

Business Summary

Why Retailers Need Store Connectivity?

- Retailers need high speed bandwidth to enable them to leverage advanced retail solutions
- Retailers need to attain faster credit card processing times and real time POS batch updates
- Retailers are looking for real time access solutions that provide immediate results and increase employee productivity
- Retailers need secure high-speed connectivity solutions that enable them to communicate with remote branch locations while reducing costs significantly
- Allows staff and management to download pricing updates and operational information in real time
- Store connectivity solutions extend the visibility of the supply chain and increase customer satisfaction
- Retailers are looking for solutions that enhance the customer shopping experience and increase customer loyalty

Business Case for Store Connectivity

Margins are extremely competitive. Retailers realize that technology is an important strategic tool to use to gain competitive advantages. Store connectivity transforms an existing dial-up network into a real time network using WAN and VPN technology. With all enterprise communications taking place in real time, operational efficiency improves in all departments. Store connectivity enables:

- Instantaneous enterprise-wide access to product descriptions, pricing, inventory availability and delivery status is possible without leaving the customer
- Train new employees more quickly, improve your sales associate's expertise to improve and deliver faster customer service
- With point of sale transactions, stock levels are immediately visible, providing insight into sales activities and metrics
- Resolutions of enterprise-wide communication inefficiencies by connecting stores through a wide area network

Solution Overview

Cisco has partnered with Resource Communications to offer a comprehensive Store Connectivity solution that includes planning, implementation and maintenance. This Store Connectivity solution provides high speed bandwidth to retail stores using wide area and virtual private networks (VPNs). The solutions and services include:

Virtual Private Networks

- VPNs offer an enhanced feature set over frame relay with a solid ROI, and positions retailers well for future features, services and convergence
- VPNs allow toll bypass and many enterprises have deployed full-blown IP telephony solutions
- VPNs have a superior cost/bandwidth in nearly all cases
- VPNs provide an integrated interoffice connectivity approach, allowing regional, branch and small offices, teleworkers, and extranets to connect to a central office
- Any branch or home that can access the Internet can securely connect to the corporate VPN

Wide Area Networks

- Typical headquarters connectivity architecture (Private WAN Option) includes:
 - Individual 56 Kbps to 2 Mbps frame relay, leased line, or ATM circuits per store
 - Aggregation by carrier into redundant high speed links for scalability and management
- Typical headquarters connectivity architecture (Internet/VPN Option)
 - Corporate connection using redundant high-speed Internet access
 - Corporate offices will use Cisco IOS Router with IOS Firewall Feature Set and VPN which provides centralized:
 - Administrative access to infrastructure devices via TACACS+
 - Configuration and control of QoS policy
 - Security including VPN configuration and monitoring

- Branches will connect to Internet using broadband (DSL or cable modem) or dedicated low speed link to the Internet
- Branches will use Cisco IOS Router with IOS Firewall Feature Set and VPN which provides WAN connectivity, routing, access-control and firewalling, hardware-based VPN acceleration, VLAN trunking, and QoS for delay-sensitive traffic
- Branch location retail servers are host-based, have intrusion detection feature, and provides protection for critical servers

Resource Communications Connectivity Services

For over a decade, Resource Communications has negotiated connectivity service contracts for its customers. Resource Communications provides retailers better contracts and pricing from service providers than they can achieve by negotiating themselves. The Resource Communications Network Operations Center (NOC) is dedicated to the management of retailer networks. With a web-based data control center, retailers gain real time management capabilities to monitor store connections. Resource Communications services include:

- Contract negotiation
- Planning
- Implementation
- Monitoring
- Maintenance and support

Qualifying Questions

What Questions to Ask a Retailer?

- What specific departmental communication challenges are facing your store?
- Are you currently using Frame Relay for network connectivity?
- How many network environments are in place?
- What percentage of your stores are connected to each other using dialup?
- How are all of your branch offices and store locations networked together?