Top Trends in Business Connectivity
Confronting Challenges, Dispelling Myths, and Designing the Future

Staying connected has never mattered more. Business leaders are facing connectivity obstacles and opportunities at a breakneck pace. A misstep can mean costly disruptions and missed opportunities. It's more than just staying online — it's about securing your company's position now and in the future.

The path forward? Recognizing the challenges, dispelling prevalent misconceptions, and adopting the right solutions. In what follows, we share the latest connectivity trends to help you make informed, strategic decisions about your network solutions.

The Modern Connectivity Challenges

The importance of connectivity becomes undeniably clear the more applications and users increase. While technologies promise opportunities and efficiency, they also carry a set of unique challenges. For mid-market companies, ensuring seamless operations means understanding and mitigating these connectivity hurdles.

- **Afternoon Productivity Loss:** It's not an urban myth; many businesses indeed experience a palpable drop in bandwidth around 3pm, precisely when local schools let out. This phenomenon underscores a larger issue — the limitations of shared internet access. When much of the community goes online simultaneously, the available bandwidth gets stretched thin, affecting business operations and potentially compromising client interactions.

- **Data Demands and Business Continuity:** With more businesses relying heavily on technologies like AI, augmented reality, and video calls, there is greater data consumption. Moreover, unexpected spikes in data usage — from things like viral marketing campaigns or a sudden influx of user activity — highlight the inadequacy of older internet setups. And with the business ecosystem becoming so data-driven, any internet disruptions can have profound consequences, including lost revenue, reputational damage, and decreased customer trust.

- **Hidden Costs:** Asymmetrical bandwidth might look good in terms of cost at first glance. But in practice, it can cause unexpected internet slowdowns that disrupt work. This discrepancy between promised and actual bandwidth can lead to longer meetings, delayed data transfer, and other general inefficiencies. Over time, these minor inconveniences compound, hurting work productivity and the bottom line.

- **The Pitfalls of Legacy Infrastructure:** Using old technology can increase security risks. Legacy systems often lack the latest security features, and the data packets aren't as secure, making them easier to access.

The Misconceptions

Misleading promotions and other misconceptions can hinder progress, leading to inefficient resource allocation. Breaking through these myths is paramount to achieving true digital empowerment.

- **"Best Effort" Fallacy:** Many internet service providers use the term "best effort," making it sound like businesses always get the best possible services. But in reality, "best effort" can fall woefully short of their requirements, especially during peak demand periods. Dedicated capacity, on the other hand, promises consistent service, tailored to the company's needs, eliminating unpleasant surprises.

- **Cloud Misconceptions:** Cloud solutions, with their ease of access and deployment, have gained significant traction in recent years. But, like any tool, they're not free from drawbacks. Some companies think using only the cloud is the best way to go. But while initial setups might seem affordable, costs can quickly spiral as data storage and access requirements grow. Therefore, it becomes crucial to strike a balance between cloud deployments (public and private) and traditional data centers, to get the best results and manage cost. Every company's requirements are different, which makes it even more important to have a connectivity partner who understands how to work with you on your cloud strategy and align bandwidth accordingly.

- **"True Diversity":** It might seem like having diverse network offerings would make things more stable. But with all the recent consolidation, is your network really diverse?. Sometimes when carriers merge (or one acquires another),they end up grooming the network, put simply: they combine them to get rid of redundancies. This can go against the diversity customers were going for in the first place. Further complicating matters when M&A is the effect of reduced competition. As providers consolidate, businesses might witness escalating prices coupled with deteriorating service quality, which are an unwanted side effects of less competition.

The Path Forward: Rethinking Connectivity

As operations become deeply intertwined with technology, businesses need a fresh approach to connectivity that aligns with their evolving needs and promises enhanced productivity.

- **Dedicated Internet Access (DIA):** Traditional shared connections, while seemingly cost-effective, often suffer from fluctuations influenced by external variables. Consider the neighborhood kid streaming 4K videos right when your business is hosting a crucial virtual meeting. DIA fixes this. Allocating specific bandwidth exclusively for a business buffers operations from such external influences, promising consistent speed and stability even during peak demand hours.

- **Symmetrical Speeds:** It's not enough for businesses to have high download speeds; their upload speeds must keep pace. This is especially relevant in tasks like video conferencing, where data is both sent and received simultaneously. Symmetrical internet recognizes this need, ensuring that upload speeds mirror download ones, so everything runs smoothly and without any delays.

- **Enhanced Uptime:** Downtime, no matter how brief, can ripple into significant operational setbacks and financial losses. Given the heavy reliance on digital tools and platforms, businesses cannot afford these disruptions. Uptime, therefore, isn't a luxury — it's a necessity. Investing in infrastructure that pledges superior uptime goes a long way in ensuring consistent productivity and maintaining positive customer relations.

- **Strategic Partnerships:** Understanding all the ins and outs of connectivity can be tough for IT teams already fully tasked. That's why the expertise and insights of knowledgeable (and reachable!) providers can be invaluable. By forging partnerships with providers who prioritize a consultative, customer-centric approach, businesses can get a clearer picture of their connectivity needs and right-size their bandwidth.

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