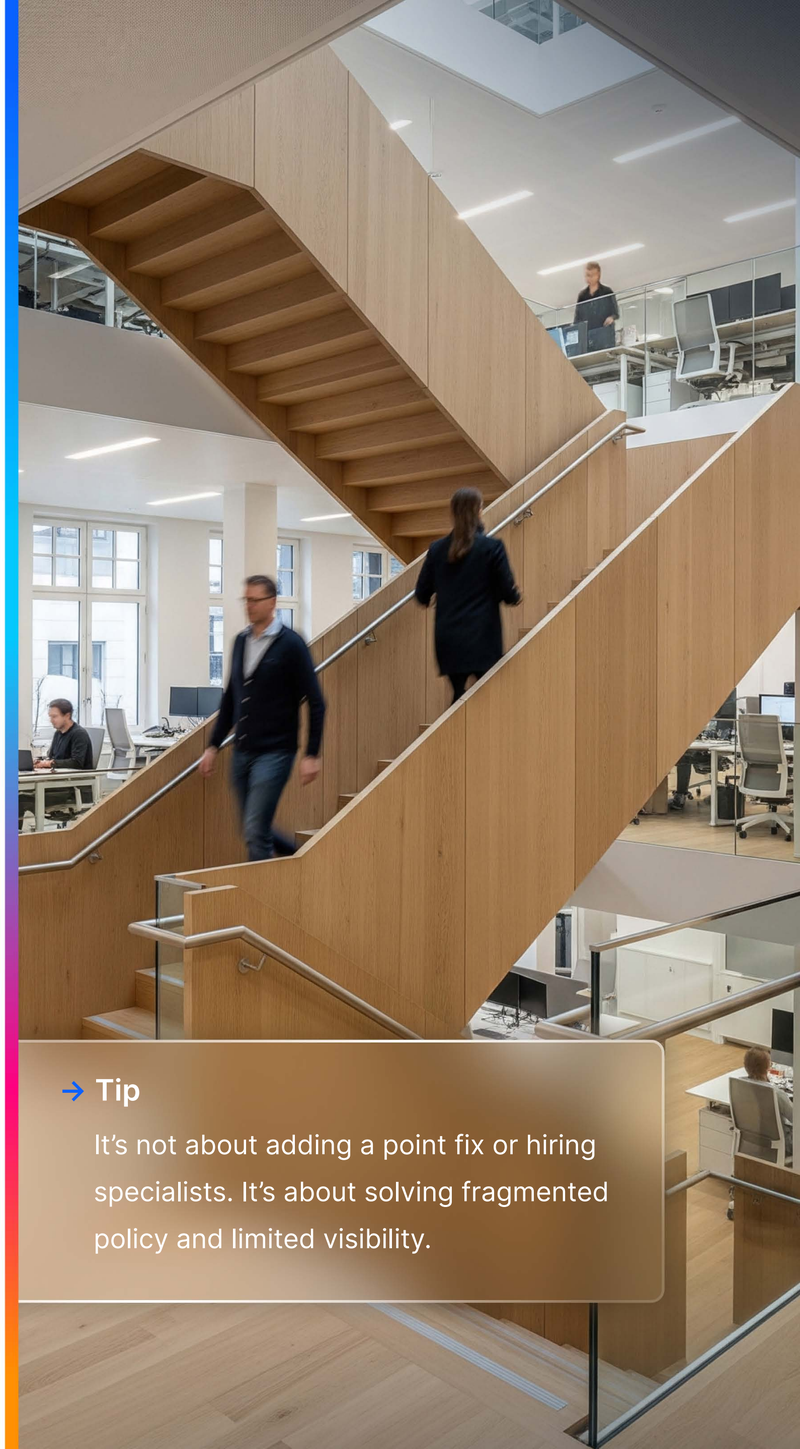
of companies have infrastructure to scale for AI[1]

Answer: **Take the strain off of IT teams.**

Aging hardware causes network issues and manual IT tasks. Leaders are modernizing by automating and moving workloads to the cloud. But 27% of cloud spend is wasted and 15% runs over budget. The goal: simplify ops and control costs without adding headcount.

