5 Fundamentals of a WAN Review

An Enablis whitepaper

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Whether or not you are satisfied with your current WAN provider, when your WAN is due for review, we strongly suggest conducting a marketplace analysis. With technology changing at such a rapid pace, an analysis will help you understand the latest technology available and the significant benefits that can be gained in the new era of managed communication services.

There are 5 key fundamentals that can save you money, increase business efficiency, and maximise your return on investment.
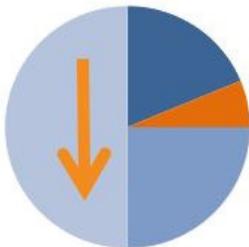
1. Reduce your communications costs

One of the biggest reasons you should review your WAN is to save money. It might sound obvious but it's often overlooked. Prices have reduced significantly over the last several years so make sure you are paying the correct price for your services.

2. Access latest technology to improve efficiency

Use your upgraded WAN services to maximum benefit by over-laying the latest technologies - SIP voice, hosted telephony, Wi-Fi and video collaboration (UC) - to greatly enhance productivity and to open up new revenue streams.

3. Increase reliability and support

Shift the burden of management and maintenance to a managed WAN expert so you can free up your precious IT team to provide greater strategic value to the business.

4. Gain valuable management and monitoring

Make sure you have total visibility with real time monitoring tools across your entire communication estate and data infrastructure. Without visibility you don't have true control.

5. Maximise your WAN investment

A new WAN should deliver much more than just a new network, it should deliver a ROI and additional value for the life of the contract.
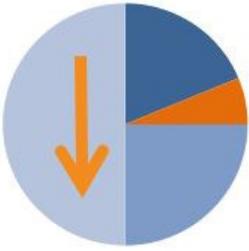
1. Reduce your communications costs

Your data network forms the foundation of your business. Yet many businesses are paying too much for a WAN that isn't reliable and can't provide the bandwidth required to support the applications that the business demands. When your network contract is up for review it is the ideal time to understand what's available in the market and to optimise the performance and cost of your data foundation.

In the last three years bandwidth access costs have reduced by over 50%. With this decrease, a typical refresh provides up to four time more in bandwidth.

- The rapid roll out of fibre across Australia is providing increased coverage and access speeds in areas where very limited ADSL services were previously the only option.

- The cost of internet access has also reduced significantly, approximately 80%. The average IP cost in 2012 was $150 per MB. Contrast that to the current rate for IP at about $30 per MB.

- Add to this the fact that as cloud technologies are maturing there is an increasing array of reliable and proven cloud communication solutions. This includes: hosted telephony, SIP voice services, cloud Wi-Fi, video collaboration, and IaaS services. These options could provide significant costs savings for your business. For example, current market price for a PSTN is approximately $30, but it's possible to a get business-grade SIP voice channel for $2.

Customer Example

"We were able to reduce our overall network spend by about 40% even though we increased our bandwidth 10 times. It was a considerable difference to us to see that our budget figures actually came down but our network capabilities went up."

Con Pazios, IT Manager, STA Travel

2. Access latest technology to improve efficiency

As businesses look to expand they must be supported by a strong data network that enables their business to take up new tools and applications quickly and efficiently. Poor networks can create bottle-necks and impede staffs' ability to work effectively and collaboratively. With greater speeds come increases in efficiency and better outcomes across the board.

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By optimising data infrastructure companies can take advantage of the greater bandwidth capabilities and make system improvements across the organisation. This delivers the ability to embrace new technologies and opportunities. For example evolving technologies such as cloud Voice, Video, and Wi-Fi are tools that can help to drive greater collaboration, productivity and revenue in a business.

In a Frost & Sullivan survey of C-level executives, 85% of the respondents indicated that their investments in video conferencing were driven by productivity benefits.[1]

- SIP or cloud voice can remove line rental charges, provide automated disaster recover, reduce call tariffs by up to 20% and provide flexibility with virtual business presence capabilities.

- Video Conferencing can be leveraged for more than just inter-company meetings. Video can now be used as a tool for many other company-wide initiatives such as training, community engagement, virtual presence and more, the possibilities are endless.

- Next-generation Wi-Fi technology can deliver 'plug and play' rapid deployment with self-provisioning, self-optimising hardware for secure staff access, and guest access provides rich analytics for deeper insights into customer behaviour. This customer intelligence can help to drive better targeted messages and campaigns.

Customer Example

"Enablis has really helped us to centralise our student records and data and we've moved from a paper-based system to a digital platform that's enabled us easier access to student records and to track their progress."

