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### **“2003 Brand Survey: The 3Com And Cisco Show”**

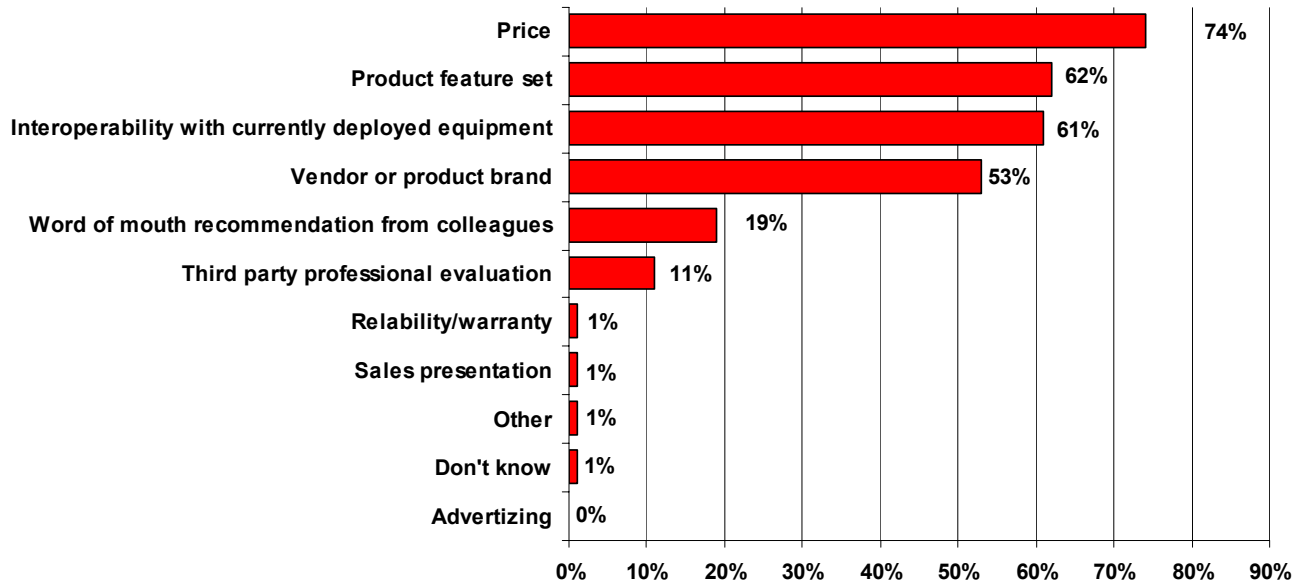
“2003 Brand Survey: The 3Com And Cisco Show” is an installment of the LAN Research Panel and provides primary, end-user data on how a multitude of networking equipment brands are perceived by end-users and potential customers. Panel members represent companies of all sizes and a range of industry verticals. Data for the report upon which this article is based was collected in January 2002, and includes information on how brands are used and perceived in general by panelists, in terms of the evaluations and selection of LAN equipment, and how panelists view the individual brands of specific LAN equipment vendors. The data and analysis contained in the report will be useful to LAN equipment companies to help gauge the effect of their integrated marketing strategies, as well as to gain an overall sense of how their companies are perceived in the market place.

In-Stat/MDR found the following:

- Brands consist of three key components: brand awareness, brand affect, and brand associations. Brand awareness is, as the name implies, simply the awareness of the brand on the part of potential customers. Brand affect is the general regard, positive or negative, in which potential customers hold the brand. Brand associations are the attributes potential customers associate with the brand. While brands have the most relevance for consumer goods, it is useful to examine the role brands play in the selection and purchase of LAN equipment.
- For LAN equipment, brands essentially play a role of secondary importance in aiding in the evaluation and selection of LAN equipment. Concrete factors, such as price, product attributes, and product interoperability with currently deployed equipment were all rated higher in importance by the panelists than brands. However, panelist did rate brands as being “somewhat” important, and more panelists rated brands as being “very” important or “critical,” than stated brands were “not very” important or “not at all” important.
- In-Stat/MDR believes that while “hard” selection criteria, such as price, are ultimately the most important to the evaluation of LAN equipment, brands do help customers in the evaluation of what can be very complex and confusing technology. It is not surprising, therefore, that panelists rated brands as being more important in the evaluation of “core” LAN equipment, which In-Stat/MDR defines as high-density switches, routers, servers, storage devices, etc., than in “client” LAN equipment, which In-Stat/MDR defines as NICs, WLAN access points, low-density switches, IP Phones, etc. While it is relatively easily to objectively evaluate “client” equipment, brands can be an aid in the evaluation of more complex “core” equipment.

