
YOU CAN'T GET WHERE YOU WANT TO GO IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU ARE

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.” — Pablo Picasso

Picasso was right, and even two thousand years ago, others knew it too: “Before beginning, plan carefully.” Although those wise words of the great Roman orator Cicero still hold true today, they can easily be overlooked in a rush to introduce the new. Some projects seem simple or highly circumscribed. But because in our business we deal with networks, they are rarely either.

We've previously written about the relevance of Juniper Networks® lifecycle approach—Plan, Build, Operate—to successful network project outcomes. In this paper, we explore the Plan phase in more depth.

Because the network touches so many users, applications, services, and customers, it isn't enough to merely decide when and where to deploy a device. In the planning phase it's just as important to understand where you are starting

from as it is to know where you want to get to. Get the planning right and it becomes so much easier to build and operate the network later on. Hence, you need to start the planning phase with a thorough assessment of your current environment and its ability to satisfy your anticipated business and technology requirements.

This includes identifying which technology shortfalls must be addressed and then creating a roadmap to get you to your desired environment. The Plan phase is also where we develop the optimum high-level architectural designs and the low-level detailed design of network devices, configurations, and interconnections. And because it's important that your migration and integration go smoothly, we also use this phase for in-depth project planning, detailing responsibilities, timelines, and dependencies.



PLAN

Assess, design and plan your network.



BUILD

Deploy your new or upgraded network and security system.



OPERATE

Keep your network up and running.

Accessing the Right Skills

Of course, the size and complexity of your project have a major impact on the effort involved in planning, which in turn impacts your staffing of it and influences the probability of a successful outcome. Sometimes the specific skills needed won't be in place within your staff, or even if they are, the individuals might be working on other projects.

Many of our customers find that engaging external consultants can be a very cost-effective way for them to secure the right skills

at the right time—and only for the period those skills are needed. Typical scenarios where this would be appropriate include:

- When you are considering the development of a new or enhanced technology roadmap
- When you seek a new perspective on which technologies to consider
- When you are dissatisfied with your current network/security vendor and are evaluating a new one.

The Benefits of Consultation

But what can a consultant bring to your project? We've already stated that it's important to know where you are and where you want to get to—a consultant can provide you with an external perspective of the gaps in your existing capabilities. Consultants bring their broad industry experience to bear and provide ideas on potential areas of improvement using technology to address your business issues.

In our opinion, every project should start with some form of assessment—one that typically develops customized roadmaps to help you schedule and prioritize technology enhancements. We have developed a number of environment-specific assessment services (for example, for data centers, security, mobile backhaul), and they typically take one or two weeks. These services follow a common structure of information gathering, analysis, and development of recommendations through to workshops and recommendations. At every step we work closely with our customers.

Once all parties have a thorough understanding of the current environment, where you want to get to, and your options for getting there, you are ready to design your solution, or work with a Juniper consultant or a certified Juniper partner to do so.

The first step is to develop a high-level specification for your network or security project. Not only does this provide a framework for your solution, it also guides you when selecting the products you want and the vendors to buy from. Once the software and hardware are selected, you need to create the low-level design specifications and specific configurations for the different elements of the solution. Regardless of the size of the project, it is important that processes be adopted to manage and control each of the tasks required as well as for identifying and mitigating the risks that are inherent in any technology project.

The Juniper Project Management Methodology

The larger the project, however, the more critical it becomes to have strong project management skills and methodologies. Our specialist team has extensive expertise in the management of all project phases no matter the size. The Juniper Project Management Methodology (JPMM) is standardized around the world, providing a foundation for the management and control of projects as well as a process for identifying and mitigating risks. It's based on industry best practices, and our project management consultants are accredited and have formal project management qualifications.

The methodology uses standard processes that are scalable—yet, we tailor them for each engagement and leverage the knowledge obtained from many project experiences across the globe. This combination of a project and risk management approach provides you with:

- A controlled and organized start, middle, and end to the project
- Regular reviews of progress against the plan
- Flexible decision points
- Essential information for more accurate budgets and forecasts

- Greater confidence that deliverables are completed on time and on budget
- Appropriate involvement of management and stakeholders at the right times during the project.

In conclusion, we contend that a successful project requires that the Plan phase of the networking life cycle should not be shortchanged. Success depends on access to the right expertise at the right time—in-house if available, but via external consulting if not. It's not just about knowing where you are going but also where you are starting out from and how you can travel between the two states in the most cost-effective and least disruptive way. Experts from Juniper Networks or one of our certified partners see many customers similar to you—they can guide you around the pitfalls to a successful outcome.

This is the second in a series of five short papers on how to effectively manage your network project life cycle. The other papers in the series can be viewed at:

www.juniper.net/uk/en/serviceprovider/customer-services/

Juniper Networks Customer Services and Support

The Juniper Customer Services and Support team consists of more than 1,800 Juniper support personnel and over 1,000 consultants within our partner community. Our global Professional Services team alone consists of

more than 200 senior-level consultants, each with an average of over 10 years' networking experience within multiple industries. For more information, visit: www.juniper.net/us/en/products-services/services/technical-services/

About Juniper Networks

Juniper Networks is in the business of network innovation. From devices to data centers, from consumers to cloud providers, Juniper Networks delivers the software, silicon and systems that transform the experience and economics of networking. The company serves customers and partners worldwide. Additional information can be found at www.juniper.net



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