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Ethernet Services Transition Guide

The decision to upgrade to an Ethernet service, add a diverse Ethernet Access service, or switch providers grows in complexity when shifting business requirements or multiple locations are involved. Suddenly considerations like budget constraints, application demands, user requirements, and growth plans carry a lot more weight. Knowing where to start the transition process can help lighten the load for IT.

This guide is meant as a model for businesses pursuing an Ethernet Access service upgrade. By considering each step and getting the right advice along the way, IT leaders set themselves up to deploy a network that aligns to the business needs of today and the goals of tomorrow.

01 Think holistically

A common misstep businesses make when upgrading to an Ethernet service or adding an Ethernet Access circuit is centering the decision around price and product features. Those items should play a role in the decision-making process, but they shouldn't drive it. Utilizing an Ethernet service should first and foremost be a business decision, an investment that has the potential to impact an organization's operation and competitiveness from top to bottom—and it should be treated as such.

As counterintuitive as it may seem, IT leaders are often more successful when they start the upgrade process without considering budget constraints at all. Instead, focusing on business-centric considerations like the organizational roadmap, individual site growth plans, and merger and acquisition goals set IT leaders up to invest in a fiber-based Ethernet service upgrade that meets the business's goals today and into the future. Once the business needs are defined, IT leaders can find a provider and Ethernet solution that aligns with those needs.

On the technology side, it's important to consider the business factors driving the technology needs before getting lost in the weeds of features and capabilities. Considerations like reliability requirements, user expectations, capacity demands, and application requirements are great starting points for IT leaders when vetting fiber-based Ethernet solutions and providers.

02 Identify and reduce excesses

Legacy switched multi-point networks are often overprovisioned on the provider side yet underutilized on the customer side. This discrepancy can lead to duplication issues and visibility gaps, leaving customers with a sprawling network that's expensive to run and cumbersome to manage.

First thing's first when looking to add Ethernet Access...start by identifying what's worth keeping from your legacy network. Businesses can often make use of much of their existing infrastructure, but only after careful auditing and strategic rightsizing according to their current and future business goals. This is a point in the decision-making process when IT leaders love to get the objective assessment of a trusted third party — the right fiber partner can be critical to helping businesses seize performance and cost-savings opportunities.

03 Devise a procurement plan

Steps one and two are only as useful as a procurement plan allows them to be. This is your opportunity to leverage your business and technical requirements into sourcing a fiber-based Ethernet solution that meets both. The challenge most IT leaders face is the time and resource investment required to guide the procurement process. Many teams lack dedicated in-house resources to vet providers, manage RFPs and demo technologies and, for businesses that can spare the resources, personnel often lack the telecom-specific expertise to drive strategic decision making.

Upgrading and/or transitioning to a fiber-based Ethernet network can be complex, but it's far easier when a carrier is already present in your existing offices or business locations. For most businesses, the biggest pitfall is delaying the process. In today's volatile business landscape, the sooner you start the upgrade process the better prepared you'll be when the landscape shifts again.

Vet Your Ethernet Services Transition Plan

Call **(715) 858-3187** or visit **wintechnology.com/talk-to-us/** to start the conversation about transitioning to a fiber- based Ethernet network.