SOLUTION BRIEF

Enabling Smart Connectivity for Small & Medium Businesses

# The Challenge of Internet Connectivity for SMBs

While SD-WAN solutions continue to enjoy strong market traction, the Enterprise network architecture is evolving towards an even more distributed model, especially for Small and Medium Businesses (SMBs), whose business relies on Internet connectivity. SMBs or highly distributed enterprises i.e. businesses with many small sites (such as Retail with high number of Point of Sales), massively consume apps in the cloud. For them, Internet connectivity has become as important as electricity or water.

A shop without connectivity cannot process digital payments like payment card / mobile payment systems, it cannot check the inventory on Shopify®, it cannot print bills, it cannot process loyalty cards. Restaurants cannot process orders.

During an Internet outage, a shop is out of business. It leads to immediate revenue loss, increased costs and reduced productivity. In short, an SMB without Internet connection is an SMB out-of-business.

Today, 51% of SMBs consider IT to be of crucial importance to their business. They are therefore planning to increase their IT spending and will almost double in 5 years.

This is why SMBs need to upgrade their connectivity, so they can guarantee their service level towards their customers and up their game to match their business needs.
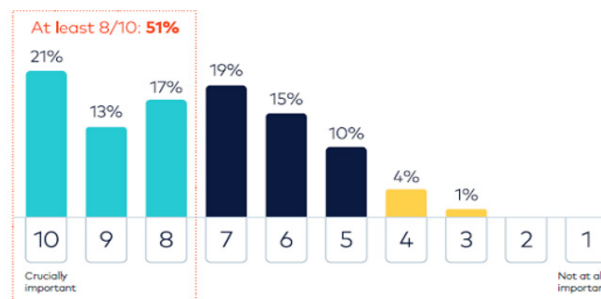

But most SMBs do not have enough resources and skills to select, install and manage tech. They need simple IT solutions. In fact, only 55% of SMBs have a dedicated IT staff. 15% only for 1-19 employees[1].

Solutions, such as SD-WAN, can improve Internet access for small businesses. But these solutions were designed for large companies and are too complex for small businesses to implement. What's more, many analysts do not include companies with fewer than 100 employees and less than 50M in revenues in their research.

1 SMB Group – SMB, BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES FOR 2023

Smart Connect: A Simple Solution to Strengthen Internet Access

Ekinops' Smart Connect is an adequate answer to SMBs' connectivity needs by delivering remote secured connectivity to the Enterprise network together with simplicity of use for IT Manager to enforce policy and security at a reasonable cost. As SMBs decide to increase their IT spending, 70% say they trust broadband providers for Managed Services. This is a major opportunity for Service Providers to provide IT Managed Services like Smart Connect.

Which of the following services beyond comms would you trust your broadband provider to provide?
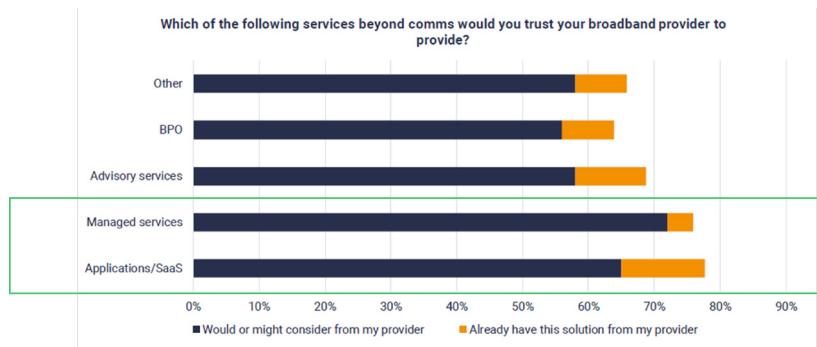
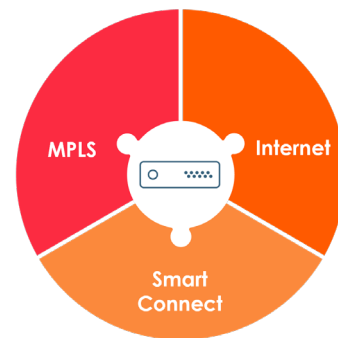## Service Provider Opportunity

One Box: Service Providers are the only ones that can provide One Box for MPLS, Internet and Smart Connect. They are providing access to MPLS or Internet networks, through copper/fiber/radio. Thanks to OneOS6, a simple solution with strong foundation, with a single remote click, the router can be upgraded to a Smart Router.

