

### HOW MUCH BANDWIDTH DOES YOUR BUSINESS NEED?

by Lee Lusardi Connor

0 comments | posted 20 hours ago under **New Businesses, Other Topics On Business, Technology.**



The how-much-bandwidth question is a big deal for a small business. No business owner wants to pay more for a service than she has to—but skimping on bandwidth risks impatient customers, loss of productivity, and worse.

So how to find out how much bandwidth your business really needs? The amount can vary widely. “Clearly, the bandwidth requirements for a liquor store are going to be much less than those of the imaging center next door, which has to send and share large files,” says Lisa Atwood, executive director of marketing at ITS, an integrated telemanagement services company in Simi Valley, California. The answer also depends on a number of company-specific variables, as well as business growth plans.

Because it's a complex topic, many business owners find it's best to tackle bandwidth questions with the help of an ISP (Internet Service Provider) rep or a managed services provider to assist with the analysis. With or without the use of outside help, however, make the bandwidth-use assessment a project that someone in your business “owns,” with lots of internal discussion about needs and expectations.

### Getting the whole picture

“The first question that every business owner should ask is, ‘What does day-to-day internet activity look like for most folks who work for the company?’” says Jason Etter, vice president of client services at Ripple IT, a technology and services company based in Atlanta and New York.

Web browsing and email use are likely a given, but other bandwidth-eaters include cloud applications (such as Office 365, G Suite and Salesforce), voice or video conferencing, VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) phone systems, and video security surveillance.

Image and video streaming in general is the biggest bandwidth hog, Atwood says. That comes into play in medical offices, as well as at manufacturing or construction companies that send and receive large files, and also in less-expected places. A brokerage may have streaming Apple TV on all day for its employees; a gym's trainers may run a class while streaming music or videos.

WiFi use can also sneak up on a business owner. A restaurant, store or professional services office needs to ensure sufficient bandwidth for guests, who increasingly expect fast, free WiFi. And in many offices, employees are tapping into the WiFi not only from their workstations, but from one or more mobile devices.

### Look to the future

In the future, bandwidth-intensive business technology is only going to become more essential, experts agree. “The internet and the cloud are affecting CRM, HR, banking—everything about how companies run their business,” Atwood says. “And in almost every industry, IoT (Internet of Things) tools are being developed to make business run more efficiently. We always tell clients they’ll never need less bandwidth than they have now.”

“In the future, bandwidth-intensive technology is only going to become more essential.”

As a result, “overestimation” is key, says Trave Harmon, CEO of Triton Technologies, a New England-based technology solutions provider. “Businesses tend not to account for issues with network congestion, their internet connection and the need for many internet-based functions to work flawlessly together,” he says. “It’s relatively cheap to increase your speed. So I go by the 50% rule—buy 50% more than you think you’ll need. That way you’re covered, and you don’t have to worry if you get a new client that requires graphics-heavy files, or you want to go to hosted phone. You want to be able to scale appropriately for future demands.”

[Print this article](#)

Connect with Spectrum Business

---

