

The CIO's Guide to Simplifying Enterprise Networking

How Lumen and Meter are redefining enterprise connectivity

LUMEN®

meter



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Introduction: The Great Network Shift

Something has shifted in the way enterprises think about their networks. They no longer have the time, or patience, for complex networking. It must be fast, resilient and almost invisible. But that's not a familiar experience for many CIOs.

For decades, connectivity has been about infrastructure, like the plumbing behind the walls. Only it didn't tick along quietly in the background. It required specialists to maintain it; slow ticket processes to fix it. Networks were complex by nature and complicated by design. Wide area networks and local area networks were built by different vendors, managed by different teams, and monitored through different dashboards. The result was a patchwork of technologies that worked (mostly) but demanded constant attention.

These complex deployments slow innovation and drain resources. They're not fit for today's enterprises, where adoption of AI, copilots, and agents is growing. Where data needs to move in real time, workloads are distributed across sites, and the number of connected devices is exploding.

All this demands a connectivity foundation that's faster, smarter, and simpler than anything enterprises have today. At the same time, the people who built and maintained traditional networks are retiring. Organizations are struggling to recruit and retain the talent to plug this brain drain, leaving them to navigate growing infrastructure needs with shrinking specialist teams.

The goal is to achieve a unified, intelligent, end-to-end connectivity experience that just works. But success means finding the sweet spot between technology and service. Scale and simplicity. And shifting from transactional vendor relationships to strategic partnerships that underpin long-term growth.



The Cost of Complexity

Ask any IT director what keeps them up at night and the answer rarely starts with “we need more bandwidth.” The real frustrations are structural. Networks that take weeks to deploy. Vendors that don’t talk to each other. Dashboards that show half the picture. Outages that require three phone calls to three different support teams before anyone can pinpoint the problem.

These are longstanding pain points, but they’re becoming terminal for organizations grappling with growing demand for AI, IoT and real-time operations. A staggering 92% of companies are already using multiple cloud solutions for AI in their business.¹ Yet IDC research found that for 69% of large enterprises, improving the performance (ie latency) of applications is a top investment priority.²

92%

of companies use multiple cloud solutions for AI in their business¹

1. Flexera. 2026 State of the Cloud Report. Flexera, 2026. [info.flexera.com]

2. US Lumen Digital Survey, IDC, April 2024

Focusing solely on technical challenges risks missing the bigger picture. This is actually an organizational problem at heart. In most enterprises, WAN and LAN are managed as separate domains. The wide area network is the responsibility of one team, procured through one set of vendors, monitored through one set of tools. Meanwhile, the local area network belongs to another team entirely. When something goes wrong it can take days, or even weeks, to fix. And every hour lost to troubleshooting takes away from delivering the strategic initiatives that IT leaders are increasingly judged by. As the network goes from enabler to bottleneck, innovation stalls and projects slip.

The approach to enterprise connectivity needs to change. Businesses need solutions that work out of the box, without the need for long planning horizons or specialized teams. This is becoming particularly pressing as IT functions grapple with talent shortages and dwindling interest in traditional network roles.



What If Your Network Just Worked?

The premise here is simple: local internet and Wi-Fi networks should be as easy to switch on as water or electricity. You turn them on, and they work. You don't think about them. You don't troubleshoot them. They're just there.

For Lumen and Meter, this is a vision that extends across the full enterprise connectivity stack. No longer confined to just the local network, the aspiration now encompasses everything from the wide area network to the Wi-Fi access point, to deliver a seamless, unified experience.

“ We started Meter to build a different kind of networking company—one that's seamless, integrated, and built to scale. Our partnership with Lumen unifies WAN and LAN into a single experience and extends our vision to simplify how enterprises connect.”



— Anil Varanasi
CEO, Meter

From idea to impact

It's an approach that's already gaining traction. At MeterUp 2025, Meter's annual conference, attendees heard about a warehouse migration completed in just 12 hours. A deployment that would have traditionally taken weeks, the Lumen and Meter vision prevented costly downtime and kept operations running without interruption. Similarly, a global ride-sharing platform shared how it scaled effortlessly across locations without burdening its teams with operational complexity.

