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Brocade Hires Cisco Exec for SDN, Cloud Efforts

By Jeffrey Burt | Posted 2012-10-22 [Email](#) [Print](#)

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David Meyer will leave Cisco after 15 years to become CTO and chief scientist at Brocade, overseeing the company's SDN efforts with service providers.

Brocade is bulking up its software-defined networking and cloud [computing](#) strategies at the expense of rival Cisco Systems.

Brocade has hired David Meyer, a 15-year veteran at Cisco who had been a Distinguished Engineer with the networking giant focused on SDNs and the OpenFlow protocol, to head its service provider business as its chief [technology](#) officer and chief scientist.

The announcement, made Oct. 18, comes at a time of tremendous transformation within the networking space, fueled in large part by trends such as SDNs and network virtualization. SDNs essentially are a way of removing the network intelligence from complex, costly hardware switches and other appliances and move it into the [software](#) layer, making programming much easier and networks more scalable and flexible.

The SDN trend has given rise to a growing number of smaller vendors and startups—such as Vyatta, Adara and Big Switch Networks—that are focused on software-defined networking [technologies](#), and is forcing established players, including Cisco, Juniper Networks, Hewlett-Packard and Extreme Networks, to embrace SDNs and develop their own solutions. At the same time, other vendors with little or no presence in networking are making plays in the SDN space to fill out their larger data center solution portfolios. VMware this summer bought SDN vendor Nicira for \$1.26 billion, and a week later Oracle bought Xsigo Systems.

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Brocade is one of those established players looking to offer SDN solutions, and in September the company added to its SDN and fabric efforts with new additions to its VDX line of switches and a new module for its MLXe Series routers. The VDX 8770 lets users expand a single VCS fabric up to 8,000 switch ports with up to 384,000 virtual machines attached to the fabric, while the new 24-port, 10 Gigabit Ethernet module for its MLXe Series routers is designed to enable software-defined networking.

Brocade officials are hoping that Meyer will be able to push its SDN and cloud computing efforts even farther, particularly when they come to service providers.

"David's a highly respected industry veteran with decades of experience within the networking space," Ken Cheng, vice president and general manager of Brocade's Routing, Application Delivery and Software Networking Group, said in a statement. "His leadership within various industry associations and Internet standards bodies is a testament to his ability to understand at a macro level the implications of the development and standardization of new and emerging technologies that are shaping the future direction of the networking industry."

Meyer, who will report to Cheng, will oversee Brocade's efforts with top-tier service providers, cloud hosting providers and Web 2.0 content providers, many of whom run massive data centers and are looking to SDNs as a way of ramping up the scalability, flexibility and [performance](#) of their data centers—where their servers and storage already are highly virtualized—while driving down power and cooling costs.

Meyer will help Brocade customers create cloud-optimized network architectures that will enable the service providers to offer new services and applications, according to Brocade officials.

"The networking industry is undergoing an evolutionary period unlike any we've recently seen," Meyer said in a statement. "The companies that are going to emerge victorious are those with the right combination of networking expertise, technology vision and business smarts. With its heritage for driving continued innovation, I believe that Brocade is well-positioned to achieve growth within the hotly contested service provider networking market."

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