Steven Armstrong, School Principal, Youth Off The Streets

[1] Frost & Sullivan, "2012 North American CXO Investment Plans for Communications and Collaboration Applications," Jan 2013.

3. Increase reliability and support

With bandwidth becoming so commoditised, yet still holding a high resource and management burden for distributed organisations, it may be more effective to shift the overhead to a managed WAN expert so you can concentrate on adding value. The true value of a managed service is that it increases the productivity of your IT team so they have time to focus on strategy and delivering more value to the business.

Many companies with ageing networks receive inadequate service and support and their network is unreliable and hinders the business. The best-of-breed managed communications providers deliver 24×7 network operation centres with proactive monitoring across their network to ensure it is always functioning at optimum health. Integration and support of all products and services is managed through a single local point of contact.

It's a simple fact that single carriers can't meet all network needs – the alternative is a multiple-carrier infrastructure in a single flexible service platform.

This managed communications platform can deliver:

- a robust network for less dollars
- provide multi-carrier resilience
- access to every single carrier nationwide, and
- dual links to all sites for redundancy

Security concerns are addressed by employing best of breed, next-generation technology to safely enable applications, provide clientless SSLVPN, and two factor authentication – all without hindering network performance and business-critical operations.

Customer Example

"Enablis have driven significant cost savings and efficiencies while also boosting performance and reliability of our infrastructure."

Tomi Strugar, IT Manager, Teachers Health Fund

4. Gain valuable management and monitoring

One of the major limitations for many IT departments is the ability to have a comprehensive view of the services they provide, their performance and their availability to the business. In addition, how can IT managers be expected to forecast future requirements when they can't see trends in usage and capacity at a clear level across the key services. This is one area where leading service providers have made huge steps in their service offering over the last 24 months.

If you decide to increase the services delivered to your business by a third party provider, you should still have full visibility and control of the services they manage for you.

In addition to visibility you should have easy access to reports on the end-to-end Service Level Agreements for each service provided.

Key reports to have access to include:

- WAN network – performance metrics and SLA's.
- Voice Services – provide a guaranteed MOS score for voice quality through the network end to end.
- Firewall – Security and thread detection reports
- Server infrastructure and Cloud IaaS estate – allowing you to have visibility of your entire server and communication portfolio.

Customer Example

"I manage our backups via a central dashboard, and can control the frequency of backups, and I'm able to recover any file from any virtual machine within minutes."

Sammy Jammal, IT Manager, Fenner Dunlop

FENNER DUNLOP
CONVEYOR BELTING EUROPE

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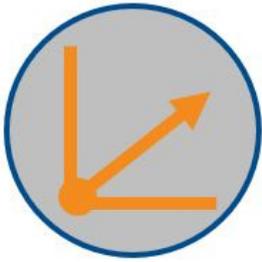
5. Maximise your WAN investment

If you have the capability to review other communication services and costs at the same time as the WAN review then we strongly advise doing this. Separating out costs for each service should be done but this is the ideal opportunity to see what new technologies and services are available today that can offer value to meet your specific business needs.

A number of leading managed communication providers offer an end-to-end portfolio of IP-based communication services that could allow you to maximise the investment and return you get from this review as an overall project.

Now is the time for CIOs to choose whether to remain custodians of core IT systems or become drivers of growth through technological innovation.[2]

Particularly when budgets are limited and getting tighter – you can use the saving created in one area to help subsidise the cost of refreshing the technology in another area. There are many cases where customers with a highly distributed footprint can achieve a total technology refresh and upgrade across all their services for no actual extra costs to the business.

Services you should also include in this review are:

- SIP voice services – to drive significant savings from traditional PSTN services.
- Hosted telephony – to have a single consistent user based system across your whole business.
- Managed Wi-Fi services – to improve staff access and open up new potential ways to interact with your own clients.
- Video collaboration - to improve collaboration internally across a distributed organisation and to create new ways to interact with customers and partners in a more effective way.

Customer Example

"The improvements made to the network without adding to my expenses was a great result."

Andrew Coratella, IT Manager, Kelair Pumps

It's time to take maximum advantage

If any of the 5 Fundamentals of a WAN Review resonate with you and you believe your business could benefit, get in touch for an obligation-free consultation consultation to understand how we could specifically help your business.

About Enablis

Enablis is committed to easing the burden of owning and operating technology for companies with highly-distributed sites and lean IT. Since 2006, we've delivered leading-edge communications technology as a managed service to give our customers competitive advantage.

We've delivered comprehensive SLAs end-to-end on a wide range of managed communication services over the last three years with significant improvements in our customers' businesses at NO extra cost.

Let's see how we can help you.

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