



Prevent Network Installation Pitfalls:

How to avoid the six major network infrastructure mistakes



“You need a quality network infrastructure in order to get value from your IT investment,” - Dr. Henry Lucas

What network infrastructure projects are you planning? Whether you’re building a new retail store, upgrading your restaurant’s wireless system, adding a self-service hotel check-in capability or completing a multi-site technology rollout, you need the right infrastructure - and the right vendor - to ensure success.

Even a small network infrastructure misstep can lead to big costs and headaches down the road. Luckily with a little planning and knowledge, you can avoid the six major network installation mistakes many retail and hospitality organizations make. Prevent these costly pitfalls and your network infrastructure will perform its critical behind-the-scenes job flawlessly for many years to come.

Pitfall #1:
Underestimating Your Network Infrastructure’s Importance

Out of sight, out of mind. All too often, it’s the cause of network infrastructure problems. Sure, your structured cabling, routers and switches may be hidden behind walls - but they are the backbone your entire network relies on to run smoothly.

The typical cost of a network infrastructure installation is just 5-10 percent of your total project budget. However, experts say the relatively small cost of your network infrastructure doesn’t correspond to its big role in the success of your technology project.

“You need a quality network infrastructure in order to get value from your IT investment,” says Dr. Henry Lucas, professor of information systems at University of Maryland’s Robert H. Smith School of Business. “Like roads, network infrastructure is something you build on. Roads don’t produce a lot of value on their own, but you use them to create value.”

Pitfall #2:
Choosing the Wrong Vendor

Organizations should do their homework before choosing a vendor for their network installation. Consider experience, references, service, financial stability and certifications when deciding on a vendor. If you don’t take the time to make an educated choice, you’re taking a big risk.

“Choosing carefully allows you to get the most value,” says Bill Roberts, President of Network Services at Datatrend, a national technology solutions firm.

“Organizations that choose too quickly can overpay. If you don’t choose carefully, your first costs won’t be your last costs. A financially unstable company can even go belly-up in the middle of a job, which could result in that company’s suppliers placing a lien on your properties.”

Pitfall #3:
Poor Project Management

Improperly managed network

infrastructure projects can severely disrupt your timeline and budget. A vendor with both project management certification and plenty of experience is better equipped to navigate project obstacles and deliver your project on time and on budget.

“There are many causes for project failure,” says Lucas. “If you don’t manage a project well, you can run into trouble and it can get out of control. Someone needs to be responsible for seeing that a project stays on track and that widespread implementation is coordinated.”

Pitfall #4:
Lack of Respect for the Customer Environment

Maintaining the customer environment at all times is critical in hospitality and retail settings such as hotels, restaurants, groceries, and retail stores. One bad experience and a customer might not return - so keeping your customers happy should be a top priority for your vendor.

“Vendors need to understand if they’re doing work during business hours it needs to be appropriately hidden or concealed - the work can’t be obtrusive,” says co-author of The IT Manager’s Handbook Brian Jaffe. “Any noise such as heavy-duty drilling should not be done during peak business hours. Vendors need to think outside the box and determine the best way to do the work with as little disruption as possible.”

Pitfall #5:
Failing to Consider Long-Term Cost of Ownership

Project cost is important; work with your vendor to come up with a price that fits your budget. But remember, pinching pennies today often means dollars lost in the years to come. If you choose the vendor with the lowest price but no track record of experience, you may be

“Organizations that choose too quickly can overpay. If you don’t choose carefully, your first costs won’t be your last costs.” - Bill Roberts

saddled with shoddy workmanship that leads to future problems and repair bills.

“Long-term cost of ownership is very important,” says Lucas. “Obviously price

is a factor, but if the bids are reasonably close you should base your decision on the long-term cost that will develop overtime. In a few years you'll forget about the price you paid, but you'll be living with the results."

"Take the time to find a vendor that is really solutions-oriented," says Roberts. "Look for a vendor who finds solutions to issues that arise and presents those solutions to you, rather than just coming to you and asking how you want to fix the problem."



Pitfall #6:

Neglecting to Plan for Future Needs

Network infrastructure can last up to twenty years, so consider future needs in your project plans. Do you want to go wireless? Will your network speed requirements increase? Where will you need network connectivity? Spending a little more in the short-term can prevent costly re-dos.

"You only get the chance to do a network infrastructure installation once, it's not like a piece of software you upgrade," says Jaffe. "It's important to make sure it gets done right the first time, and that you have an infrastructure to meet your needs not just today but also in 10 or 15 years - as long as you're going to be there."

By choosing a solutions-oriented network installation vendor with the right experience and qualifications, you'll virtually eliminate these six mistakes and ensure your network installation happens without a hitch. Simply follow this vendor selection checklist to choose the right vendor for your next network infrastructure project.

"You only get the chance to do a network infrastructure installation once, it's not like a piece of software you upgrade," - Brian Jaffe

Choosing a Network Infrastructure Partner

While these common network infrastructure pitfalls can be costly, getting your infrastructure right isn't too tricky. Mostly, it's about choosing the right vendor. A good partner will offer advice, guidance and problem-solving along the way to make sure your project is done right.

Network Infrastructure Vendor Selection Checklist:

- ✓ Provides references and offers customer site visits.
- ✓ Guarantees their work with a warranty.
- ✓ Has experience with your industry, project size and project type.
- ✓ Provides a high level of service and support.
- ✓ Seems knowledgeable, friendly and helpful.
- ✓ Belongs to professional membership groups, such as BICSI.
- ✓ Demonstrates financial stability and a long history of success.
- ✓ Uses experienced project managers certified by the Project Management Institute.
- ✓ Understands the importance of maintaining your customer experience.
- ✓ Has enough resources and technicians to effectively execute your project.
- ✓ Works with you to design a project that fits your budget.
- ✓ Helps you plan for future network infrastructure needs.
- ✓ Provides standards-based solutions.
- ✓ Is fully licensed and insured, with a track record of safety.



Datatrend
TECHNOLOGIES INC.

Taking [it] Beyond

121 Cheshire Lane, Suite 700
Minnetonka, MN 55305
United States
1.800.367.7472
www.datatrend.com



Datatrend
TECHNOLOGIES INC.

Taking [it] Beyond

121 Cheshire Lane, Suite 700
Minnetonka, MN 55305
United States
800.367.7472
www.datatrend.com