Businesses should conduct regular network assessments to ensure that their IT processes are performing efficiently. From identifying obsolete hardware and software to improving security and devising disaster plans, a well-designed network assessment makes sure that business productivity maximises.

Here are 5 things a good network assessment must include:

# Network Inventory

The first step is to know how the network is equipped, structured, and configured. One must know answers to questions like how many users we have, how old is the network software and hardware, are users accessing the network through few or many devices, and what exactly is the network used for?

Some businesses depend on their networks for accounting or communication. Others may also rely on their network for application development, ordering and inventory control, office collaboration, and project management.

A network assessment should examine network inventory and align its capabilities with the business. This helps ensure that the network is performing optimally without wasting many resources.

# Security Assessment

With data breach numbers increasing every year, data security is integral to protect a business. A vulnerability can exist in any part of the network. It can be a result of an outdated network technology, insufficient firewall protection, unsecured web application, or poor passwords.

Conducting a security assessment uncovers potential issues before they arise, saves downtime, prevents data loss and ensures customer loyalty.

# Network Performance Evaluation

A bandwidth limitation slows down performance and affects employee productivity. These bottlenecks can be a result of a number of causes such as large file transfers, backups at wrong times, content streaming, or faulty software and hardware configuration.

Network assessment can isolate the causes of slow network performance and helps determine the best way to get the network up and running efficiently and effectively.

# Cloud Setup Evaluation

With more business setups moving to the cloud, it’s important to consider how to leverage the technology. Many organisations use cloud for file sharing and backup and recovery. In each case, it is important to cater to security. Some businesses such as Office 365 also run cloud-based applications.

In addition to security concerns, it is important to know how well the cloud setup works for specific needs of the business. Cloud assessment and evaluation can make overall network assessment more thorough.

# Mobile Device Usage

For businesses that heavily rely on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, a network assessment helps reveal how the mobile device usage relates to the network. Some mobile devices work efficiently, but can pose security threats as well. A network assessment that evaluates mobile usage while adhering to security concerns goes a long way towards making the business network more reliable.