

WAN Services Planning Checklist

To help WAN planners consider every aspect of the total enterprise solution, this practical checklist outlines what to consider when planning network migration and extension, including questions to ask and areas that warrant further evaluation.

Overall WAN Objectives

- What are the overall objectives of the WAN?
 1. Connect sites?
 2. Accelerate applications?
 3. Keep traffic distinctly separate?
 4. Prioritize performance of specific applications?
 5. Simplify operations and reduce costs?

Evaluate all of these needs at a high level to consider the entire enterprise and the design elements that are common to all locations including coverage needs (regional/national/international), access types, service types, users, applications and protocols.

Costs and Ease of Management

- Is it desirable for us to have more than one service provider? If so, why?
- If we have more than one provider, is it our requirement to fully manage the entire WAN or can the service provider handle routing for parts of the network?
- What does each type of access connectivity cost and where would it be best to use lower-cost alternatives in some areas?

Enterprise-Wide Traffic Capacity

- What is the overall volume of traffic we send among our locations and users every day?
- Is this need likely to grow?

Location Considerations

- How many locations do you have?
- What are our growth plans for more locations?
- Is it likely that more users will need access from these locations in the future?

Redundancy

- What are the most important locations critical to business operations?
- How can we plan disaster recovery efforts for these sites in particular?

User and User Access Considerations

- How many users do we have at each location?
- How often and how long do they spend on the network from that location, or are they accessing the network in other ways?
 - » If accessing the network in other ways, what are they?
 - » What are the connectivity and protocol requirements of each type of access device?
- Do these users need restricted access to specific parts of the overall network in terms of special user group domains (such as departments or common applications access or by location)?

Applications and Bandwidth Considerations

- What critical applications does each user group need to perform daily work?
 - » How much bandwidth do these applications require?
 - » How does the bandwidth requirement map to the users and the ways they need to access the network?
 - » How much bandwidth is needed for them to access these applications from each of the devices they use to log on to the network?

Performance and Reliability Issues

- What expectations do these users have for performance of these specific applications?
- Do these users use VoIP telephones?

Security Concerns

- Which applications, departments or network domains have special requirements for security and privacy of information?

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