

Advantages of a Cloud Managed Wireless Network

Growing small businesses face many challenges. Amidst it all, they need to ensure their networking solutions grow with them. Whether due to a merger, an acquisition or simple success, this is especially important when a small business expands beyond a single location. It is often the case that once a second location is necessary, they need it up and running yesterday. Old networking solutions rarely make it easy to do so.

A New Solution to an Old Problem

Cloud managed wireless networks are the perfect solution for small businesses in the Chicago metro area that are in the process of expanding. They are specifically designed to make scaling up to multiple locations easy and painless. And they have a lower overall total cost of ownership – both in the short and long term. The power of the cloud makes it entirely possible for a business to roll out a stable, secure and speedy network at a new location in a matter of hours rather than days.

Many businesses feel that the supposed benefits of cloud managed wireless networks sound too good to be true. These concerns are well founded, since new technology rarely seems to live up to the marketing hype. However, when the advantages are examined more closely, it begins to make sense.

Time Savings Equal Cost Savings

Cloud managed wireless networks save a considerable amount of time compared to older solutions. The technology that drives them – such as Cisco's Meraki line of networking equipment – is specifically designed with multi-location small businesses in mind. Rather than wasting time trying to manage multiple disparate networks, the cloud allows all business network locations to be treated as one big network. And they are all administered via one easy-to-use dashboard.

In the past, network administrators had to multiply their efforts for each business location. They needed to maintain multiple pieces of documentation for each network. Firmware updates needed to be manually applied to the networking equipment one at a time at each location. If the

equipment offered a reporting function, it would also need to be manually configured across each network to monitor performance and security.

Even in an ideal scenario where a small business had a dedicated network administrator in addition to other IT staff, these manual steps were tedious, error prone and time consuming. In a more realistic scenario where a small business had a single IT employee responsible for all technology resources – or perhaps no IT staff at all – this led to poorly documented, sub-optimally configured and insecure networks.

Thankfully, times have changed. Cloud managed wireless network technologies like Meraki allow network administrators or management staff to quickly and easily apply security updates and configuration changes across every business location simultaneously. Visibility and reporting can easily be enabled across multiple sites via the “single pane of glass” browser-based interface. Scalability is vastly improved with the ability to have new locations seamlessly “adopted” into the existing networking dashboard while automatically receiving the company’s standardized network configuration.

Ultimately, the time saved leads to significant cost savings. Employees – whether IT or administrative – can make better use of their time to further company initiatives rather than spending it all on network management. Costly downtime is reduced thanks to increased visibility, allowing small problems to be detected and remediated before they become larger issues. New locations can be up and running in a fraction of the time, allowing them to be profitable sooner. If a small business opts to contract their network management out to an IT service provider, they will be able to configure, manage and maintain the company’s network in a more cost-effective manner by utilizing cloud managed wireless networking.

The Smart Networking Choice for Small Businesses

Rather than limping along with old, inefficient and insecure networking solutions, more and more small businesses are embracing cloud managed wireless networking. In return, they are reaping the benefits of incredible time savings, unprecedented visibility, frictionless scalability and simple maintenance – all adding up to compelling cost savings.