

NEWFOUND COMPETITIVENESS

NEW ZEALAND: A NEW GLOBAL LEADER THROUGH EXCELLENCE IN NETWORKING INFRASTRUCTURE





New Zealand is a nation on the rise, both in terms of global competitiveness and the opportunities that businesses and individuals are presented. According to the Global Competitiveness Index 2016–2017, New Zealand is just shy of the global top 10, with

a ranking of 13. This is up from its previous ranking of 16 (in fact New Zealand has been steadily rising through the ranks for a number of years now), and it is ahead of regional neighbours like Australia (21) and fast-moving economies like China (28).

There is no singular contributor for the country's steady lift in its competitiveness ranking; the report tracks a host of factors that affects this – from the development of the financial sector, through to education standards and healthcare. But one of the more critical measures, and something that New Zealand has become synonymous with in the region, is infrastructure and technology development. In direct comparison to other countries in Asia and the South Pacific, New Zealand has been recognised as a leader in terms of ongoing investment into networking infrastructure as a national priority.

“Allowing organisations to focus on their core business is one of the most important benefits of having a good networking environment,” Vocus Group NZ, Head of Network Engineering, Richard Baalham, said.

“For the most part, organisations do not necessarily want to expend significant efforts on keeping their network performing to standard. This is the role of their network provider and releasing an organisation's resources and time to focus on their own vision and strategy is where growth happens.”

New Zealand is blessed with a government and corporate environment that understands the value of fast Internet. But there is much more to it than that. New Zealand's attraction to startups and its positioning as a potential incubator of technology innovation is also because investment in networking technology has encouraged private enterprises to step up their own solutions and services, to the ultimate benefit of customers.

But there are challenges in the market, too. Principal among these is the escalation in demand, as the Internet becomes ever more critical to every facet of life in New Zealand. “Available scale in a commoditised market is a real challenge here,” Baalham said. “Keeping up with the accelerating demand for connectivity and content along with increasing expectations in terms of availability for less money can potentially put a lot of pressure on the nation's networks.”

As a solution, the networking provider, Vocus Communications maintains its own dedicated fibre network, and is able to provide both direct clients and the wholesale market with lightning-fast communications infrastructure, coupled with the security and stability that is expected from an independent supplier. Vocus Communications is also heavily invested in making its network more robust and scalable. As a result, it enjoys the support and clientele of the New Zealand government right through to small enterprises, enabling business operation and innovation well beyond what a simple fast connection provides.

“For us, it all comes down to understanding the technology that we are working with, its possibilities and limitations, then coupling this to a well thought-out development strategy using agile methodologies to keep customer disruption to a minimum while we augment capacity and feed in new infrastructure and capability,” Baalham added.

TOP THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN A NETWORKING PROVIDER

FINDING A NETWORKING PROVIDER THAT CAN HAVE AN HONEST AND TRANSPARENT CONVERSATION AROUND AVAILABILITY AND RELIABILITY IS CRITICAL

With increasing reliance on networking technologies, the risks from downtime have become all the more significant. Research shows that the increasing reliance on cloud based services means downtime has a greater impact on an organisations' operations, thus exposing them to significant costs.

With New Zealand increasingly being seen as a potential future technology and knowledge economy hub with global prominence, the number of businesses that rely on networking as the foundation of their operations is going to increase, and for those businesses the impact of downtime is going to be greater. On an unprecedented scale, New Zealand businesses are going to need access to networks that can guarantee reliability and stability to go with the fast new speeds the country is already operating at.

According to Baalham, finding a networking provider that can have an honest and transparent conversation around availability and reliability

is critical. "Businesses need networking partners to provide what they cannot, in other words reliable access to applications, capabilities, the supply chain and customers," Baalham commented. "This is a mission-critical partnership and one that on top of the normal technical capabilities of a network provider demands trust, understanding and transparency at every interaction; authenticity and regular effective communication are key here".

"To foster these relationships of trust necessitates a crystal-clear understanding of what is required and available on both sides of the solution in order for it to be a business and technical success. It is imperative that the provider can have that in-depth and timely technical conversation to shape expectations and provide early notice of issues that need to be addressed without placing pressure on the customer to either accept or reject the network provider."

