breezeline™

What's the

Right choice for your business?

From professional services and hospitality to healthcare and retail, businesses thrive when they have fast, reliable Internet connections. You need reliable connections to send sales transactions, upload files, transmit payroll data, and take advantage of cloud-based applications for sales, finance, and shipping. Then remember all of the different devices in your office – like mobile phones, wearables, tablets, and even desktop phones – and the need becomes even greater.

That makes your choice of bandwidth – and Internet provider – a crucial decision for your business. If you're just starting out and don't have a provider, what should you look for? And if you already have a provider, are you paying too much, or should you be investing in a higher level of bandwidth. Just as important – are you getting the level of customer service you deserve?

Sizing up your needs

Before you begin your evaluation, the best first step is to perform a quick assessment of your needs for internet connectivity. There are a few areas you'll want to consider:

- **Devices –** You need to count more than the number of people in your company – or even contractors and customers. It's the number of devices that matter – everything from servers to laptops to mobile phones, tablets, and even wearables. Those numbers can change daily, weekly, and monthly, but all of them consume bandwidth – and those needs will only grow.

- **Applications –** The fact is, different apps have different bandwidth requirements. And different apps have different priorities. For instance, a cloud-based accounting system used by your finance group will require a high level of speed and reliability. Online backups can be mission-critical. Other apps such as email or file sharing have more modest requirements, but you don't want to be stuck with snail-pace internet connections or intermittent outages that can bring business to a halt.

- **Security Needs –** Critical applications may require secure, dedicated network solutions like fiber-based dedicated Internet, while less-vital functions can run more cost-effectively on shared broadband networks.

- **Technical Know-How –** Not every administrator or office manager has the time or interest in getting into the weeds with internet connectivity issues. Assess your comfort level and see what your vendors can offer you to make the process easy and hassle-free.

- **Local Market Expertise –** It's essential that your provider knows and understands your local market and can quickly install and service your network services.

Choose your bandwidth

Bandwidth – the amount of data you can send and receive in a given time period (think of it as the speed of your connection) – is an important choice to make for your internet connectivity. While the impulse might be to get as much as possible, remember there's an associated cost.

You want to match bandwidth to your business needs.
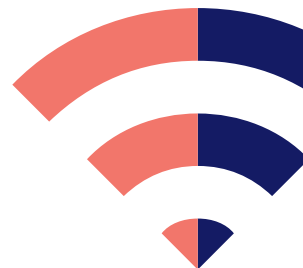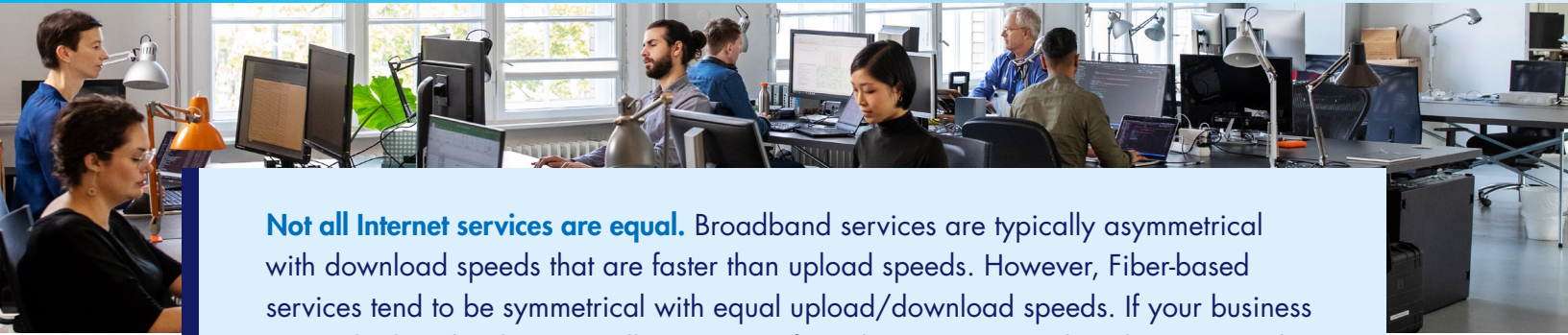
Not all Internet services are equal. Broadband services are typically asymmetrical with download speeds that are faster than upload speeds. However, Fiber-based services tend to be symmetrical with equal upload/download speeds. If your business primarily downloads – or "pulls" – content from the Internet (email, website research, etc.), broadband may be a good fit. If your business relies on uploading – or "pushing" – content to the Internet (point of sale data, backups, etc.), a Fiber-based solution may be better suited for the job.

Typically, there are two types of services:

- **Broadband –** This is the popular cable-modem based internet connection that can serve many small businesses very cost-efficiently. While the speeds are typically on the lower end, broadband is simple, affordable, and reliable. For this reason, it's a cost effective choice for many small businesses. Keep in mind, however, that broadband is a shared service, and your full connection speed is not devoted solely to your business.

- **Fiber –** Sometimes a business needs a higher level of Internet speed/service and guaranteed availability. In those cases, fiber-based services like Dedicated Internet Access (DIA) can be the right choice. With DIA, you get your own direct dedicated (unshared) connection with guaranteed speeds and uptime that are as much as 10-100 times faster than broadband. For businesses with significant speed, throughput, and reliability requirements, Fiber is an excellent choice.

Accessing your Fiber choices

In many instances, you'll have your pick of Internet service providers who can offer you high-speed Fiber connections. However, not every provider owns and operates 100 percent of its Fiber connections in all of the markets it serves. Depending on location, you might use 100-percent Fiber, or a combination of Fiber and broadband. For instance, Breezeline owns and operates more than 7,000 route miles of its own Fiber, including the "last mile" Fiber to your location. That means when issues arise, there's no finger-pointing or delays: one call, one provider.

By owning the entire Fiber footprint, a provider can offer exceptional flexibility when it comes to customizing a solution that aligns well with your business needs and objectives. You're never boxed into cookie-cutter solutions.

Additionally, you'll want to look for a provider that has a decentralized engineering and field operations team, such as Breezeline. The people who install your modem or circuit are people who live in your community and understand it's nuances allowing you to avoid the frustrations of dealing with a faceless conglomerate when you need assistance.

Your choice of bandwidth – and Internet provider – is an important decision for your business. Be sure to assess your needs, review your options and know your provider before jumping in. Your business depends on it.

Call **855.284.3804** or visit **breezeline.com/business.**