27%

of cloud spend is wasted



→ Tip

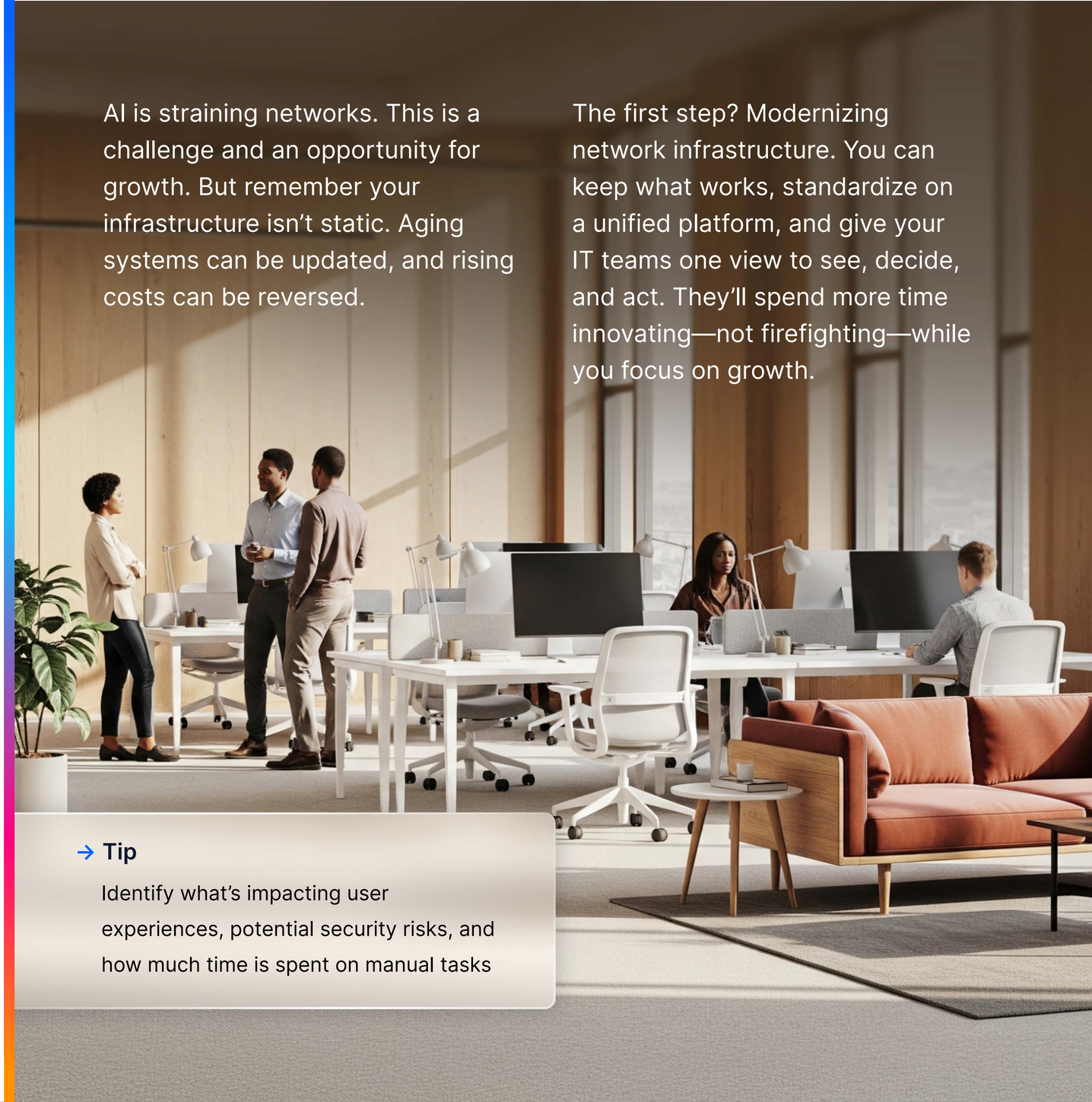
It’s not about adding a point fix or hiring specialists. It’s about solving fragmented policy and limited visibility.

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Your network isn’t ready for AI—yet.

AI is straining networks. This is a challenge and an opportunity for growth. But remember your infrastructure isn’t static. Aging systems can be updated, and rising costs can be reversed.

The first step? Modernizing network infrastructure. You can keep what works, standardize on a unified platform, and give your IT teams one view to see, decide, and act. They’ll spend more time innovating—not firefighting—while you focus on growth.



