

# Vendor Evaluation Guide

Seven vendor-neutral questions to ask any network provider you're evaluating.

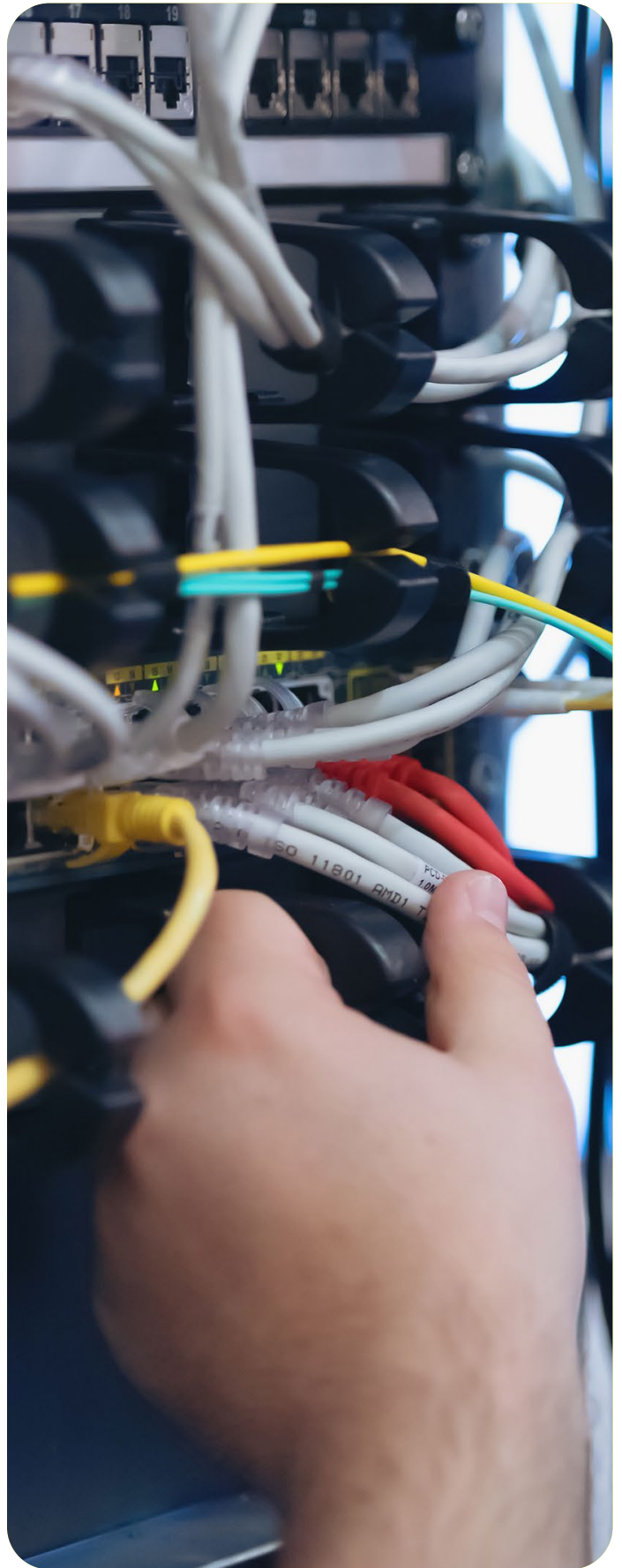
A companion to the white paper  
[The Hidden Cost of Fiber Consolidation](#)

whitepaper

# Introduction

These seven questions get at how a network is built, operated and supported. They work for any provider you're evaluating, including us.

Each question comes with why it matters and what a strong and a weak answer sound like, so you can tell a confident, specific answer from a vague one. Bring them to your next provider conversation.





## Ownership

Is my route on fiber that you own end-to-end, or is part of it leased from another provider?

**Why it matters.** Ownership shapes who can act when something breaks. Where a provider owns the route, its own team can work the fault directly. Where part of the route is leased, what matters is whether the provider still owns the support and accountability end to end.

### A Strong Answer

Tells you which segments it owns and which it reaches through partners and commits to a single point of accountability across both.

### A Weak Answer

Can't say which parts are owned versus partner-provided, or who owns the fix when a partner segment fails.



## Route Diversity

Do my two paths run through physically separate conduits, with separate entrances into my building?

