# CX Matters Now More Than Ever

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Having the best possible connectivity is typically top of mind for network managers. Am I with the right vendor? Am I getting good value? Is the reliability, redundancy, and security good enough? Do I trust them? These are all fair questions that are central to any supplier partnership, not just those providing connectivity.

Businesses are asking tougher questions with greater scrutiny, especially as they are facing challenges that are making it tough to do business: the macroeconomic and geopolitical situations are far from what any of us would want to see on both a business and personal level. Add to this the rising costs of providing their products and services, combined with the need to keep costs down for their customers. It's not a very pretty situation.
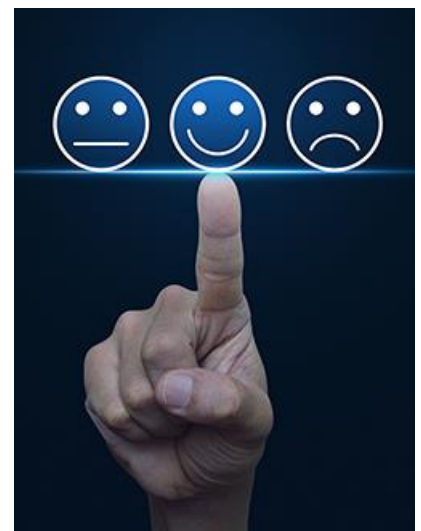
Getting to the Heart of Thing

Service delivery and customer service are key differentiators in the highly competitive telecoms sector. Exceptional service delivery, particularly during the implementation phase, is crucial to laying the proper foundation for partnership relationships with customers. It's a huge sign of trust when anenterprise (such as a financial institution) runs its business-critical IT systems over its chosen network. That trust can't be taken lightly. It must be cultivated from the beginning and tended throughout the relationship.

Once services are up and running, the speed, reliability and performance of the network are always being measured. All of these reside under the customer service umbrella. For every provider in the sector, world-class customer service must be the ultimate focus. It starts with maintaining constant, transparent, and open communication with customers. And it goes without saying that accountability and honesty are part of this mix, especially when technology fails, or an unexpected event occurs. For the partnership to survive during the tough times, finger pointing and excuses can't be part of the conversation.

Finding the Right Provider

One of the biggest challenges in switching providers is knowing which one to choose. It can take a great deal of time and effort to research all the options available in the market and, whilst the opinions of peers matter, it could be risky to make an enterprise network decision based purely on another person's experience.

To help overcome these challenges, we are seeing a steady increase in enterprises using the services of Technology Service Brokers (TSBs) to help in sourcing and selecting connectivity provider services.

TSBs will take the time to understand each enterprise's unique set of business challenges and help to streamline the evaluation process and narrow down a set of providers that they recommend meeting those challenges. They hold the providers accountable to demonstrate, in a measurable way, the quality of the network, services, and customer service that they provide.

With that in mind, here are my predictions on the qualities that TSBs will increasingly evaluate when choosing a connectivity provider to support global enterprises.

Service Delivery of the Highest Level

Enterprises place significant importance on the service delivery experience, with good reason. Unfortunately, one previously negative service delivery experience can deter an enterprise from

exploring new connectivity providers, even if they are unsatisfied today. In 2024, TSBs will seek globally distributed service delivery teams that possess

a deep understanding of the markets they serve and are able to leverage relationships in those markets. Furthermore, transparent communication throughout the service delivery process will become a key consideration for TSBs in the coming year. Finally, TSBs will recommend providers whose service delivery teams take responsibility for a solution from implementation to operation until that solution functions as designed within a customer's IT environment.

Scalable Bandwidth

The demand for scalable, high-capacity bandwidth will only increase as multinational enterprises strive to cost-effectively serve diverse application needs, improve performance, and maintain customer satisfaction across a multi-cloud environment. TSBs will push to understand how connectivity services are optimized to serve those needs through the recent development of open network architecture and coherent pluggable components.

Coherent pluggable components are now essential for meeting rising bandwidth demand in data centers, cloud computing, and high-speed applications (AI and video), driving significant value for enterprise customers by enhancing power efficiency and cost savings without sacrificing capacity, performance, or scalability. In 2024, connectivity services enabled by coherent pluggables will help enterprises unlock numerous use cases, including increased access to data centers and multi-cloud sites, disaster recovery, and data replication.

Reliability on a Global Scale for Performance and Security

Multinational enterprises are generating more traffic and pushing applications over the Internet than ever before, and that trend will continue in 2024. Reliable performance and security on a global scale are crucial for business success. However, with increased SD-WAN deployments, many enterprises will find that providers' underlay networks lack performance and security because they are pieced together through acquisitions. In other cases, carriers will diversify their portfolio so much that they will lack expertise in delivering high-performance connectivity. Furthermore, many providers only offer network security (like DDoS) as an "add-on" when in fact, it should be a foundational network element (i.e., part of the connectivity package) in 2024's global threat landscape.

To meet 2024's difficulties, TSBs will work to understand a carrier's network evolution and evaluate their track record in solving the performance and security problems associated with global service delivery. To address network security specifically, TSBs will prioritize global DDoS mitigation that is native to all the potential networking services of a provider.

Responsive and Knowledgeable Customer Service Resources

Excellent service delivery experiences are the starting point, but a sustainable partnership with a global enterprise must be built on a provider's long-term commitment to customer service. As a result, customer service will continue to be a major focus of TSBs when evaluating connectivity partners. They will evaluate if customer service is a core part of a carrier's business and culture, including third-party measurements to validate its customers' trust in their services. This trust extends to both the provider's SLA and their ability to demonstrate that their overall support process will deliver responsiveness and transparency during a service-impacting problem.

In 2024, simplicity will become the defining quality of customer service resources, as the traditional gauntlet of portals and credentials will be consolidated. To provide value to enterprises, TSBs will

choose connectivity services that can be accessed through either 1) a single service portal that provides full transparency of service tickets, real-time network analytics and traffic graphs, or 2) open APIs that can integrate directly into the customer's IPSM platform.

Focus on what Matters: Performance, Trust, and Transparency

As we head into 2024, enterprises will continue to face challenges related to the cost and complexity of application performance across multi-site and multi-cloud footprint, combined with the risks of global service delivery and increased security threats on a global scale. To help enterprises overcome these challenges, TSBs will recommend global connectivity providers that demonstrate effective service delivery/customer support processes, while transparently sharing all data in a way that best suits the customer's business need. In addition, a provider's ability to scale and show measurable network performance will go a long way in mitigating the perceived risk of an enterprise seeking to change providers.