→ Tip

Identify what’s impacting user experiences, potential security risks, and how much time is spent on manual tasks

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STRATEGY #1

1 Converge networking and security in a unified platforms

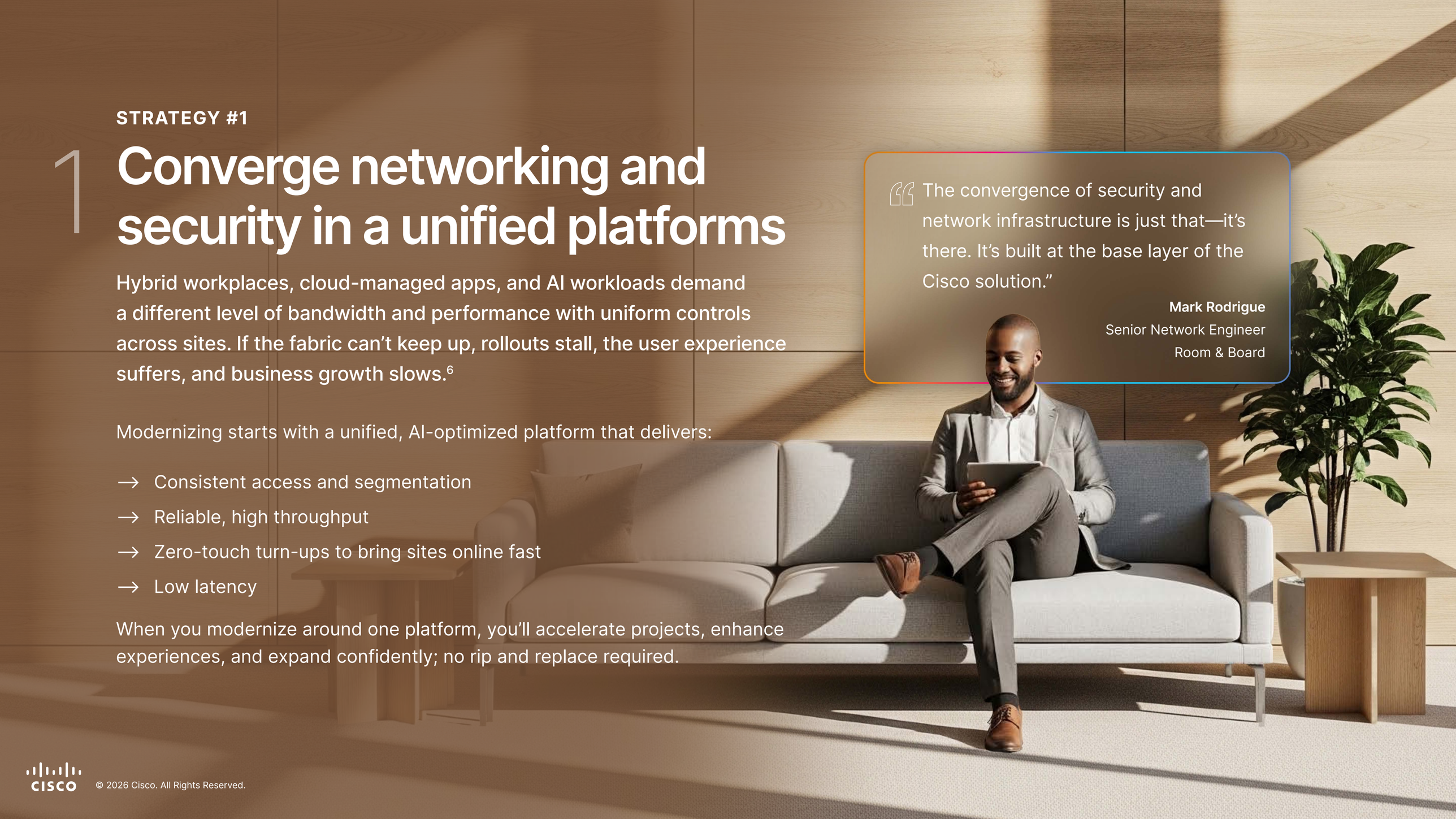
Hybrid workplaces, cloud-managed apps, and AI workloads demand a different level of bandwidth and performance with uniform controls across sites. If the fabric can't keep up, rollouts stall, the user experience suffers, and business growth slows.[6]

Modernizing starts with a unified, AI-optimized platform that delivers:

- → Consistent access and segmentation
- → Reliable, high throughput
- → Zero-touch turn-ups to bring sites online fast
- → Low latency

When you modernize around one platform, you'll accelerate projects, enhance experiences, and expand confidently; no rip and replace required.