And then came a particularly compelling endorsement. Bob Metcalfe, the inventor of Ethernet, spoke about the future of networking and reinforced a principle that resonated throughout the event: the most transformative technologies are the ones that succeed by becoming invisible. They fade into the background and simply work.

“ This partnership with Meter is a powerful step forward in delivering enterprise customers AI-ready connectivity quickly, securely, and effortlessly. We're not just connecting networks—we're connecting outcomes.”



— Kate Johnson
CEO, Lumen

That idea, for technology that empowers by disappearing, sits at the heart of what Lumen and Meter are building together.

The Talent Crisis Compounding the Problem

The people problem is an often-overlooked piece in the connectivity puzzle, but it's already a significant barrier to adopting emerging technologies. More network engineers are retiring than are entering the job market. The pipeline of specialists who can configure, design, and maintain enterprise-grade networks is thinning at precisely the moment that network complexity is increasing.

The problem is partly self-inflicted. Because network configuration, design, and maintenance are so arduous and manual, engineers end up doing grunt work rather than actual engineering. As a result, the profession has become less compelling, and fewer talented people are choosing it as a career.

But if we look at the history of computing, it's full of moments where automation has liberated professionals from mechanical tasks and allowed them to focus on higher-value work. Networking is overdue for the same shift. Organizations that embrace network automation will not only operate more efficiently—they'll attract and retain better talent, because the work itself becomes more interesting.

People used to compile code manually. When computerized compilers took over, software engineers moved to more interesting tasks. The same transformation is happening in networking.

AI Demands a New Approach

This isn't just a question of what runs on the network. Artificial intelligence is driving changes in how the network itself should be procured, structured and deployed. Aiming to tackle this shift, Lumen, one of the world's largest network infrastructure operators, and Meter, the company rethinking how enterprise networks are built and managed from the ground up, have partnered to create a new, end-to-end networking experience.

Lumen and Meter are delivering an innovative unified SD-WAN to LAN solution—built to unified WAN and LAN solution that's built for the AI-driven enterprise.



The rise of intelligent networking

Lumen is deliberately hitching network modernization to the defining technology shift of our time. With ~340,000 route miles of fiber and a global backbone capacity exceeding 350 Tbps, Lumen operates one of the most deeply connected networks in the world and the physical backbone that AI workloads depend on. Lumen is building the programmable network that connects data, clouds, applications, and AI infrastructure as one system. By doing so, it offers three things no other provider does together:

- Deliver a ubiquitous physical network at AI scale
- A fully digital, API-driven platform
- A connected ecosystem across hyperscalers and SaaS

The result is simple. It's no longer about circuits, but outcomes. Its network reaches deep into major metros and across long-haul routes, connecting data centers, cloud providers, and distributed enterprise sites at scale.



This network footprint is crucial. But the question today is whether that network is intelligent, automated, and adaptable. Can it respond to changing conditions in real time? Can it configure itself for new workloads without waiting for a human to log a ticket?

This is where Meter comes in. The company has built AI directly into its network management platform, with models trained to make network configuration and management easier. IT managers are already communicating with their networks using natural language, turning what used to require specialized CLI knowledge into a conversation. The ultimate vision is nothing less than autonomous networks, with infrastructure that configures, monitors, and heals itself with minimal human intervention.

The convergence is powerful. Lumen provides the AI-ready wide area backbone. Meter makes the local network intelligent. Together, they are built to cover the full connectivity stack—from the cloud to the conference room—with a layer of intelligence that neither could deliver alone. Customers stop managing network complexity, and instead get fast, secure, on-demand connectivity between applications, clouds, and GPUs.

But both companies are careful about how they talk about AI. As Meter CEO Anil Varanasi observes, “The word AI gets said so many times in a given meeting that it’s lost all meaning.” What matters is not the label but the outcome: networks that require less human intervention and deliver more consistent performance.

