

Is your business using the right broadband service?

8 Questions to ask about your business broadband needs

Volatile and increasingly competitive local and global economies combined with the growing pace of change in business models and technology increases the need for businesses to ensure they are using technology effectively and economically.

One area requiring serious consideration is how your business connects to the World Wide Web, aka your broadband connection. With the number of suppliers and business broadband plans available which one should you choose for your business?

Here are 8 questions you should ask yourself before considering which broadband service to use:

1. What access speed do I require? This will largely depend upon the number of internet users and/or speed of response demanded by your business applications using the internet. An office with 2-5 staff simply browsing the net and sending smaller low volume emails will need a much lower speed service than one say with a higher number of users downloading/uploading graphics, videos or large diagrams. Using feedback from your clients and internal users on “perceived internet” speed will give you an indication of optimum speed/performance. Note that a slow network response may not always be as a result of a slow broadband access speed as other factors may be causing the network, server or other elements to impact on the user experience.

If your business needs to upload large files then ensure your broadband service is “symmetrical” i.e. The same upload and download speed, many broadband services are not symmetrical and offer significantly reduced upload speeds. This can cause time delays and staff inefficiencies.

2. How much usage data will I need? Again this is dependant upon how you use the internet within your business. If you have a business need to send and receive a significant number of large files via the internet then you should consider an “unlimited” usage plan (where available) as this will avoid nasty surprises on your monthly bill due to the “excess usage” charges most suppliers apply. Some suppliers choose to ‘slow down’ your connection when you have exceeded your limit which can have significant impact to your business. If you already have a broadband connection then all good suppliers will supply a report on your monthly usage which, over time, will allow you to craft the best value usage plan for your business.

3. What is the cost? Price is usually a trade off between speed, usage and often the number of competing service providers in your area. When it comes to price, trying to compare “apples with apples” can be difficult as many suppliers bundle their services with other products such as land lines, tolls and mobile phones etc. Make sure you are aware of the ‘big picture’ when comparing and looking at all your broadband and voice services costs.

4. Will there be additional or hidden cost? We have already mentioned the ‘excess usage’ charge which can be significant if unexpected, unplanned or unauthorised high usage occurs. Keep in mind that some business broadband providers separate the access and internet service charges. i.e. There will be a charge for the ‘access line’ and another charge for the “Internet/ISP” service.

5. How will my business be impacted if the internet is unavailable? Remember outages may impact your business applications, systems, email or your website. If any or all of these are critical to your business then you need to ensure a highly reliable service provider or consider back up options such as dial-up (very slow) or an additional diverse broadband service. Also ensure your service provider has 24/7 support available.

6. Can I use VoIP Services (e.g. Skype) over my Broadband Connection? Many businesses are taking advantage of the significant savings Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) can offer. It has been suggested that some broadband service providers ‘throttle’ (delay) this type of traffic rendering them slow or unusable. If you wish to use any type of VoIP service offering ask your service provider for written confirmation that VoIP traffic will not be throttled/delayed or impacted by any design or deliberate actions on their part. You should also check their terms and conditions to see if their right to throttle this kind of traffic is explicitly stated.

7. Should I commit to a term contract? – Ultimately this comes down to a business decision on your part. Term contracts can offer very attractive enticements but it is often quoted that the internet year last just three months and similarly broadband pricing is reducing and services improving at an ever increasing rate. Depending on the offer on the table a 12 month term would be ideal whereas a 24 month contract may see you constrained financially and technically in 12-18 months time.

8. What about technology, how does it all fit together? There are a number of technology issues that will require addressing. These can be complex and best left to the experts but for basic broadband connections you will require your own router (wireless or fixed). All good broadband services providers should provide information, advice or even support in setting up your broadband connection into your business environment.

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About nzwireless

nzwireless is a New Zealand owned company and has been providing high quality, reliable broadband and telecommunications services to the Greater Wellington region since 2002.

For a no obligation consultation about how nzwireless can help you with your business broadband needs call 0800 nzwireless (0800 699 473) (International +64 3852211)