> "The convergence of security and network infrastructure is just that—it's there. It's built at the base layer of the Cisco solution."
>
> **Mark Rodrigue**
> Senior Network Engineer
> Room & Board



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STRATEGY #2

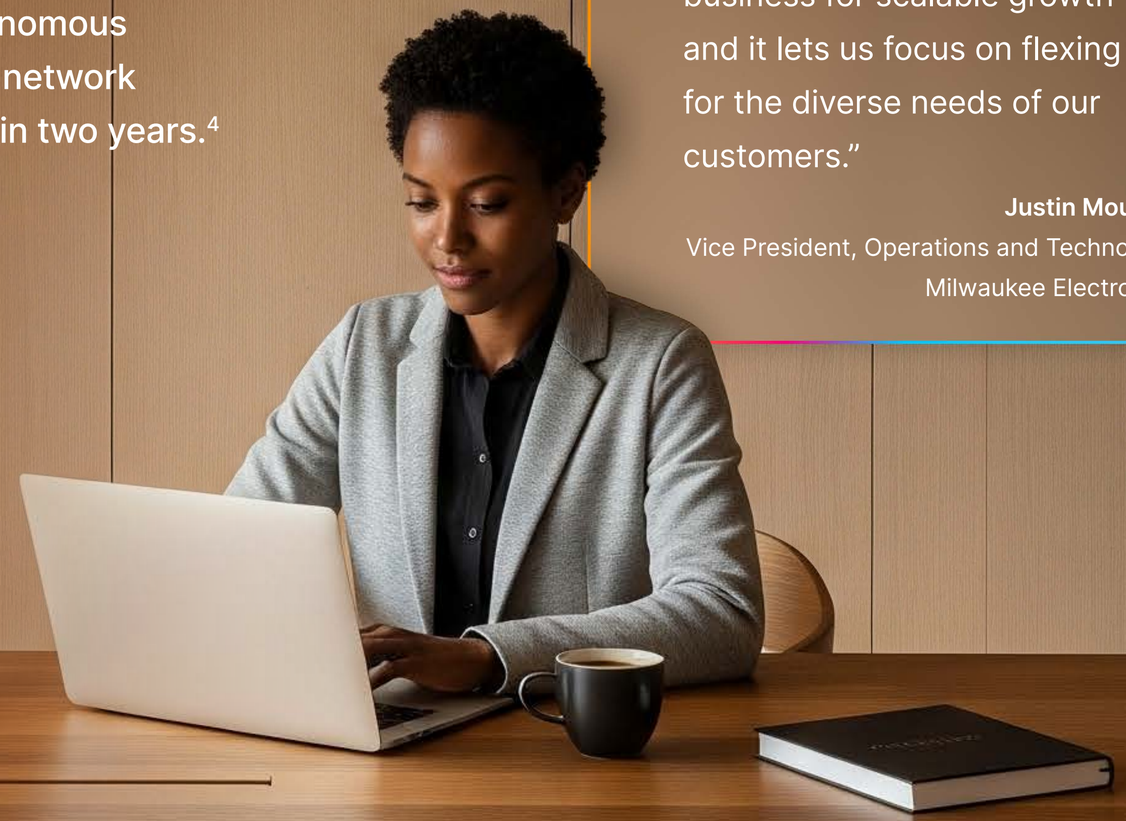
2 Embrace the most intelligent automation with AgenticOps

Outdated infrastructure multiplies manual change windows and tool handoffs while slowing root cause identification. Autonomous automation is your easiest fix: 54% of campus and branch network management tasks will be augmented or automated by AI in two years.[4]

With centralized visibility and agentic workflows, you can:

- → See sites, policies, and flows from one place
- → Detect anomalies faster
- → Move from reactive to proactive operations
- → Push safe changes everywhere at once

By simplifying oversight and automating routine work, you'll cut mean time to resolution (MTTR), reduce tickets, fix issues faster, and scale with the team you have.



> "Implementing the Cisco solution lets me maximize my IT team's resources; it positions the business for scalable growth and it lets us focus on flexing for the diverse needs of our customers."
>
> **Justin Moulton**
> Vice President, Operations and Technology
> Milwaukee Electronics