A Unified Connectivity Solution

The Lumen and Meter joint solution is the WAN-to-LAN offering built specifically for the enterprise. It combines Lumen's high-performance wide area network with Meter's intelligent local area network platform, delivered through a single procurement experience.

Through Meter Connect, enterprise customers can purchase the integrated solution in a single flow, designed for faster deployment, unified visibility, and lower total cost of ownership. The solution will also be available through the Microsoft Marketplace, allowing enterprises to apply the purchase directly to existing Azure commitments.

Single-pane-of-glass simplicity

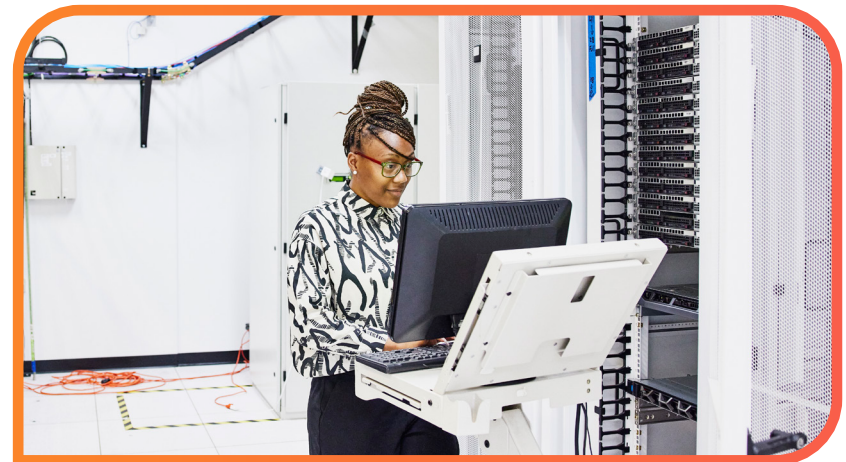
For IT teams, the practical impact is immediate: a single pane of glass showing both WAN and LAN performance data, including circuit health and installation metrics from Lumen. No more switching between dashboards. No more wondering whether a connectivity issue lives on the WAN side or the LAN side. One view. One set of data. One support path.

This is part of Lumen's broader Connected Ecosystem strategy—a framework for interconnecting customers, partners, and platforms to drive smarter, faster solutions across cloud, data center, and infrastructure services. For Meter, the integration extends its reach beyond the local

network and into the wide area, completing the picture that enterprise customers have been asking for.

Meter designs and builds its own networking hardware. From controllers and switches to wireless access points, it's all Meter-manufactured. The company then installs the equipment and uses its own software to manage everything, creating a vertically integrated model that removes the handoff friction typical of multi-vendor environments. On the cellular side, Meter's 5G gateway provides indoor coverage that replaces traditional distributed antenna systems at a fraction of the cost, keeping users on cellular networks without forcing a switch to Wi-Fi.

The result is a connectivity experience that feels like one network, because it is one network.



Speed to Value

Traditional enterprise network deployments are measured in weeks or months. Site surveys, vendor coordination, equipment procurement, configuration, testing, go-live—each stage introduces delays, and each delay has a cost. For CIOs operating in industries where time-to-market determines competitive advantage, those delays aren't just an inconvenience. They're critical business risks.

Accelerating the timeline

Lumen and Meter are compressing these timelines dramatically. Like the warehouse migration, deployments that took weeks now take hours. The pace is driven by Meter's hardware and delivery model: nine new hardware platforms with three times the throughput and three times faster installation times, announced at MeterUp 2025.

Beyond speed, this partnership helps customers see their network as a strategic advantage, not a commodity. Lumen and Meter bring a consultative approach that helps organizations define the best networking architecture for their unique needs—translating infrastructure investment into tangible business outcomes.

