

# Top 4 Network Imperatives

After the last few years of fast-tracked digital disruption and innovation, it's hard to imagine a world where the pace slows down. For network managers looking toward the future of business connectivity, the priorities have changed.

**Put these four at the top of your list.**

## 01 Conduct a pricing review of the network.

Bandwidth patterns have changed drastically, leading to fluctuating prices. Challenge service providers to develop a business case for tailoring a solution, adding an enhancement and how that will affect pricing.

## 02 Demand a custom-built connection and network.

Connectivity is not a one-size-fits-all. Custom-built networks ensure you have what you need. Work closely with engineers to ensure the network design meets the needs of today with enough leeway to accommodate the needs of tomorrow.

## 03 Expect more from telecom providers.

Change is inevitable. It shouldn't be difficult or costly to make upgrades and reconfigurations as new needs and requirements arise. Experience matters – ask for references of current customers.

## 04 Require transparency in data paths.

The top providers show the exact path data will follow, and in some cases, the physical path of the circuit. Don't be afraid to ask for details about the NOC and the equipment they use for IP.

It can be tedious to differentiate services between incumbent providers and the minutiae of contract terms and SLAs — especially when you're also triaging the fast-changing technology demands of their internal stakeholders and customers.

# Vendor Evaluation

Business and IT leaders should have an easy way to assess connectivity options in today's chaotic landscape.

**We created a vendor evaluation checklist to help overstretched leaders compare providers based on the most impactful criteria for their organizations.**

Others	FirstLight	
<b>Enhanced Ethernet Options (included in standard offering)</b>		
?	✓	Does failover take 100 milliseconds or less?
?	✓	Is there diverse signaling?
?	✓	Are there dual fiber routes?
?	✓	Is full bandwidth "always on?"
?	✓	Is there a true point-to-point architecture?
?	✓	Is it possible to choose the exact bandwidth needed (10mb increments)?
<b>Additional Services &amp; Value</b>		
?	✓	Do they offer security solutions that protect against DDoS attacks, ransomware, and security breaches?
?	✓	Do they offer access to cloud computing resources or connectivity to hyperscale cloud providers?
?	✓	Do they have backup and disaster recovery options for your data and applications that work in tandem with network connectivity to provide fast replication and recovery?
?	✓	Do they provide Unified Communications/Voice Services?
?	✓	Do they offer additional managed services and expertise to help offload burdensome IT tasks to free up your team for critical technology priorities?
<b>Service Level Agreements</b>		
?	✓	Do you always get the bandwidth you paid for?
?	✓	Are available credit amounts listed out?
?	✓	Are credits applied on the next invoice?
<b>Customer Support</b>		
?	✓	Can most "On-Net" circuits be turned up in two weeks or less?
?	✓	Is instant, on-demand order status available?
?	✓	Does the account team truly care about making customers happy?
<b>Pricing</b>		
?	✓	Is pricing transparent and cost effective?

Once you've completed an initial evaluation of your vendors, your organization would likely benefit from a deeper audit of its technology environment, including connectivity, infrastructure, security, and compliance.