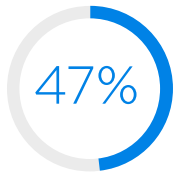# A NETWORK PARTNER FIT FOR YOU

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A reliable network can make all the difference

Modern business is conducted in a connected world. Companies of all types rely on phone, cable, Internet and other network services for daily operations; for most, remaining "open for business" depends on network performance. Continuous connectivity — without outages, slowdowns or service interruptions — is crucial. As a network provider, Spectrum Enterprise is committed to always-on connectivity and responsive service that helps businesses succeed, scale and create successful outcomes in the short and long term.

According to a LogicMonitor survey published in 2019, the four issues most likely to keep IT department decision makers awake at night are network performance, availability, security and cost-effectiveness. Performance and availability were rated especially important, with 80 percent of respondents including those two issues as major areas of concern.[1]

Their worries are not misplaced. Almost all (96 percent) of the surveyed IT professionals reported at least one network outage within the last three years. Nearly half (47 percent) experienced five or more outages in that time, a significant amount.[2] Behind those numbers are stories of real-life business owners, employees and customers faced with the inability to perform essential job functions, a lack of communication, diminished service offerings, closures and lost revenue.

Still, more than half of surveyed IT decision makers believe that outages and brownouts — that is, periods when networks are available but much slower and with lower-capacity than normal — are avoidable. A reliable, high-performing network can help businesses avoid outages or slowdowns and guard against lost revenue caused by network problems.

47%

of IT departments have experienced five or more outages within the last three years.[3]

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The impact of poor reliability

The practical realities of doing business can change rapidly. Sometimes, they can change overnight. No matter the situation, a reliable network can help a company guard against losses, improve operations and navigate unforeseen obstacles — while an unreliable network can increase losses, impede operations and create new obstacles.

It's not enough for a network connection to work "most of the time." Any service interruption can be detrimental for businesses, unpleasant for customers and frustrating for employees caught in the middle. In call centers, for instance, poor quality and network performance can lead to dropped calls, long wait times and unhappy customers — and customer service representatives are left unable to help. Meanwhile, time lost to slowdowns and downtime adds up for customer service teams and their employers, leading to hours of lost productivity.

Brick and mortar retailers and restaurants increasingly rely on mobile point-of-sale (mPOS) technology, credit card terminals and fast access to sales, pricing and inventory data, all of which need strong in-store connectivity. Two-thirds of retailers now use mPOS, and 57 percent offer in-store coupons and promotions via mobile.[4] Many stores also benefit from capturing customer emails or other data at the point of sale. And a majority of shoppers (63 percent) want to be able to use their phones to research products and pricing when browsing a store.[5]

66%
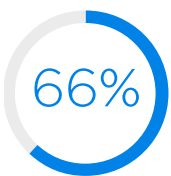
of retailers rely on connected mPOS technology.[6]

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Businesses with frequent outages report costs 16 times higher than those who experience less downtime.[8]

Additionally, as companies of all types look to online sales for revenue, a reliable network allows them to accept and fill orders in a timely and accurate manner. Managing e-commerce storefronts, running digital ads, collecting analytics and maintaining customer databases are all likewise critical to online selling. But all of the above — e-commerce, mPOS transactions, sales data, inventory checks, mobile coupons and customer device usage — evaporate in a network outage, effectively stalling sales both in stores and online.

The business impacts of downtime extend beyond lost revenue. Network outages can lead to compliance failure, lost productivity, damage to the brand, lowered stock prices, loss of data and higher mitigation costs. Given the number of essential job functions that are now IT-dependent, the prevalence of remote work and the ever-expanding role of social media and e-commerce, a single interruption in service can hurt business at any hour of the day and any day of the week. Even brief hiccups can cause ripple effects of frustration across an organization.

For instance, financial institutions depend heavily on centralized systems for operations across locations, from corporate offices to bank branches to ATMs. If local branches lose access to the Internet, they can't operate fully. Customers might be temporarily unable to access their accounts or perform in-person transactions, potentially resulting in delays, frustrations and a loss of trust in the financial institution — a major issue for an industry that depends on long-term customer loyalty.

Companies with more outages or slowdowns report mitigation costs — the cost of resolving issues that could have been avoided with no downtime — that are, on average, 16 times higher than companies with fewer instances of downtime. These companies also report spending twice the amount of time and deploying twice the number of personnel to troubleshoot network issues.[7]

Across industries, it's clear that on a long enough timeline, a network that is not functional at all times can be a liability. One way or another, outages and interruptions prove detrimental to the bottom line.

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What you need from a network

There is no single factor that guarantees consistent network performance. Instead, an effective network solution incorporates multiple methods of preventing outages and slowdowns. Your organization's network and your service provider's network should work together to provide the best capacity and coverage. The most important characteristics of a reliable business network are:

Abundant capacity

Network usage spikes and overloaded capacity both commonly cause downtime. Approaching or passing a capacity threshold can happen gradually and is easier to predict, which is why IT professionals consider it a top-two "missed opportunity" to prevent downtime.[9] On the other hand, surges in network usage can be temporary and unpredictable, and the best way to prepare for them is to implement a high-capacity network in the first place.

