



FOUNDRY
NETWORKS

**Leveraging the Advantages of a
Multi-vendor Network Strategy**

White Paper

Overview

Today's enterprise network provides more than simply a technology infrastructure. It's an enabler for the enterprise, supporting mission critical applications, creating operational efficiencies and increasing productivity gains. While the infrastructure provides the very foundation for the organization and its initiatives, the business strategy must drive the development of the enterprise network, ensuring it supports today's requirements while evolving to meet tomorrow's demands.

A multi-vendor network strategy supports the idea that in order to truly align the enterprise infrastructure strategy with business requirements, organizations must be free to choose the solutions that best meet their unique needs and based upon open standards, not proprietary, closed systems. Business imperatives and strategy should drive network infrastructure strategy, not the other way around.

Advantages of a Multi-vendor Network Strategy – The Power of Choice

Unlike single vendor strategies that require the enterprise to conform to a sole equipment provider's point of view, a multi-vendor network strategy empowers enterprises with the freedom to choose. The network strategy should be built upon an open standards-based solution that fits with the business' vision, a path for network evolution, and best-of breed innovations that deliver a competitive edge.

Best-of-Breed without Compromise

With the network becoming a vital component of the overall business strategy, enterprises shouldn't be forced to sacrifice one area of the network for another simply because a vendor's product portfolio constraints demand it. A truly sustainable, evolutionary network foundation needs to have every component of the network firing on all cylinders - a multi-vendor network strategy allows an enterprise to do just that.

While single-vendor strategies force the enterprise to settle for what one provider has to offer for each area of the network, a multi-vendor strategy enables a true best-of-breed solution that is optimized to perform across the enterprise.

Flexibility That Drives Innovation

When networks are built upon open standards, enterprises have the ability to adopt new solutions as the business grows and needs change, or as new and improved solutions become available. Because a multi-vendor strategy is inherently an open-standards strategy as well, vendors must continue to innovate to create competitive advantage, driving new advances that result in higher performance solutions.

A single vendor with a broad portfolio of products will by its very nature always have products that lag behind others due to resource allocation, disparate product lifecycles and shifting areas of focus. Furthermore, a single vendor strategy results in a lock-out strategy for any competing vendors –

even when they offer a superior solution. A multi-vendor network strategy based upon open standards doesn't demand that you sacrifice innovation or flexibility. In fact, innovation and flexibility are its very by-products.

Reducing Risk – And Costs

While reliance upon a single vendor creates significant risk for enterprises, a multi-vendor network strategy actually mitigates risk by reducing exposure to a single vendor's decisions, from arbitrary product rationalization and service discontinuation to pricing increases. But the risk reduction benefits of a multi-vendor network strategy don't end there. Because while a single vendor strategy puts the enterprise at the mercy of a sole source that can drive costs up through mandatory upgrades, compulsory support programs and equipment packages that include products that don't necessarily meet your needs, a multi-vendor strategy actually promotes cost reduction. By creating a level playing field where partners must earn business through best-pricing, comprehensive service programs and added value, vendors in all areas must demonstrate commitment to earning your business – today and every day.

Leverage the Enterprise's Expertise

No vendor understands your business and its network requirements as well as your technical staff. To move forward with a single-vendor strategy is to abdicate control over the decisions your technical staff is trained to make and instead places the control of your network destiny directly into the hands of a third party. A multi-vendor strategy ensures that you are at the helm of your network by giving you the ability to select solutions based upon your business drivers, not your vendor's.

Specialized Support

Today's network complexity requires that technical support be delivered by experts with deep knowledge in specific areas. Because single vendor strategies are designed around broad product

Myths of the Single Vendor Network:

Limits complexity – many vendors who claim to provide everything an enterprise needs to meet its technology requirements have actually built solutions through acquisition with products that weren't necessarily designed to work together

Superior support – with diverse and varied products to support, support is provided by generalists with broad experience vs. specialists with deep knowledge

Lower operational cost – in addition to often requiring increased support costs for aging technology, selecting a single vendor to provide products for all areas of the network may actually increase costs due to the limited ability to negotiate pricing as well as supporting aging technology

Acceleration of innovation adoption – with a single vendor the enterprise is actually limited to the innovations that one vendor thinks is important

Increased operational efficiencies – a vendor wouldn't source all its materials from a single vendor due to the increased risk of relying upon a single source, why should an enterprise customer be any different?

portfolios and supported by generalists who sacrifice depth for breadth of knowledge, finding the right person with the right answer can take time, time your organization doesn't have when the network supports enterprise operations. Multi-vendor strategies ensure that you have access to specialists with the focused expertise necessary to effectively resolve issues, minimizing the impact to interruption to your organization.

Foundry Networks as Part of a Multi-vendor Network Strategy

When you develop your network requirements to support your business strategy, and not to support a single vendor's point of view, the enterprise is not only positioned for the future, it's positioned to win. Built upon open standards, and committed to delivering flexible solutions that drive innovation, Foundry Networks provides the ideal foundation for a multi-vendor network strategy.

Open Standards for Greater Flexibility

Foundry has built a reputation for innovating high-performance networking solutions that address the needs and requirements of today and tomorrow's network infrastructures. At the core of this reputation is our commitment to open standards solutions.

Foundry Networks provides a comprehensive end-to-end IP infrastructure, which not only provides a foundation for existing applications, but embraces new applications without costly upgrades or replacement. With Foundry products as your network foundation, you can be confident that legacy applications will be supported, and that you will be able to take advantage of new applications and next generation technologies that are mission critical to your business.

Proven Best of Breed Solutions

Foundry's customers include the world's premier ISPs, metro service providers, and enterprises, including e-commerce sites, universities, entertainment, health and wellness, government, financial and manufacturing companies. From being recognized as one of Network World's Ten Companies to Watch to our selection as Best of Show at Interop, Foundry Networks has been recognized by industry experts, analysts, and publications for our commitment and leadership in technology innovation and continued corporate success.

Knowledgeable Support

Foundry Networks understands that for today's enterprise, the network is the lifeline of the organization. Many of the world's largest companies rely on Foundry's industry-leading service and support to keep their networks operating at maximum efficiency. These demanding enterprises and service providers leverage Foundry's people, processes, and tools to maximize network uptime, availability, and performance.

With Foundry support services, you have the peace of mind that comes from knowing that your business is backed by responsive, value-added technical support that ensures maximum network reliability and uptime.

Freedom of Choice is the Freedom to Succeed

Today's network infrastructures are complex extensions of business operations. They must adapt to rapid growth, data intensive applications, security threats, and new technologies that push the edge of the network. With so much at stake, can you afford to put the future of your business into the hands of a vendor with a single point of view?

For more information, visit

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