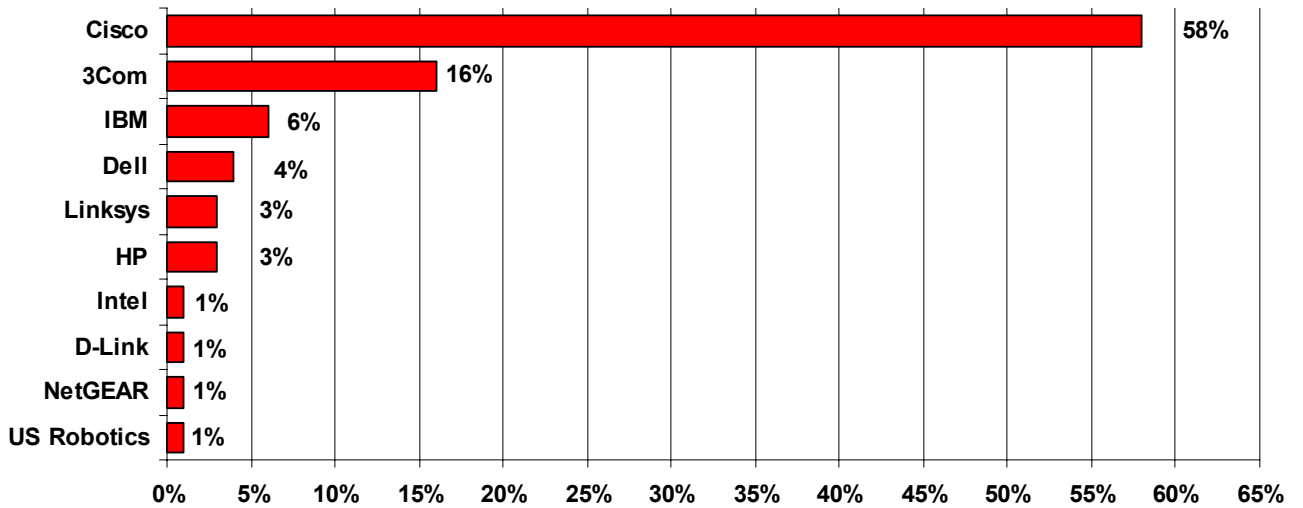
- “Customer support,” “technical innovation,” and “financial stability” were the key associations cited as being important for LAN equipment vendors’ corporate brands, while “product interoperability,” “product feature set,” and “pricing” were the key associations cited by panelists as being important for LAN equipment product brands.
- “Tradeshows,” “word of mouth, from colleagues,” and “print ads” were cited by panelists as being the most effective way to communicate brands to customers. This suggests that the recent pullback by vendors from participation at tradeshows may be detrimental to some degree in their long-term marketing efforts.
- Key brand association questions were segmented along the lines of “core” and “client” LAN equipment and demonstrate the dominance that Cisco and 3Com have achieved in the “core” and “client” markets, respectively. For “core” LAN equipment, Cisco received the most responses when panelists were asked to identify vendors they most associated with a “distinct and memorable” brand, with marketing communications that “most accurately depicted” their company and products, and with having developed a brand that would “most likely influence” the panelists’ purchase decision. For “core” LAN equipment, 3Com came in second in response to each of these questions. This situation was reversed for “client” LAN equipment, with 3Com coming in first, followed by Cisco. Other vendors in the “top ten” in the responses to each question rarely broke out of the single digits.
- Finally, Cisco was cited by panelists as having developed both the “best overall reputation in the industry” as well as the “most recognized name/brand” in the industry, overall, with 3Com, again, in second place in response to both questions. This is further indication of the tremendous impact the Cisco and 3Com brands have in the LAN equipment market.

Which, if any, of the following are the most important attributes when selecting a LAN equipment vendor for your organization? (n=579; up to three)



Source: In-Stat/MDR, 1/03

Which of the following vendors do you think has the most recognized name/brand overall, for LAN equipment? (n=579; up to three)



Source: In-Stat/MDR, 2/03