12 hours

to complete a full warehouse network migration³

3. Based on from a customer story shared at MeterUp

Lumen answers the wide area side of that equation. With one of the world's largest fiber networks and more than 1,500 Network-as-a-Service customers (and counting), Lumen brings the connectivity that enterprise sites need, delivered through the Lumen Connect digital platform that removes the friction of traditional sales cycles. Taken together, accelerated site activation and an integrated hardware and software model:

- Eliminates procurement and provisioning bottlenecks
- Moves enterprises from deployment to value creation at speed
- Lowers total cost of ownership, versus traditional multi-vendor approaches.

With a customer base that's growing at 50% quarter over quarter, Lumen listens, learns and understands its customers' needs, turning enterprise insight into enterprise value.



From Complexity to Consistency

Deployment speed is only half the story. What happens after go-live matters just as much, if not more. The ongoing operational burden of managing distributed enterprise networks is relentless: monitoring, troubleshooting, updating, patching, responding to incidents, maintaining visibility across dozens or hundreds of sites.

Meter's Command interface is designed to address this resource-intensive process. It's a generative user interface that lets IT managers communicate with their networks using natural language. Instead of navigating complex configuration menus or writing CLI commands, an IT manager can simply describe what they need, and the system responds.

First unveiled at MeterUp 2024, Command is already reducing support ticket resolution time by up to 90% in early deployments.³ A more advanced version is planned for 2027, moving the platform closer to the vision of fully autonomous network management.

Command is already reducing support ticket resolution time by up to 90% in early deployments⁴

4. Based on MeterUp 2024



Power in partnership

The partnership with Lumen deepens this capability. The two companies are developing integrations that will bring WAN insights and automation directly into Command, offering natural language control and end-to-end visibility across the entire enterprise network stack. Lumen's APIs and Connect digital platform will make these capabilities scalable, enabling customers to design, purchase, and manage Network-as-a-Service through a flexible, consumption-based model.

For IT teams, the impact is practical and immediate. Instead of maintaining separate monitoring tools for WAN and LAN, they get unified visibility. Instead of escalating issues across vendor boundaries, they get a single support path. Instead of spending their days firefighting, they can focus on the strategic work that their organizations actually hired them to do.

From Connectivity to Outcomes

So what does this look like in practice, for the CIO in retail, healthcare, education or logistics? For those juggling distributed sites, or hybrid cloud, or ever-more demanding stakeholders? The Lumen and Meter partnership is designed for exactly this, helping organizations from warehouse to office floor, to reduce deployment friction and build the digital infrastructure of tomorrow.

Distributed Enterprise Connectivity

Meter's reliable site-level Wi-Fi/cellular and proactive monitoring

+

Lumen's backbone redundancy and low latency, scalable performance

=

Built-for, resilient connectivity across any sites, points of sale, clinics, branches and hubs

Network-as-a-Service Transformation

Meter's subscription LAN/Wi-Fi with built-in refresh

+

Lumen's usage-based connectivity options and backbone

=

A fully managed, OpEx-first model that avoid vendor sprawl and boosts financial predictability with scalable, SLA-based services



Consistent, Multi-Site Expansion

Meter's LAN/Wi-Fi deployment

+

Lumen's connectivity circuits

=

Enabling faster time-to-service, simplified operations and consistent user experience across all sites

Smart Campus & Edge Experiences

Meter's managed Wi-Fi/cellular for device access

+

Lumen's low latency backbone and edge compute for processing

=

Seamless digital experiences with frictionless edge-to-core performance and security

* Explore detailed industry scenarios in the companion interactive infographic at meter.com/connect.

A New Vision for Network Connectivity

The future of enterprise connectivity is simpler, faster, and more intelligent than what most organizations have today. The Lumen and Meter partnership is designed to make that future attainable now.

The integrated WAN-to-LAN solution is available today through Meter Connect, with planned availability in the Microsoft Marketplace. For enterprises looking to modernize their network infrastructure or expand into new sites quickly, this partnership represents a new standard for speed, service, and simplicity.

Whether you're managing a single headquarters or hundreds of distributed locations, the question is the same: what would your organization look like if your network just worked?



Ready to Explore What Meter powered by Lumen Can Deliver?

Visit site

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[Explore industry scenarios in the interactive infographic](#)



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