It means for example one single box for :

- Access 1: Fiber

- Access 2: 5G

- Smart Connect

With dynamic routing between the two.

Smart Connect opportunity: The Smart Connect solution supports service providers in evolving their connectivity offers and leverages a software-defined approach to deliver services while reducing deployment complexity. Smart Connect functionalities focus on delivering high value to SMBs. Smart Connect improves their availability to Internet and secures their IT at scale. Complete with robust visibility and delegation capabilities, Smart Connect enables service providers to rapidly deploy or upgrade their connectivity offers with continuity, security, agility, and visibility to their end-customers.

Smart Connect Solution: Benefits

Multiple Uplinks: Smart Connect can manage unlimited multiple uplinks active/active or active/passive. It also has an active/shutdown mode, particularly well-suited for 4G/5G backup use cases. This way if the connection is lost on one link, the connection to the network is not lost. The end-customer still has a connection to Internet and his applications and can continue his business as usual.

Security: Security is one of SMB's main concerns and advanced security in the cloud means scalable security. Smart Connect can send traffic to SSE for protection at scale, it can handle peak traffic at 1 Gbps, and still lookup for malware inside TLS. Smart Connect' statefull L4 firewall can reduce malware lateral movement: if a host is infected, the firewall will prevent the malware from propagating to the whole site.

Simplicity: Smart Connect's automatic application recognition function makes it easy to configure the solution without advanced IT knowledge. Smart Connect solution also offers visibility so the end customer can understand network usage and also lookup bandwidth consumption: does a specific user or app consume all the bandwidth.

Optimized Costs: Service Provider does not have to pay for the hardware purchase, for the hardware transportation and for the technician on-site installation. It is one hardware, but it is also only one Operating System. Smart Connect features are part of OneOS6. It means a very simple system to set-up and manage. As there is no hardware roll-out needed, it means quicker revenue recognition.

Optimized Carbon Footprint: From a sustainability point of view, it means electrical consumption of one appliance instead of three. Instead of having a MPLS access router, and Internet access router and an SD-WAN appliance of 200 KgCO2eq each, service providers can have a single box of less than 200 KgCO2eq. It reduces carbon footprint by more than 3.

With Ekinops' Smart Connect Small Businesses can work peacefully and focus on their business. Their Internet will always be on.

Find out more about Ekinops' Smart Connect here.

Visit our website to learn more about how Ekinops can enables service providers to rapidly deploy or upgrade their connectivity offers with continuity, security, agility, and visibility to their end-customers.

About ⸜ ekinops

Ekinops is a leading provider of open and fully interoperable Layer 1, 2 and 3 solutions to service providers around the world. Our programmable and highly scalable solutions enable the fast, flexible and cost-effective deployment of new services for both high-speed, high-capacity optical transport networks and virtualization-enabled managed enterprise services

Our product portfolio consists of three highly complementary product and service sets: Ekinops360, OneAccess and Compose.

- Ekinops360 provides optical transport solutions for metro, regional and long-distance networks with WDM for high-capacity point-to-point, ring and optical mesh architectures, and OTN for improved bandwidth utilization and efficient multi-service aggregation.

- OneAccess offers a wide choice of physical and virtualized deployment options for access network functions.

- Compose supports service providers in making their networks software-defined with a variety of software management tools and services, including the scalable SD-WAN Xpress and Nuvla Edge-to-Cloud solutions.

As service providers embrace SDN and NFV deployment models, Ekinops enables future-proofed deployment today, enabling operators to seamlessly migrate to an open, virtualized delivery model at a time of their choosing.

A global organization, Ekinops (EKI) - a public company traded on the Euronext Paris exchange operates on 4 continents.