State of the art equipment

Along with usage spikes, network failure is consistently rated one of the two most frequent causes of downtime. A modern, well-maintained, owned and operated network from a major provider is less likely to fail than an outdated, piecemeal or incomplete network.

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Built-in diversity and redundancy

Having a diverse network, with redundant connections to act as backups and fail-safes, can also prevent failure. For instance, a software-defined wide area network (SD-WAN) allows a business to direct traffic over multiple connections within a network, efficiently using available bandwidth to optimize network capacity instead of overburdening any one connection. Even without SD-WAN technology, enterprise networks should incorporate backup connections and other architectures, as needed, to prevent downtime.

Service level agreements

Competitive service level agreements (SLAs) define a high level of network performance that is backed by effective, responsive technical support. Certified technicians, local support staff and guaranteed uptime should be part of any SLA at the enterprise level.

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Benefits of managed services

- Predictable cost structure that reduces capital expenditures and limits ongoing costs.

- Improved risk management with support on planning, documentation and compliance.

- Future-ready IT strategy that ensures your infrastructure can keep up with tech innovations and market opportunities.

- Ability to focus on your core business rather than day-to-day IT management.

Why Spectrum Enterprise?

Network solutions from Spectrum Enterprise are predicated on all of the above qualities: abundant capacity, state of the art equipment, built-in diversity and redundancy, a dual-core network and an exceptional SLA.

When it comes to both capacity and equipment, Spectrum Enterprise is prepared to handle enterprise-level challenges. Across the nation, tens of thousands of on-the-ground employees monitor and support over 230,000 fiber-route miles of physical network infrastructure, maintaining equipment and adding capacity based on local demand. Spectrum Enterprise fiber services are backed by a dual-core fiber network that is fully redundant.

Spectrum Enterprise offers a diverse range of services, including Internet, network, voice, TV and security solutions, as well as end-to-end network management, which can help alleviate pressure on overburdened IT departments. In fact, 90 percent of IT managers report that they would prefer end-to-end management from a network provider.[10]

No matter the type of network or number of connections needed, Spectrum Enterprise will cover your business at every site, with network performance backed by a team of experts, including industry-certified engineers, customer service representatives and local support staff. This team enables Spectrum Enterprise to offer industry-leading performance and uptime, with 99.99 percent service availability on fiber. In the event of an outage, Spectrum Enterprise can guarantee a four-hour mean time to restore service. Meanwhile, local technicians remain on call to provide round-the-clock responsive support.

In addition, Spectrum Enterprise network specialists train regularly for worst-case scenarios and rely on disaster modeling to prepare for (and ideally prevent) outages and disruptions. When combined with always-on network monitoring and backup support, these practices help ensure reliable, responsive and future-ready service.

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Planning for the future — together

In today's connected business environment, network services are the ties that bind retailers and service providers to their customers, employees and the world at large. No matter what happens, uninterrupted connectivity can mean the difference between "avoidable problem" and "seamless continuation of business." Choosing a network partner that can expertly set up essential services, then keep them running smoothly, can help companies thrive even as circumstances change and the business world continues to evolve.

In short: your network should work for your business, not against it.

At Spectrum Enterprise, we regularly review and update our business continuity plans based on industry data to ensure that we will be able to provide fast, reliable service in every scenario. With constant network monitoring and backup support as standard operating procedures, Spectrum Enterprise remains prepared to deliver uninterrupted Internet, network, voice and collaboration, security and TV services to our clients.

Spectrum Enterprise is committed to providing reliable network support and exceptional customer service to organizations of all sizes. Learn more about Spectrum Enterprise on our website.

90%

of IT managers report that they would prefer end-to-end management from a network provider.[11]

1. LogicMonitor, "2019 IT Outage Impact Study," 2019, https://www.logicmonitor.com/it-outage-impact-survey.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. BRP Consulting, "2019 Special Report: In-Store Mobility," 2019, https://brpconsulting.com/download/2019-special-report-in-store-mobility/.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. LogicMonitor, "2019 IT Outage Impact Study.
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9. Ibid.
10. Deloitte, "The future of cyber survey 2019," 2019, https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/advisory/articles/future-of-cyber-survey.html.
11. Ibid.

About Spectrum Enterprise

Spectrum Enterprise, a part of Charter Communications, Inc., is a national provider of scalable, fiber technology solutions serving America's largest businesses and communications service providers. The broad Spectrum Enterprise portfolio includes networking and managed services solutions: Internet access, Ethernet access and networks, Voice and TV solutions. Spectrum Enterprise's industry-leading team of experts works closely with clients to achieve greater business success by providing solutions designed to meet their evolving needs. More information about Spectrum Enterprise can be found at enterprise.spectrum.com.

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