

STEM CAREERS AND SKILLS OF THE FUTURE

The STEM Alliance proposes a series of online events (webinars and chat discussions) and career sheets that aim to promote Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers with role models. Representatives from companies – partners of the STEM Alliance – are invited to give online presentations to inform teachers about possible careers in their companies. Based on content picked up from the webinar and drawing on the experience of STEM experts, the STEM Alliance will then create a career sheet for the specific career profile presented in the online event. The career sheet will serve as an awareness-raising tool for teachers and career guidance officers, as well as providing valuable information for the companies' own awareness-raising campaigns.

The following document contains suggestions of the questions that can be highlighted during webinars and chats. Moreover, the answers provided by professionals are transformed into the career sheets – short articles that will be published on the STEM Alliance website and will be accessible by teachers.

Please do keep in mind that the information in this career sheet relates closely to the context of the professional whose experience the career profile is based on. STEM professions, studies and challenges vary between countries and industry sectors.

Career profile: Customer Success Specialist

Name and career title:

Esther Roure Vila, *Customer Success Specialist for Cisco Digital Network Architecture.*

What is this profile about?

As a Customer Success Specialist, you are responsible for ensuring client expectations are met with regard to products and services. In this key client-facing role, you develop and manage client relationships across an assigned regional territory. You work with clients and internal business partners to gather project requirements and coordinate with technical support to ensure that the setup and implementation of products meet client expectations.

The Customer Success Specialist is the central point of contact from a post-sales perspective (but not necessarily the single point of contact). Customer Success Specialists clearly understand the customers' business objectives and collaborate with all internal stakeholders to exceed the customers' expectations. They drive a positive customer experience across the entire lifecycle and ensure that customers maximize their return on investment with your provided solutions, which in turn will result in customer retention and expansion.

By integrating technology, sales & marketing, training, support, and exceptional customer service, the customer success manager (and team) can build a successful and lasting relationship between the customer and the business. This is a fairly new and vital role that has been created due to the need for a relationship product in the Software as a service / Cloud space.

How much and what does one need to study?

Esther studied a master's degree in Telecommunications Engineering and joined Cisco within the framework of the graduate program for Technical Services. Already during her studies, she participated in the Cisco Networking Academy. In addition, she has two Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert (CCIE) Certificates and an Executive Master of Business Administration (MBA).

However, whatever direction you want to go, Esther believes it is important to start to get skills early on, as you will always be able to get back to them. Most importantly, you should do what you like and build a strategy to achieve your goals.

How did you know you wanted to work in this job?

The tool that helped Esther most was the VSEM plan (Vision – Strategy - Execution - Measurement), used within CISCO for the company's corporate strategy. But also, for personal reasons, the VSEM plan helps you to become aware of and define your vision of a project, your career or your life. For Esther it was to bridge the gap between business and technology in order to create value to her global stakeholders. At the same time, it is important for her to maintain a good balance between career and personal life.

Based on your vision, you elaborate a strategy, execute all parts of it and measure the results. In her case, she focused on three key areas, namely Business, Technology and Education to advance her vision. In concrete steps, she obtained several certifications or participated in trainings.

You can find both a template as well as Esther's personal VSEM Plan at the end of this career sheet.

What are the key skills needed?

In this career field, you will work at the intersection of technology and customers services. Ultimately, it is crucial that you have an affinity to both technological subjects as well as client-contacts.

Apart from this, almost any sector that involves technology is nowadays undergoing rapid transformations. Therefore, Esther found it useful to be able to improvise, be flexible and respond quickly to changing circumstances.

Generally, and this does not only apply to this job, she thinks public speaking skills are very important, as they allow you to communicate effectively and express yourself. She participated in the [Toastmasters Club](#), which helped her a lot in promoting my communication and leadership skills.

What are the possible places of employment?

As a customer success manager is someone who represents an online company or brand, this is also the sector in which you will find most employment possibilities.

What are the challenges of this job?

As mentioned before, working in a technology-related field requires being able to adapt to a fast-changing environment. One of the main challenges is to stay up-to-date with the latest

developments in the sector. Along with this comes a second challenge, that is staying focused with all the information that we can access today.

How did you prepare for this career?

You should go for what you truly like! For this it is important to know yourself. You can check out some personality test like 16personalities.com.

