

Propelling the Modern Workforce

A cloud platform provides a launchpad for success.

A cloud-first network strategy ensures employees and their devices have secure, consistent network access regardless of location.

State and local governments have too much to do and too few resources. Constituents expect quick, competent services and well-functioning operations, yet workforce shortages and skills gaps—both in IT and in day-to-day operations—jeopardize mission delivery and overwhelm existing staff.

Organizations need a clear strategy that enables IT and business teams to work from anywhere, simplifies work for IT staff and provides a path for IT skill development. A cloud platform helps government IT leaders achieve this strategy by streamlining network management, increasing agility and scalability, and improving security across the network environment.

Meeting workers where they are

The following trends drive the need for a cloud-first network strategy:

People working in and out of the office. To draw on a larger pool of skilled workers, organizations are hiring beyond their local area and offering hybrid work options. IT teams must maintain high standards for onboarding, connectivity and security regardless of where people work.

IT skills gaps and loss of institutional knowledge.

As seasoned IT professionals retire, undocumented network configurations and customizations go with them. In addition, the cost of expertise for managing today's complex network is often beyond budget.

Cybersecurity and compliance risks. The expanding network perimeter and growing volume of endpoints introduces new vulnerabilities. Security professionals must also make sure network traffic meets compliance requirements for privacy, availability and data-sharing outside specific physical locations.

Widely distributed government locations. In-person site visits to dispersed state offices or multiple city agencies can consume hours in drive time and delay repairs, upgrades and maintenance. Whether ensuring digital services are provided

to constituents, troubleshooting network issues or upgrading systems, government IT teams are already stretched thin.

Growing number of touchpoints. Traditional network management is complex. Too many people spend their time keeping the network running instead of making sure it can flexibly support new services, new users, new devices and future network needs.

Benefits of a modern workforce strategy

A cloud-first workforce strategy addresses key business and technology challenges with recruiting, onboarding and supporting today's workers. Organizations that embrace a cloud-based strategy reap the following benefits:

- ✓ Agility to recruit from a wider pool of skilled professionals
- ✓ Equitable access to the network and resources, no matter where people work
- ✓ Enhanced productivity and optimized workflows
- ✓ Network infrastructure that scales quickly and flexibly to add remote workers and accommodate changing needs
- ✓ Seamless, secure connectivity across all touchpoints
- ✓ Easier monitoring and management of devices and the network
- ✓ Faster, more accurate and well-coordinated response to cyber threats
- ✓ A path to skill development and a chance for less-skilled IT workers to handle tasks that once required an administrator

Connect and secure the hybrid workforce

To make sure all workers can meet residents' needs and perform their roles efficiently:

Connect workers wherever they are. Make the network and its resources seamlessly available to all workers anywhere and anytime (e.g., by deploying next-generation Wi-Fi for public access).

Simplify deployment. Allow IT workers to easily deploy virtual private networks and other resources by using a single cloud-based interface to provision and manage thousands of devices.

Strengthen security. Incorporate security that spans the entire workforce environment and accommodates specific

policy and compliance needs. Consider Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) technology to reduce the attack surface, identify anomalous behavior and improve performance.

Simplify network management

To help lean IT teams maximize productivity:

Go cloud first. Use a cloud-based platform and tools to flexibly monitor and manage on-site, remote and hybrid work environments.

Centralize management. Manage network configurations, security, performance and other functions from any location or device. Simplify management of distributed sites by using a single cloud-based interface to gain real-time, end-to-end visibility into networks, devices and applications across the entire infrastructure. By enabling the IT team to troubleshoot issues remotely, centralized management also reduces the need for on-site visits.

Automate intelligently. Use artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to streamline tasks, provide recommendations to optimize resource usage and detect potential issues before they become a problem.

Enlist vendor support. Be sure your vendor offers a range of materials and levels of 24/7 technical support to address issues wherever and whenever needed.

Empower and upskill IT teams

Running a network requires a range of skills and expertise. To assist network administrators, expand IT skill sets and prepare the next generation of IT professionals:

Leverage vendor content. Use vendor-provided content, online tutorials and workshops to train, upskill and certify IT employees. Look for simplicity and ease of learning out of the box.

Provide on-the-job learning. Give new employees opportunities for hands-on experience in deployment, management and monitoring by using cloud tools that simplify provisioning, network optimization and other tasks.

Simplify technology rollouts. Use a cloud platform that automatically executes the organization's security and use policies onto new devices or applications. This allows a junior

team member to set up new locations, which a senior member can then check through the management dashboard.

Show, don't tell. Use an intuitive dashboard that graphically displays network configurations for easier management and faster resolutions.

Why a best-in-class cloud platform matters

A best-in-class cloud platform provides features and capabilities that help organizations successfully execute a modern workforce strategy:

- ✔ **Rapid scalability** in terms of performance and deployment to new geographical areas.
- ✔ **Automation** of routine tasks such as resource deployment and management so IT teams can do more with less. For example, departments of motor vehicles (DMVs) can automatically optimize network resources to handle increased demand when automobile registration or license renewal services go online.
- ✔ **Extensibility** via APIs to link to third-party applications and automated workflows. For example, DMVs can link to an application that provides estimated wait times and offers options to on-hold call center customers.
- ✔ **Network optimization** using AI and machine learning rather than manual trial-and-error processes, which are time-consuming and difficult to get right in dynamic environments.
- ✔ **Choreographed architecture** so disparate or newly introduced products can work together efficiently and seamlessly. This efficiency increases agility and enables organizations to create rich experiences for constituents and the workforce.

Trajectory to success

A cloud-first workforce strategy helps state and local governments remain agile, resilient and innovative. Each organization has unique needs. To craft the best solution for your organization, identify the most urgent workforce challenges and opportunities, then work backwards to choose the appropriate solution and vendor partner.

This piece was written and produced by the Center for Digital Government Content Studio, with information and input from Cisco Meraki.

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