People are a little hyperbolic these days. Everything is awesome, epic, and literally the best thing ever. Likewise, many cloud vendors will tell you there are no limits to what you can do with cloud technology. However, there is one big limitation for many businesses: bandwidth.

It's bad enough if your cloud customer relationship management or content management systems are sluggish. However, if your real-time communications features don't work optimally, both team collaboration and the customer experience can really suffer.

Having reliable bandwidth is even more challenging for franchises and other multi-location businesses. Without taking proactive measures, network quality of service can often vary dramatically from one location to the next. This keeps your IT engineers busy putting out fires and can prevent them from deploying more sophisticated cloud communications tools. If even one or two locations can't use the new technology, none can.

How can you get better bandwidth across locations?
Solutions that Boost Bandwidth

For larger companies that are undergoing a cloud migration, optimizing bandwidth is a smart, forward-thinking concern. Real-time communications features such as video and voice over IP (VoIP) place significant demands on a network, especially if that network is already running slowly due to inadequate internet service or too many cloud applications running at the same time.

Regardless of internet provider, companies can optimize bandwidth in one of the two following ways:

1. Tying into a private network
2. Employing a cost-effective software-defined wide area network (SD-WAN) for unified communications-as-a-service (UCaaS)

Private networks are workable solutions, but since they're tied to one location, they're not always cost-effective for multi-location businesses. Then, of course, your IT team may need to manage those private networks across locations and potentially set up more private networks for future locations. And because private networks treat all data transfers equally, an employee communicating with a customer gets the same bandwidth as the employee streaming cat videos in the break room.

Combining your communications stack into one platform — UCaaS — already saves space on your network when compared to having a separate app for each type of communication. However, UCaaS can still require significant bandwidth.

SD-WAN for UCaaS optimizes bandwidth by monitoring a company's traffic and locating the best possible path for each data transfer. Think of it like using GPS for driving directions. The technology knows all the possible routes and where the traffic jams are, so it can help you find the quickest route — saving you time, energy, and a few instances of foul language.

At the same time, SD-WAN for UCaaS prioritizes communications over other traffic, so customer calls always come first. Administrators can also prioritize other cloud enterprise apps, so the most vital digital assets get ranked above other internet traffic. In other words, it's not just business communications that outrank the cat videos — other applications deemed important by administrators do as well.

Benefits of SD-WAN for UCaaS for Multi-Location Businesses

This technology can help any company improve quality of service for customer communications, but multi-location businesses might benefit the most. Here's why:

- **Scalability:** Whether you're adding new locations, growing existing ones, or closing underperforming stores, SD-WAN for UCaaS scales up or down to meet your changing needs. Because the technology can be deployed at any number of locations, you save money with each new business you add to the system. It's like a family phone plan. The more lines you have, the less you pay for each one (unless you have a teenager and don't have an unlimited data plan).

- **Consistency:** With a multi-location business, there are always a few weak links. Maybe it's the store in the rural area where the best internet available is DSL (oh, the horror) or the office that loses internet every time there's a thunderstorm (oh, the headache). Either way, those weak links can hold everyone else back from adopting the latest digital communications package and other cutting-edge cloud tools. With SD-WAN, every location can run all the cloud tools it needs to get work done and deliver a stellar customer experience.

- **Reliability:** SD-WAN provides the ability to work over numerous data connections. So, when lightning knocks that one store's internet out again, users can temporarily switch over to a commercial broadband line on the main system, an LTE connection, or another networking solution.
SD-WAN for UCaaS is still a relatively new technology that will only get more sophisticated in the coming years. But its effect on enhancing network quality of service is already revolutionary — helping to ensure no weak links hold other locations back and eliminating blackouts, brownouts, dropped calls, and interrupted team collaboration.

Would you like to learn more about SD-WAN for UCaaS? Connect with a Vonage Business representative.