The VSEM plan can be one way of guiding you to achieve your goals. In general, you should build on your a) uniqueness, b) strengths and c) ongoing training. This will help you to maximize yourself. There is an interesting [TED talk by Simon Sinek](#), which points out that you should always start with the “why” and only then follow with the “how” and “what”.

At Cisco, Esther follows the principle of “education, exposure and experience”, which means that education alone is important, but you also need to dare to expose yourself to what you learned and gain experience. In line with this, you should appreciate the value of constructive feedback, which can help you to grow.

Finally, a good time management is crucial to achieve your strategy. Getting things done by David Allen was a good inspiration for Esther. Sometimes, we have so many choices, that we need to be decisive and just go for it.

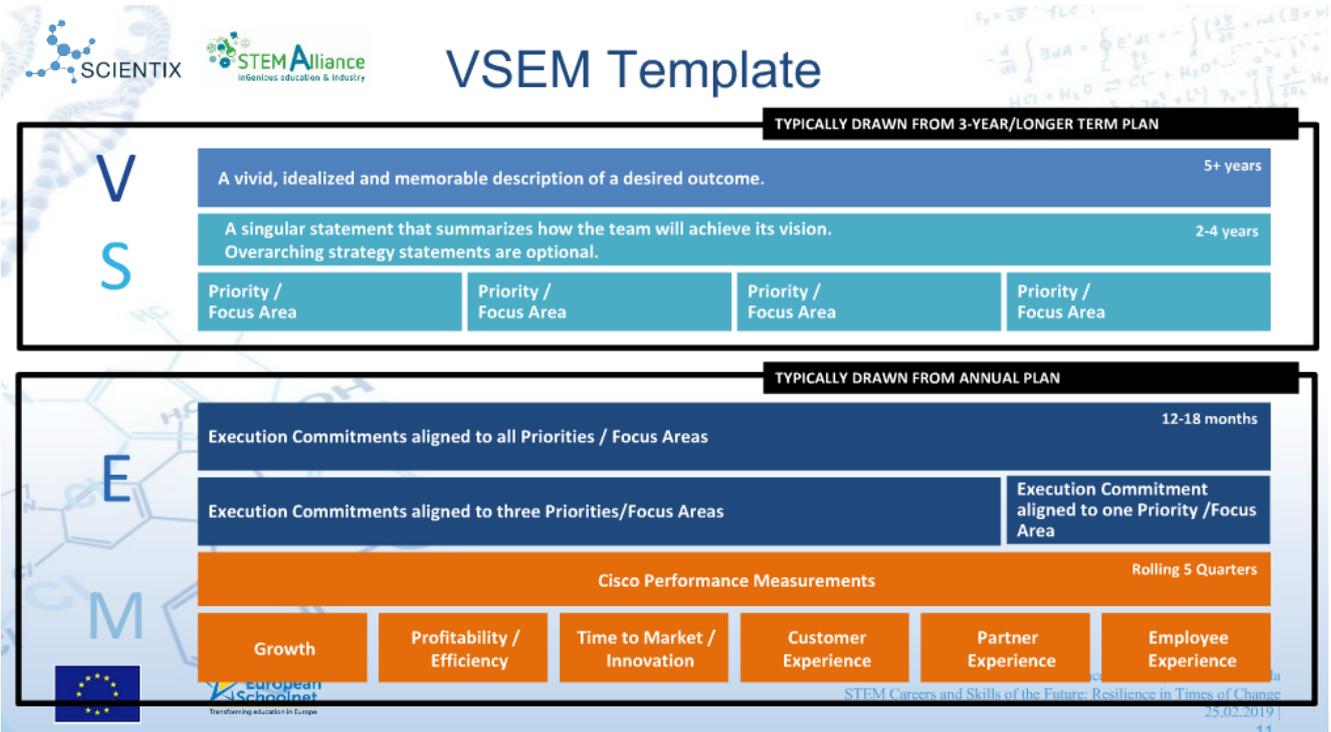
Advice to teachers and parents

Most of all, show the real-life applications of the subjects you teach or deal with. Classes that focus solely on the theoretical aspects are often perceived as dry and boring by children at this age. Instead, make them see and experience the subjects they cover.