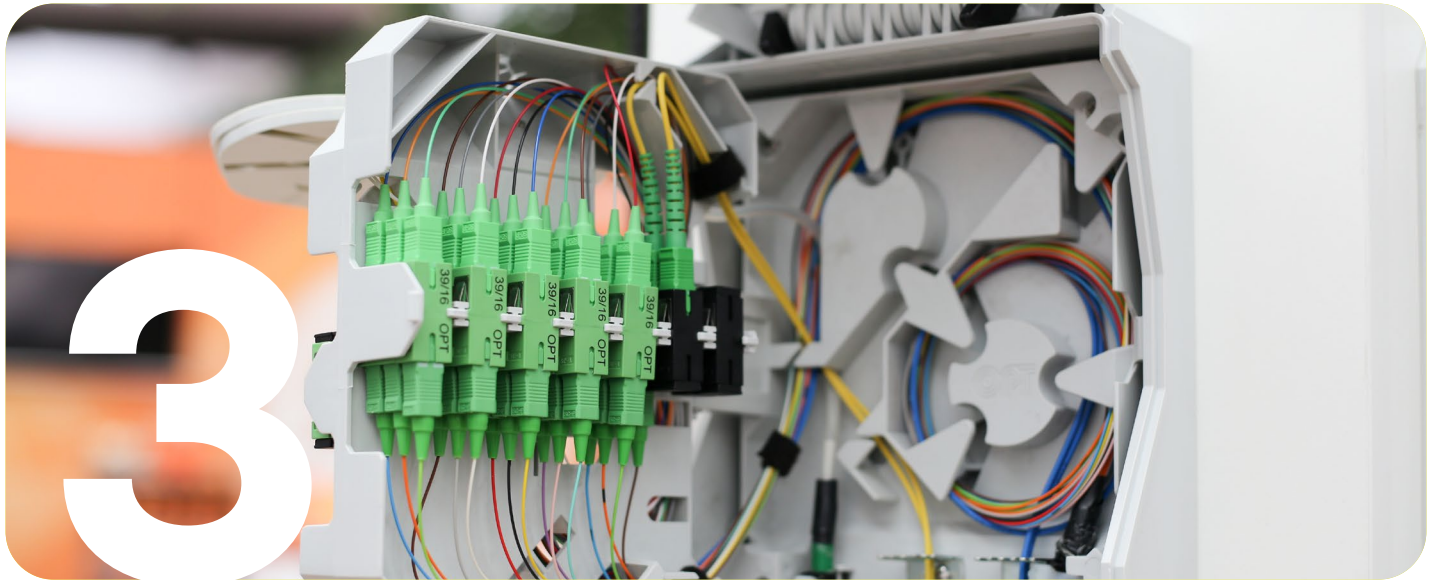
**Why it matters.** Paths that share a conduit, a building entrance or an upstream segment can go down on a single event.

### A Strong Answer

Shows you the physical paths, names any point where they converge, and can document the separation.

### A Weak Answer

Describes the paths as diverse without being able to show the physical separation.



## Capacity

What do you hand off at my interface, and what is the ceiling behind it before a hardware change?

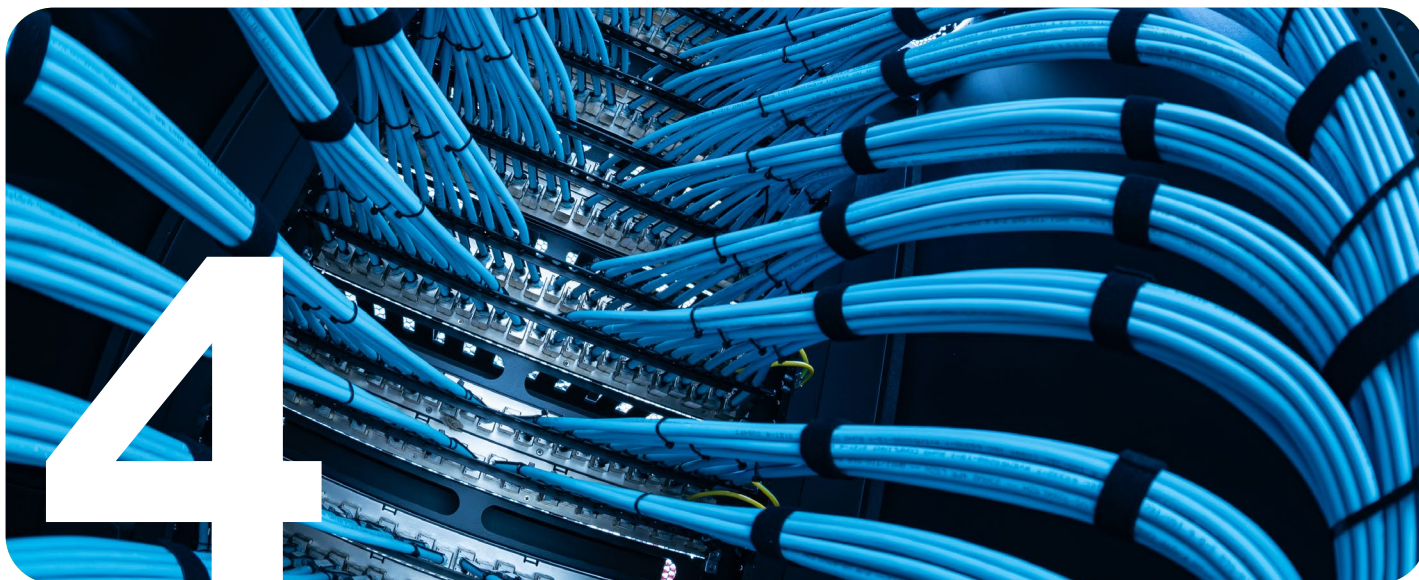
**Why it matters.** The handoff and the line behind it are two different numbers, and only one of them is the capacity you actually plug into.

