



IP NETWORK

Choosing the Best Open Standards Network Strategy

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.

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. While the infrastructure provides a 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.

OVERVIEW

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.

The Power of Choice

Unlike single vendor strategies, which requires the enterprise to conform to one 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 should not 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 and an open standards-based 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 might by its very nature 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 lockout strategy for any competing vendors—even when another vendor may offer a superior solution. A multi-vendor network strategy based upon open standards does not demand that you sacrifice innovation or flexibility. In fact, innovation and flexibility are its very byproducts.

CHARACTERISTICS 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 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 does typically not 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?

BROCADE AS PART OF A ROBUST NETWORK STRATEGY

When you develop the network requirements to support your business strategy and not to support a single vendor's point of view, the enterprise is positioned for future growth and development. Built upon open standards, and committed to delivering flexible solutions that drive innovation, Brocade provides the ideal foundation for small-to-medium size businesses and enterprise-class organizations for many different types of customers.

No vendor understands your business and its network requirements as well as your technical staff. Moving forward with a single vendor strategy may mean abdicating control over the decisions your technical staff is trained to make and risks placing the control of your network destiny into the hands of a third party with proprietary, closed systems. Embracing open standards-based 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.

Reducing Risk and Costs

While reliance upon a single vendor may create 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. And the risk reduction benefits of a multi-vendor network strategy do not end there. Because while a single vendor strategy puts the enterprise at the mercy of a sole source, which can drive costs up through mandatory upgrades, compulsory support programs, and equipment packages that include products that may not 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.

Open Standards for Greater Flexibility

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

Brocade'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. Brocade has been recognized by industry experts, analysts, and publications for our commitment and leadership in technology innovation and continued corporate success, including the following awards:

- Brocade 8000: Special Award, Best of Show Networking Infrastructure Product for Large Enterprise, Interop Tokyo 2009
- Brocade BigIron RX Series: Best of Show Network Infrastructure for Enterprise - Interop Tokyo 2008
- InformationWeek 500: Business Technology Innovators 2007, 2008
- Brocade: Best of Interop Las Vegas - Green Award 2008

KNOWLEDGEABLE SUPPORT

Today's network complexity requires that technical support be delivered by experts with deep knowledge in specific areas. Because single vendor strategies may be designed around broad product 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 does not have when the network supports mission-critical network operations. Leveraging best-of-breed vendors ensures that you have access to specialists with the focused expertise necessary to effectively resolve issues, minimizing the impact to interruption to your organization.

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

CONCLUSION

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 product portfolio built on proprietary, closed systems?

ABOUT BROCADE

Brocade connects the world's most important business information—delivering proven networking solutions for today's most data-intensive companies. From the data center to high-performance Ethernet networks, Brocade is extending its near-15-year heritage as a leading provider of business solutions for real-world environments.

The unique Brocade approach to networking protects IT investments, reduces costs, and minimizes risk by providing:

- Business-centric, highly reliable products that reduce TCO and OpEx
- A strategic competitive advantage through innovative technology
- The best choice in terms of overall price/performance value

From the Global 1000 to top financial and research institutions, from the largest enterprise networks and government entities to global service providers, the world's most demanding organizations count on Brocade to maximize the business return on their data. It's no wonder 90 percent of the world's most critical business information flows through Brocade solutions. Quite simply, Brocade enables today's complex businesses to run. Where other vendors produce networking that's ordinary, Brocade is committed to delivering the extraordinary.

For more information about Brocade products, services, and solutions, visit www.brocade.com.

Corporate Headquarters

San Jose, CA USA
T: +1-408-333-8000
info@brocade.com

European Headquarters

Geneva, Switzerland
T: +41-22-799-56-40
emea-info@brocade.com

Asia Pacific Headquarters

Singapore
T: +65-6538-4700
apac-info@brocade.com

© 2009 Brocade Communications Systems, Inc. All Rights Reserved. 10/09 GA-WP-1425-00

Brocade, the B-wing symbol, BigIron, DCX, Fabric OS, FastIron, IronPoint, IronShield, IronView, IronWare, JetCore, NetIron, SecureIron, ServerIron, StorageX, and Turbolron are registered trademarks, and DCFM, Extraordinary Networks, and SAN Health are trademarks of Brocade Communications Systems, Inc., in the United States and/or in other countries. All other brands, products, or service names are or may be trademarks or service marks of, and are used to identify, products or services of their respective owners.

Notice: This document is for informational purposes only and does not set forth any warranty, expressed or implied, concerning any equipment, equipment feature, or service offered or to be offered by Brocade. Brocade reserves the right to make changes to this document at any time, without notice, and assumes no responsibility for its use. This informational document describes features that may not be currently available. Contact a Brocade sales office for information on feature and product availability. Export of technical data contained in this document may require an export license from the United States government.

**BROCADE**