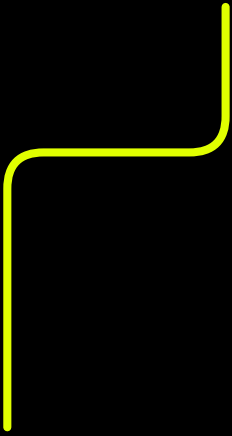


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10 Questions You Should Be Asking Your Network Provider

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Businesses across the board face exploding bandwidth demands. Nowhere is this truer than the New York and Boston metropolitan areas. The problem for many companies is that their networks can't keep up, at least not with some network providers.

Analyst Simon Kemp at DataReportal made a bold statement: "The world's digital behaviors have shown some of the most profound changes we've seen in years, even compared with 'the pandemic years.' The latest research reveals that these behaviors are evolving in a number of unexpected ways, too."

Echoing that statement was TeleGeography's global bandwidth measure, which reached 997 Tbps in 2022, signaling that we will soon be in the "Pbps era."

As some businesses adopt remote and hybrid work long term, networks face new pressures to accommodate on-site and remote end-user experiences. Even for those that have returned to in-person environments, network landscape and bandwidth needs are not the same as they once were. Companies will continue to introduce more bandwidth-intensive applications, and networks must be able to handle the higher loads that have become the new normal.

In increasingly competitive markets, the risk of staying with the status quo is too great. As a result, businesses are reevaluating their network providers' capabilities or assessing new options for the 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 now a necessity, and not all network providers are equipped to reliably provide all three. 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 tell you what you need to know. You'll quickly be able to tell the type of partnership to expect and whether the 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 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 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 provider.

3

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

While this question is more open-ended than the previous one, 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 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 a network 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 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 providers. Instead, look for a provider with a reputation for experienced industry veterans who are knowledgeable about the network they offer and can explain how they meet and exceed your requirements. Even better is a provider with sales and operations leaders who have built 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 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 whether 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 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 give you 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 a network build. Your 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?

If a 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 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?

Choosing a provider that embraces cutting-edge technologies is essential for optimizing and future-proofing your network. Advanced optical and packet networks provide increased bandwidth with the flexibility to scale as your business grows. They also deliver low, predictable latency with high availability and reliability. A provider with technologies stuck in the past will hold you back from growing your business and reaching your goals.

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 and the positive impact those will have on your network.

After asking these 10 questions, or even just the first few, you'll have real insight into who your provider is and whether they are right for your organization. If any of the answers give you pause, consider researching other options before extending your contract. Look for a provider with the network capabilities you need, proven local expertise and teams committed to being transparent.

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.

About Lightpath

Lightpath owns, builds and operates an all-fiber network built for the AI era, delivering high-capacity, low-latency connectivity for cloud, hyperscale, data center and mission-critical enterprise workloads. With more than 12,100 route miles of fiber, the Lightpath Network reaches over 17,500 service locations, 190+ on-net data centers and eight subsea cable landing stations across 11 major U.S. metro markets. Our consultative service model gives customers direct access to the engineers who design and operate their routes, and for more than 30 years thousands of enterprises, governments and educators have trusted Lightpath to power their organizations. **Fearless builds. Unwavering service.**

To learn how Lightpath can help your organization, call 877-544-4872 or visit lightpathfiber.com.