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STRATEGY #3

3 Infuse security directly into your network

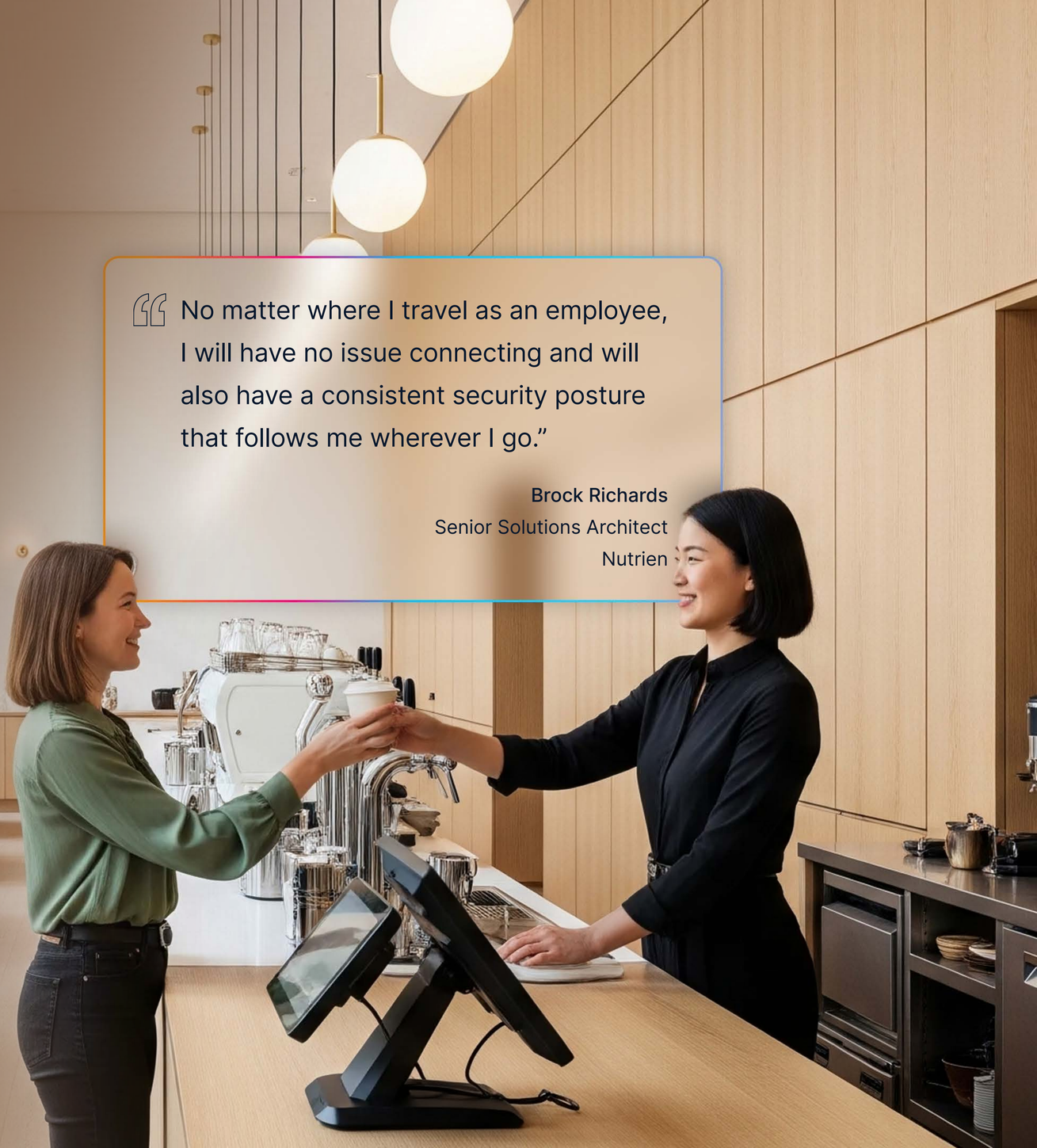
Legacy gear raises security and legal risks. Limited patches, telemetry, and controls invite breaches and penalties. Your business's reputation is at stake!

But when you modernize infrastructure, you can:

- → Unify policy enforcement
- → Limit lateral movement with segmentation
- → Automate updates across on-premises and cloud environments
- → Deliver reliable telemetry and consistent governance

As you standardize on supported, updatable platforms, you'll lower breach likelihood, simplify audits, keep stakeholders confident, and stay ahead of compliance—before it becomes a headline.

> "No matter where I travel as an employee, I will have no issue connecting and will also have a consistent security posture that follows me wherever I go."
>
> **Brock Richards**
> Senior Solutions Architect
> Nutrien



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You have the strategies. Now let's put them into action.

When you modernize your network with Cisco, your business can:

Unify performance fabric

Align switching, wireless, WAN, and security on one platform. Standardize templates and zero-touch workflows to optimize rollouts and performance.