### A Strong Answer

Keeps the two numbers separate and communicates both to you without being asked.

### A Weak Answer

Gives a single number without saying whether it's the handoff or the line behind it.



## Latency

Can you show me the measured round-trip latency on my route, on owned fiber, before I sign?

**Why it matters.** A latency number can be modeled from a map or measured on the actual route. For latency-sensitive applications, only the measured number tells you what you will really get.

### A Strong Answer

Gives you a measurement and the route it was taken on, and will measure yours before you sign.

### A Weak Answer

Offers a precise figure but can't say whether it was measured on your route or estimated.



## Turn-Up

What is the turn-up time if fiber already reaches both sites, and what does it become if construction is needed?

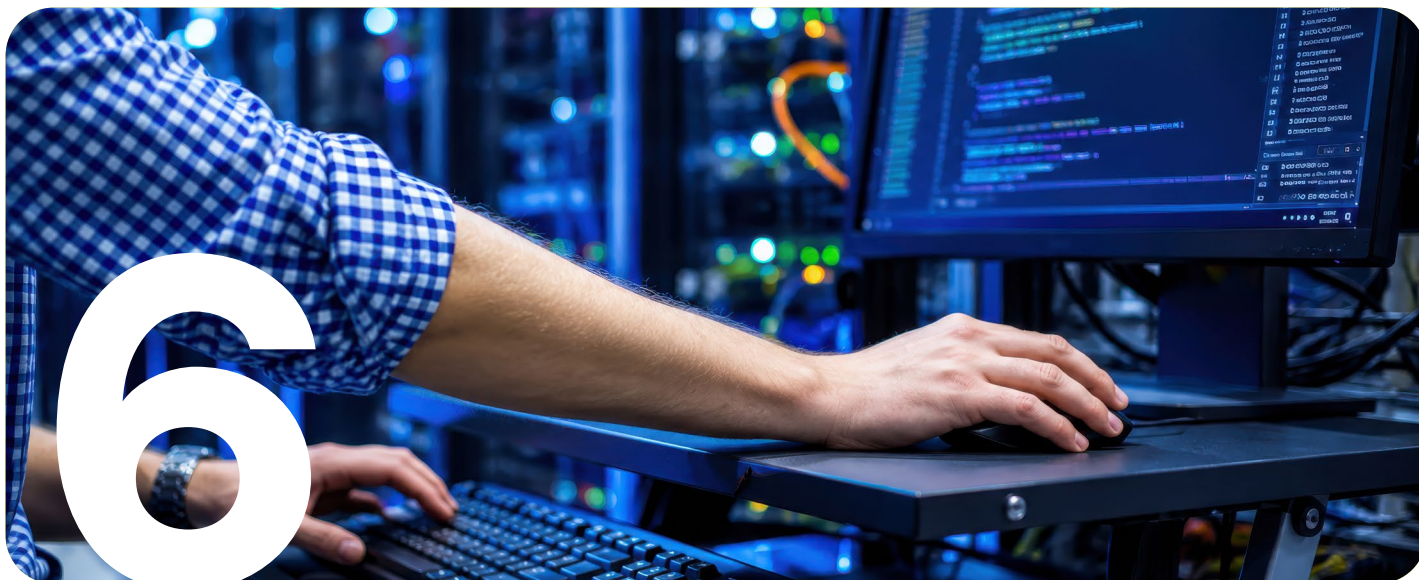
**Why it matters.** An install estimate depends on whether fiber already reaches your sites. Construction and permitting add time no one fully controls.

### A Strong Answer

Gives one interval for an in-place route and a separate, honest range when construction is required.

### A Weak Answer

Gives a single timeline without saying whether it assumes existing fiber or new construction.



## Support

When a circuit goes down, do I reach engineers who run the network or a first-tier queue, and what credits apply if the SLA is missed?

**Why it matters.** Every support model looks the same until something breaks. What matters is how quickly you reach a real person who can help you fix it.

### A Strong Answer

Connects you to the people who operate the network, and backs the SLA with credits when it's missed.

### A Weak Answer

Routes you to a general queue and offers an SLA with no credits behind it.



## Footprint

Where do you own and operate today, and where do you rely on partners to extend your reach?

**Why it matters.** Your footprint and the provider's should line up. Ask what they operate locally today and what they reach through partners, so the coverage they promise matches where you actually operate.

### A Strong Answer

Is specific about where it operates directly and where it works with partners to reach you.

### A Weak Answer

Blurs owned and partner coverage into a single map.



## Network providers worth partnering with

### **WHAT A STRONG ANSWER ADDS UP TO:**

- Measured routes on named fiber
- Owned and partner segments named clearly
- One point of accountability, end to end
- An SLA with credits behind it
- Will measure your route before you sign

# Request a Route Mapping Session

In 60 minutes, our team can show you where your current provider's routes overlap with ours, and where genuine physical separation exists for your critical paths.

**lightpathfiber.com** | 877-544-4872

A companion to the white paper *The Hidden Cost of Fiber Consolidation*.

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