A thorough site survey is the first step toward successful management.

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Many network administrators today have experienced the same ah-ha moment: They’re realizing that achieving wireless network efficiency requires looking at both wired and wireless networks.

The conceptual line between managing wired and wireless networks is disappearing. Administrators must adopt holistic designs and management solutions that can dynamically serve prevailing traffic patterns to preserve time-sensitive voice and video content.

To make this happen, network administrators should consider implementing two vital elements — a thorough site survey and a solid network management system that provides a consolidated view from a single pane of glass.

Success Starts with a Survey
Site surveys have always been important; today they’re indispensable. They document the unique communications needs of each organization. Successful enterprises expand the survey with projections that cover the types and numbers of edge devices and applications the network will likely support in the next 18 months. Comprehensive surveys also help administrators plan for new protocols. That’s especially important today as the industry migrates from the 802.11n wireless standard, which supports both the 2.4GHz and 5GHz frequencies used by existing wireless hardware, to 802.11ac, which supports only the higher-capacity 5GHz band.

Enterprises may conduct the site survey themselves or partner with an outside professional services organization.

Manage Holistically
With an accurate network blueprint in place, IT administrators must choose the right network management solution for maximum efficiency. Today, that often means a consolidated solution that simultaneously manages wired and wireless networks.

A central tool gives desktop, networking, security and compliance administrators a clear view into all the edge devices accessing the network. Single-pane-of-glass options can overlay information about identity management, net-flow rates and application usage statistics on top of the network blueprint so stakeholders can see the information that’s most meaningful to them. The result: They make better business decisions and drive greater efficiency.

A Foundation for Future Advancements
As edge devices and applications become more advanced — and the lines between wired and wireless networks disappear — organizations are empowered to deliver new and better services. But they can only do so when they achieve the highest levels of network efficiency with the help of a detailed site survey and consolidated network management system.

HOW CAN ENTERPRISES GET THE MOST OUT OF CONSOLIDATED NETWORK MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS?

Here are four important considerations:

1. SOLUTIONS VARY, SO CHOOSE CAREFULLY.
   Sometimes the best option will be what’s available from a current networking vendor — but not always. Organizations must define their needs and look for the right match.

2. FACTOR IN COMPUTING REQUIREMENTS.
   Single-pane-of-glass systems aggregate high volumes of valuable information, but this practice requires adequate IT resources. IT administrators should understand how much processing power, memory and disk space will be needed by the solution. The site survey will be essential here, especially for looking beyond today’s needs to assess future requirements.

3. CONSIDER THE CLOUD.
   Cloud-based network management solutions can help organizations bypass IT resource hurdles by shifting capacity planning responsibilities to a cloud provider. In addition, some cloud options may be simpler to use than on-premises solutions. The flipside is that cloud products may not collect as much historical information or offer as much flexibility for analyzing the data as their on-premises counterparts.

4. FINE-TUNE EFFECTIVELY.
   Single-pane-of-glass systems offer impressive capabilities for flagging and troubleshooting network problems. But unless it’s utilized properly, all that valuable information could end up looking like clutter. IT managers can guard against this by designating an administrator responsible for learning and optimizing the solutions. This may require training sessions with an authorized partner.

Learn how effectively assessing pain points can help optimize network performance.
View our webinar at cdw.com/NetworkWebinar