Unlock end-to-end visibility

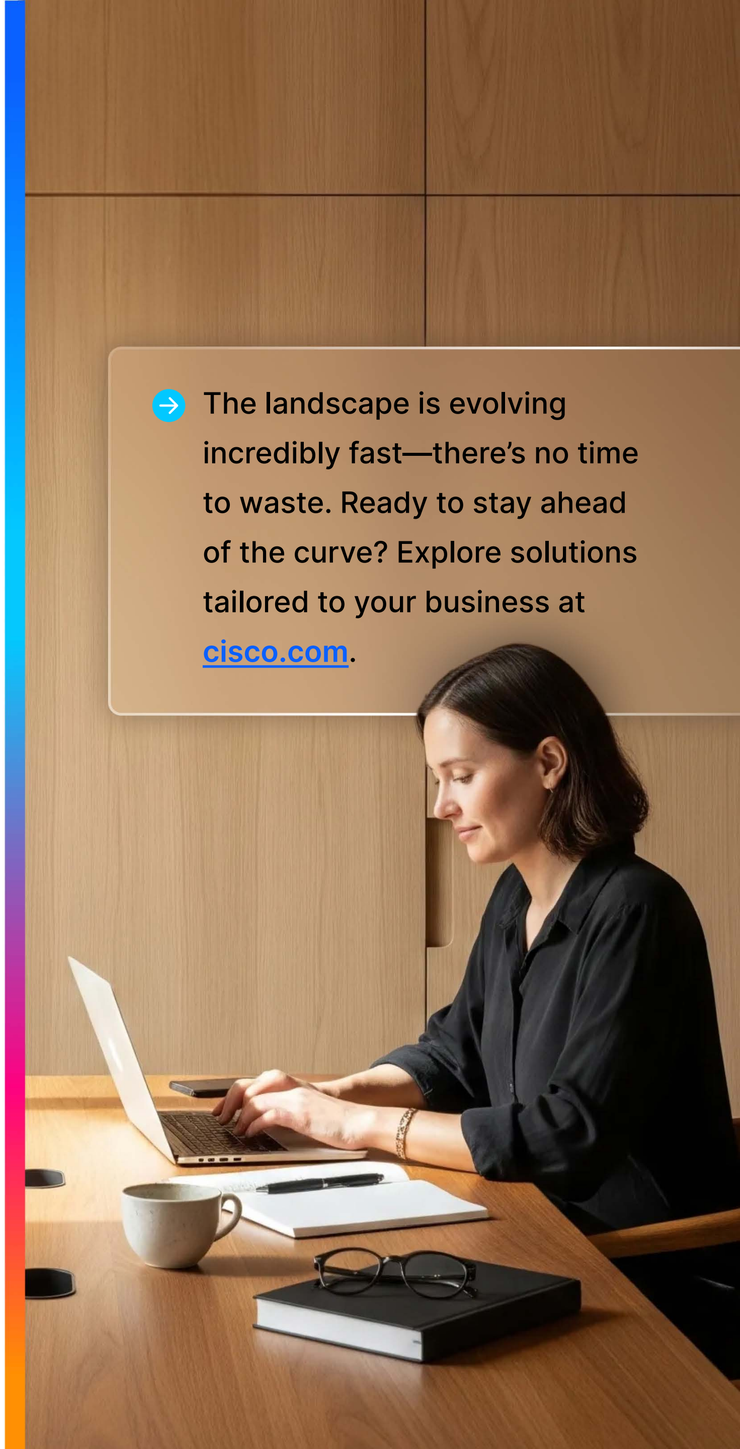
Correlate topology, policies, and flows in one view; spot issues sooner; and guide safe change. Goodbye, Day 2 firefighting. Hello, Day 0/1 acceleration.

Secure users and data everywhere

Apply least-privileged access and segmentation across on-premises and cloud networks so controls keep pace with change.

Unlock end-to-end visibility

Faster deployments, fewer escalations, flawless experiences, and lower costs, so you can modernize securely at scale.



The landscape is evolving incredibly fast—there's no time to waste. Ready to stay ahead of the curve? Explore solutions tailored to your business at cisco.com.

[1]Realizing the Value of AI: Cisco AI Readiness Index 2025, Cisco, 2025
[2]State of the Cloud Report, Flexera, 2025
[3]2025 Cisco Cybersecurity Readiness Index, Cisco, 2025
[4]Strategic Network Transformation in the AI Era: Unlocking Performance and Simplicity, Brandon Butler, IDC, February 2026.
[5]Uptime Institute Global Data Center Survey, Uptime Institute, 2024

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