Choosing the right network partner

You need a trusted network partner to support your business' growth. We look at the questions you need to find that partner.

An effective digital strategy is a prerequisite for success – whether you're optimising your operations or expanding internationally, selecting the right network partner to facilitate your growth will be one of your business' most fundamental choices.

Different businesses have different needs, but whether you need to provision a multi-cloud environment which leverages programmable networking or just need a fast, reliable connection between Hong Kong and London, choosing a network partner begins with understanding your requirements.

The right connections

When comparing providers, gaining an understanding of the depth of their network infrastructure in the region you're targeting, should be the first thing to consider.

What ownership does the provider have over the network they're using – are they directly responsible for remedying faults, or are they just one voice in a group of several who you would need to work with to restore connectivity?

Working with providers that can deliver a greater proportion of your connectivity over their own infrastructure simplifies the management of your network, from initial deployment through to ensuring consistent performance.

In addition to considering whether the provider has points of presence where you need them now, look at their network presence in locations where you might need them into the future.

Don't neglect to specifically check their redundant pathing options between your locations – these can differ substantially among smaller providers. Some larger providers with extensive networks even offer "always on" service agreements, guaranteeing that connectivity can be rerouted through alternative pathways without a significant performance difference in case of fault.

> **What ownership does the provider have over the network they're using?**

High performance networking

At its core, understanding whether a network meets your performance needs is simple: what speeds do they offer and what round trip delay can they guarantee between your locations?

With today's deeply connected workplace and the ubiquitous adoption of cloud applications, having a high-performing, low-latency network is important for maintaining an efficient workplace.

Direct connections to cloud services such as AWS are another key differentiator, for example organisations who increasingly move more of their ICT stack into virtualised environments are placing a premium on speed and reliability.

In addition to direct cloud connectivity, a network provider's expertise in public and private cloud management should be an important factor in decision making, as data sovereignty laws in key markets including China and Indonesia can present a challenge unless properly incorporated into your strategy.

Different providers are also better suited to meet the needs of different industries. While reliability is a chief concern for most organisations, content providers have very different bandwidth needs compared to financial institutions that prioritise low-latency connections to support trading.

Optimising your operations

Programmable networking is quickly becoming a key tool for businesses looking to manage costs by optimising their operations and moving to a PAYG bandwidth model. Its speed and flexibility are also empowering businesses to move faster than their competitors to take advantage of new opportunities.

As more and more networks are now offering Network Function Virtualisation (NFV), the points of differentiation between provider's centres on the quality of their APIs and the visibility they provide over your network, to help you make the most of its capabilities.

Experience with managed SD-WAN is also important for organisations that need to rapidly provision new branches and manage variable demand to meet their rapidly changing needs and business priorities.

> **Experience with SD WAN is vital for organisations that want to manage variable demand**

Networking in Asia

Gartner's 2018 *Critical Capabilities for Network Services, Asia/Pacific* report is an invaluable starting point for organisations who need to make informed decisions about their network options in Asia Pacific.

Analysing 13 leading global network providers in the region, Gartner noted that despite considerable interest in network modernisation, network providers' "capabilities and experience" can still differ.

This is particularly prevalent in emerging markets such as the Philippines, Vietnam and parts of the Indonesian archipelago. Additionally, network technologies such as SD-WAN and programmable networking (such as the Telstra Programmable Network) remain key differentiators for organisations seeking to leverage their efficiencies.

Throughout Asia, it remains critically important to engage a partner with local expertise, particularly when expanding into China. This is to ensure that your Chinese locations connect as smoothly as possible into your wider network, as without a well-established presence, providers can find it difficult to quickly respond to faults.

You need a network partner with proven network experience to help you connect to new markets.
Download the 2018 *Gartner Critical Capabilities for Network Services, Asia/Pacific* below.
https://forms.enterprisenews.telstra.com/rgm-itm1