

Lightpath



10 Questions You Should Be Asking Your Network Provider

Powered by

ciena

Businesses across the board face exploding bandwidth demands. The problem for many companies is that their networks can't keep up, at least not with some providers.

The pressure isn't coming from where it used to. AI, cloud workloads and data-intensive applications now move volumes of traffic that legacy networks were never built to carry. Content and cloud networks alone drive nearly three-quarters of international bandwidth demand, and total demand has tripled since 2020, surpassing 6.4 Pbps.

Remote and hybrid work accelerated the shift, but it runs deeper. Bandwidth needs are not what they once were, and the applications driving them are heavier and less forgiving. Networks now have to handle loads that have become the new normal.

In increasingly competitive markets, the risk of staying with the status quo is too great. Legacy networks from big providers simply aren't rising to the occasion in many cases.

As a result, businesses are reevaluating their network providers' capabilities or assessing new options for specific projects needed to help them succeed.

Is your network provider focused on your goals and successes?

Analyzing bandwidth needs and network providers should all be part of your decision roadmap as you begin executing your IT plans. Fast, redundant, diverse capacity is a necessity, and not all network providers are equipped to reliably provide all three. However, it is possible to find network providers focused on building up infrastructure and enabling enough capacity to keep up with new demands.

When reevaluating your network provider, a few straightforward questions can provide you with all you need to know. You'll quickly be able to tell the type of partnership to expect and if the network provider can truly meet your requirements. A Strategic Network Partner worth your time and business is honest and transparent about their network services, teams, and SLAs. The right questions can even help uncover details the network provider didn't plan to tell you.

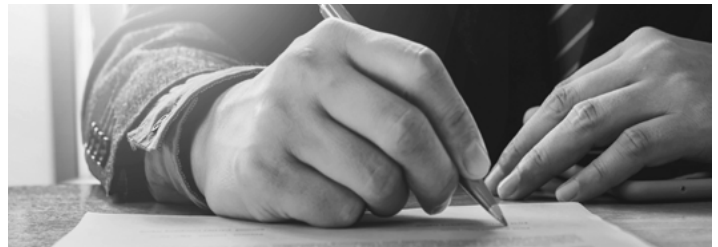


Here are the 10 questions you should be asking your network provider.

1

Can you describe your Service Level Agreement (SLA) in detail?

An account executive should be able to describe their SLAs in great detail. They should also be able to give a straightforward answer about response times and concessions made if SLAs are not met. Don't be blinded by a bold promise of up-time and forget to dive into the details of what happens if they don't live up to it.



2

Can you tell me about your history of service reliability?



Reliability starts with installation being completed and turned up on time, and continues with maintaining your connectivity at or above your service level expectations. Ask a network provider for service reliability statistics and relevant customer references. If a provider can't or won't give these references, be cautious about what they promise. You can even check the Public Utilities Commission and Federal Communications Commission websites for complaints against any specific network provider.

3

What experience can I expect if I continue working with you?

While this question is more open-ended than the previous, the answer can be very telling. The right provider shows a commitment to listening and working collaboratively to develop a network plan to your exact specifications. Be wary of network providers that try to fit you onto existing routes and don't show the flexibility to build to your needs. This might be a sign they aren't willing to work collaboratively and customize network solutions to best accomplish your business goals.



4

How long have your teams been in the industry and are they locally based?



You don't want to end up with a network provider that has a revolving door of inexperienced junior employees that aren't invested in your business needs. Unfortunately, that's the reality for many network providers. Instead, you should look for a provider with a reputation for experienced industry veterans who are knowledgeable about the network solutions they offer and can explain how they meet and exceed your requirements. Even better is a provider with sales and operations leaders that have made their careers in your market and understand the ins and outs of the local network landscape.

5

Does your network provider offer unique routes and connectivity hubs?

The importance of network diversity cannot be stressed enough. Having the option to leverage unique network routes and connectivity hubs can make all the difference when common routes and locations experience outages. Ask your provider for a copy of their network maps to see if you have the same routes and endpoints as other businesses.



6

How are you connected to your data centers?



Data center connectivity is more than just having a circuit into the facility. Any veteran telecommunications account executive should have an answer ready. Your network provider's team should be able to tell you everything about the entrance, riser, and closet where your data goes. A team with expertise in local facilities can provide you with a plan to keep your data center connectivity running, no matter what.

7

Does a third party provide any part of my service?

This is a straightforward question, so you should expect a straightforward answer. It is quite common for providers to rely on third parties to complete network solutions. However, your network provider should be able to readily tell you where a third party is involved and what the impact could be to your business.



8

Do you own your fiber?



Here is another straightforward question. If your provider has leases or IRUs in place, your network might not be as flexible as you need it to be. A provider that owns its own fiber can customize or even build networks to exact specifications. If they don't own their fiber, you could get locked into a network your provider doesn't fully control and which may not be able to meet your business needs.

9

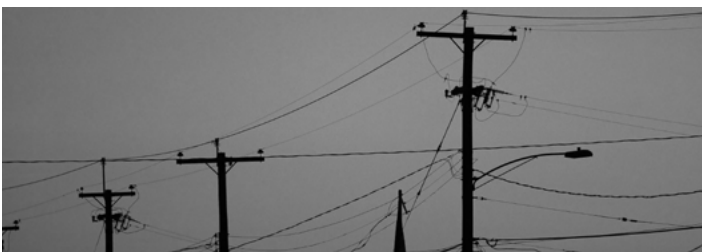
Does your network provider use the latest optical and packet technologies?

The fiber is the foundation, but the equipment running on it decides how much capacity you actually get. Current optical and packet technology moves far more data over the same strands and holds performance steady as traffic grows. Older gear caps you sooner and slows every upgrade. Ask what the provider runs today, what speeds they support now, and whether they can scale your circuit without replacing hardware.



10

What investments are you making in your network that will benefit my business?



A provider that strategically expands its network and invests in the latest technologies enables businesses to grow as customer demands and market trends change. If your provider has your future success in mind, they should be able to explain in detail the investments they're making in their solutions and services and the positive impact those will have on your network.

After asking these 10 questions, or even just the first few, you'll have additional insight as to who your provider truly is and if they are right for your organization. If any of the answers your account executive provides give you pause, you might want to consider researching other options before extending your contract. Look for a provider that has the network capabilities you need, with proven local expertise and teams that are committed to being transparent about their network solutions.

Enough with complicated phone trees, auto-attendants, and lengthy contracts ... it shouldn't be this way. **You deserve better.** Talk with Lightpath today to start a conversation on how you can improve your network, enable growing business needs and control costs as you scale.

Get in touch with the Lightpath team to evaluate your provider, benchmark your capacity, and see how your network measures up to other businesses in your market.



Lightpath

About Lightpath

Lightpath builds and operates all fiber infrastructure designed for the AI era. With connectivity to more than 18,000 locations, 190+ data centers and eight subsea landing stations, our dense network supports cloud, AI and mission critical workloads with low latency and scalable capacity.

We approach network expansion fearlessly owning, building and operating our fiber end to end to reach complex, high demand environments. Backed by unwavering service and human accountability, Lightpath delivers infrastructure built boldly and supported by the engineers who stand behind it every day.

Experience the Lightpath Difference.

For more information on how Lightpath can help your organization, call 877-544-4872 or visit lightpathfiber.com.

Powered by

ciena