As an example of a leading networking provider, and what it is doing to continue to meet the needs

of the increasingly networking-hungry enterprise space in New Zealand, Vocus Communications has been investing heavily in the ongoing development of its network to ensure reliability and precision in the services that it offers.

Vocus Communications maintains more than 4,200km of its own fibre in New Zealand

This is expanding as the telco aims to reach further customers with fast broadband. As part of that development, Vocus Communications has also worked hard to ensure there is redundancy at each of its sites – Auckland, Hamilton, Christchurch, Wellington and Dunedin – to protect it – and its

customers – from any potential outage scenarios. Any business that wants to avoid these costly outage expenses needs to rely on a technology partner that can provide proper redundant services, and that redundancy should be built right into the foundations of the solution being provided. This is the investment that Vocus Communications has been making.

Vocus Communications' investment in technology goes well beyond the fibre network. The company has ongoing investments in more powerful and flexible edge routers. The first customer 40GE interface was in service as early as 2016. With companies now heavily invested in rich media, telecommunications and messaging, bandwidth can be an issue even with fibre, without the right technology sitting on top of it. For a business, maintaining a competitive advantage through the use of technology requires a provider that itself sees technology investment as a competitive differentiator.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENTS ARE BEING MADE IN NEW ZEALAND'S TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE. THE RATE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THAT INFRASTRUCTURE IS ALSO CRUCIAL. THIS CAN BE A MAJOR OPPORTUNITY FOR BUSINESSES OR A SIGN OF FAILURE IF THE BUSINESS IS UNABLE TO ADAPT TO THE RATE OF CHANGE



Businesses should seek out flexible suppliers such as Vocus Communications to make the most of this opportunity. Flexibility in the commercial model allows businesses to adapt and scale their services as they grow.

"Businesses need to keep themselves informed to be ready for these changes," Baalham remarked. "Regular conversations with your network partner at a technical level will help significantly. We are very keen to share our perspectives and technical

road map and in return learn how our customers' organisations work and what they need or will need to be successful. Understanding a customer's strategy and their desired outcomes is a crucial layer we add, to ensure they reap the benefits of the infrastructure changes we're making", adds Baalham.

To help ensure our customers have every opportunity through this period of rapid growth, Vocus has invested in bringing its separate networks – Callplus and Vocus/FX – together, in order to maximise both scalability and support to customers. At Vocus Group NZ, this modern and nimble network continues to receive heavy investment, and is a major opportunity for customers that are looking to make the most of their spend on networking infrastructure.

"Further streamlining is occurring through Vocus Communications investments in automation and orchestration," remarked Baalham. "The journey we are now on is to automate the interactions that we, our customers and our suppliers have with the network (both on and off-net) to further increase flexibility and availability while reducing risk and the complexity of delivering service."

"There are several initiatives in flight at the moment in bringing together the teams, transactions and information we have on the network, OSS, BSS, APIs, and so on in such a way as to provide for automation and orchestration."



"This streamlining is essential in allowing Vocus Group NZ to empower organisations to work with ever-escalating data demands in a reliable and stable manner. Consider that in 2020, 1.7 megabytes of new information will be created every second for every human being. That rate of growth is so significant that the only potential 'future proofing' that an infrastructure provider can do is to ensure cohesion within the organisation, and develop a solution that will be able to go to scale very rapidly as global data flow requirements increase exponentially," Baalham explained.

SUMMARY

THE OPPORTUNITIES FACING BUSINESSES IN NEW ZEALAND ARE SIGNIFICANT

Traditionally, New Zealand has been seen as an exporter of primary industry products, but this is starting to change as advanced technology infrastructure is enabling rapid modernisation and innovation. Increasingly New Zealand is being seen as a country that is globally competitive, and as more businesses, incubators and startups spring up in the knowledge economy space, the need for faster and more reliable networking infrastructure will be keenly felt.

For the New Zealand market, it is not just about getting fibre to premises – that is already happening. What businesses need are reliable, stable connections, as every hour of downtime can result in significant costs. In addition, these businesses need technology providers that can place an emphasis on efficient support and commercial flexibility and can scale as the business grows.

For a fresh and highly flexible approach to your business connectivity, speak to Vocus Communications today – www.vocus.co.nz