Learn more:

- *Getting things done* by David Allen
- *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni
- *Business Model Generation: A Handbook for Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers* by Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur
- *The Lean Startup* by Eric Ries
- *Running Lean: Iterate from Plan A to a Plan That Works* by Ash Maurya
- *Lean Analytics: Use Data to Build a Better Startup Faster* by Alistair Croll and Benjamin Yoskovitz

VSEM (Vision – Strategy - Execution - Measurement) plan



VSEM Template

V A vivid, idealized and memorable description of a desired outcome. 5+ years

S A singular statement that summarizes how the team will achieve its vision. Overarching strategy statements are optional. 2-4 years

Priority / Focus Area			
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E Execution Commitments aligned to all Priorities / Focus Areas 12-18 months

Execution Commitments aligned to three Priorities/Focus Areas

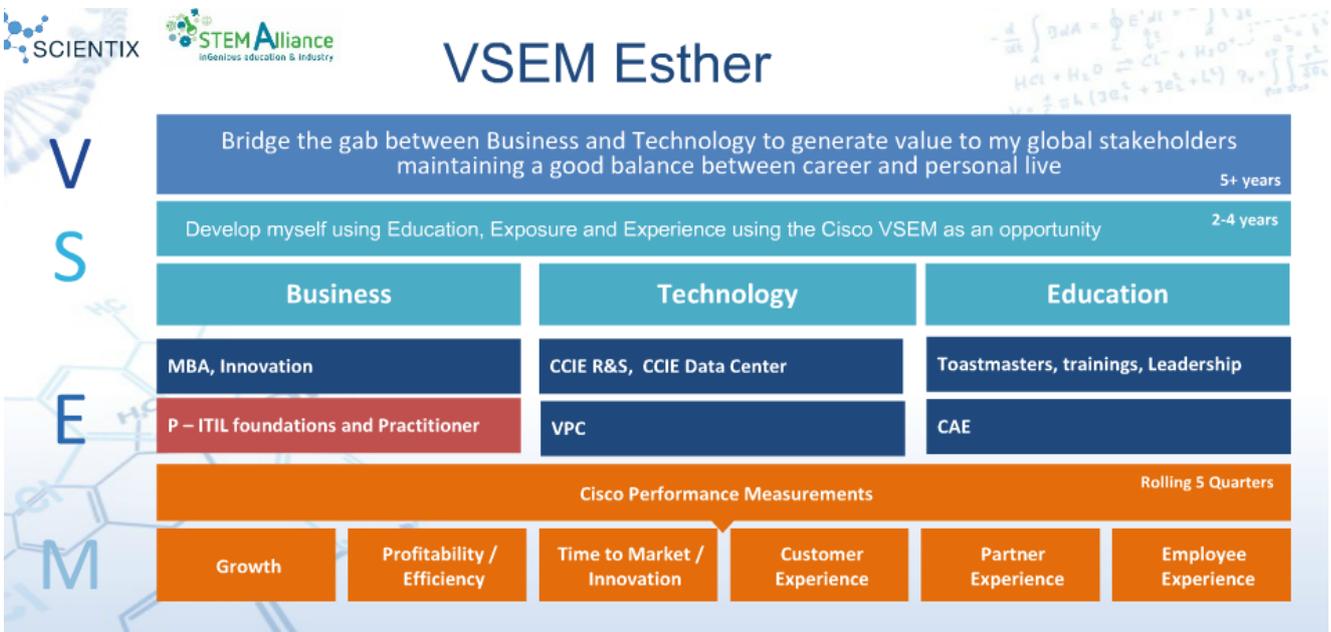
Execution Commitment aligned to one Priority /Focus Area

Cisco Performance Measurements Rolling 5 Quarters

Growth	Profitability / Efficiency	Time to Market / Innovation	Customer Experience	Partner Experience	Employee Experience
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VSEM Esther

V Bridge the gap between Business and Technology to generate value to my global stakeholders maintaining a good balance between career and personal live 5+ years

S Develop myself using Education, Exposure and Experience using the Cisco VSEM as an opportunity 2-4 years

Business	Technology	Education
MBA, Innovation	CCIE R&S, CCIE Data Center	Toastmasters, trainings, Leadership
P – ITIL foundations and Practitioner	VPC	CAE

Cisco Performance Measurements Rolling 5 Quarters

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