



Profile Snapshot

I'm a technical expert, but I also understand our organization's business objectives. Network uptime and reliability is my team's top priority, but we also have a major stake in our organization's virtualization and cloud computing initiatives. As those get built out, we can't afford to be the weak link in the chain or to slow down the provisioning process.

Titles I may have: Network Architect, Senior Network Administrator, Senior Network Manager, Manager of Network Systems, Network Analyst, Network Engineer.

Buying role

Primary:

Champions and Influencers with veto power over key network infrastructure purchases.

Secondary:

Users — My team will implement, manage and use the purchased solutions.

Key challenges

- Under pressure to provision new network services more quickly.
- Performance issues related to virtualization and storage initiatives.
- Must balance legacy network infrastructure against need for 100GE and SDN investments.
- The network load is scaling; my team size is not.

Watering Holes

- Vendor-specific user groups, conferences and events.
- Contacts through ongoing education and certification programs.
- Sometimes reads trade pubs such as Network Computing and Network World, but less often than in the past.
- Increasingly relies on social networking contacts, especially LinkedIn, for initial product research.

Vendor content preferences

- Proficient with online research, as you'd expect from this job role.
- Regular reader of vendor-sponsored white papers and related content.
- Wary of sales calls until very late in the buying process – and then only on her own terms.
- Prefers direct and action-oriented content such as checklists; less likely to consume “light” content such as videos.

Measures of Success

- The CIO stays aware of nuts-and-bolts network KPIs – uptime is still Job One.
- Business stakeholders are increasingly aware of how the network impacts new business-technology initiatives, and satisfying them is an increasingly important job-performance goal.

Top initiatives

- Network security upgrades, including hardened DDI and endpoint solutions.
- 100GE upgrades in the data center.
- Pilot and/or initial rollout of SDN infrastructure.
- Branch-office infrastructure upgrades that had previously been scaled back or delayed.
- Support for virtualization and cloud architecture initiatives.

Pain points

- Vendor lock-in: We prioritize open standards-based investments.
- Automation issues: Manual provisioning and troubleshooting is a major bottleneck.
- Network utilization is increasingly an issue, especially in virtualized data center environments.
- Post-implementation support has been an issue with some vendors – including some major ones.

Role in decision process

I provide advice and guidance to the CIO on major networking purchase decisions. Although the CIO has the final word in these decisions, I typically begin the process by defining and justifying a need – and I almost always have veto authority on networking vendor selection.

Positive Perceptions

Negative Perceptions

Proof Points

Inquire

Learn

Evaluate

Justify

Select

Confirm