



AT&T Uses Netformx Every Step of the Way



Overview

The process of designing and validating networks manually was time-consuming and often less reliable for AT&T's Professional Services unit. DesignXpert Platinum Edition from Netformx, provides a complete network design environment allowing the AT&T team to design and validate networks quickly, using one application and knowledge base.

Challenges

- Slow Manual Network Design Process
- Utilizing Multiple Applications for Design Causes Errors
- Existing Drawing Tool Could Not Validate Designs
- Vendor Websites Require Device-By-Device Configuration

Capabilities

- Portability
- Flexibility
- Comprehensive Automated Discovery

Advantages

- Up to 50% Time Savings
- Rapid ROI
- Validated Design Accuracy
- Design Confidence

Manual Network Design Slows the Process

Before Netformx, the AT&T network engineers used an industry-standard drawing tool, as well as multiple vendor websites to put together their equipment order list for a project. The drawing tool did not validate the designs, and although the websites had some validation features, they only provided time-consuming "device-by-device" configuration, and lacked support for the complex topologies of today's networks.

"We would have to enter all the parameters manually and when the design didn't validate, we had to figure out why," said Bryan Payne, Sr. Network Engineer for AT&T Business. "It wouldn't tell us that we needed a specific component. Everything was slower and manual, with a lot of cutting and pasting from one application to another. A lot of mistakes could be made because of compatibility issues or incorrect quantities of components."

Leveraging Netformx Through the Design Process

Now Payne and his team use DesignXpert throughout the entire design process, from initial drawings to order completion and final validation. First, they use DesignXpert Enterprise AutoDiscovery to conduct a site survey. Then they complete initial drawings, build equipment order lists, and validate that they have all the right components all via DesignXpert.

AT&T saves substantial time performing validation and building the equipment order lists, because they are able to export into Excel

"With Netformx, at the end of the day I spend less time producing better work, with more accuracy and more information about the network. I love the product."

Bryan Payne

Sr. Network Engineer, AT&T Business

and then into Word to create documents, such as contracts. The Excel documents are also exported directly into AT&T's order system. AT&T then uses Netformx to develop and validate the new network. In a large network, they often transition the new network equipment through a series of steps. Each of those steps must be documented. "We use Netformx because it is easy to drag and drop and change components, and we can quickly create new drawings to show each layer of the project," Payne noted.

"After we've made the last hardware change, we run Enterprise AutoDiscovery again," he added, "and we are able to quickly and accurately produce a document showing how the customer's new network will work."

"We wanted a tool that is easy to use and portable," said Payne. "With other vendors we ran into lack of portability. Those applications had to be set up on a server. We needed something that we could put on just about anybody's laptop. To be able to go to client sites with Netformx and do work for multiple customers, and multiple pieces of large networks — that flexibility is not in any other product I have seen."

About AT&T Business

AT&T is a global leader in phone, Internet and transaction-based voice and data services. The company's AT&T Business Services division is a leading business communications services provider, and the division's Professional Services unit is the network engineering group that provides support to customers needing custom network designs. All of the unit's clients are Fortune 1000 companies, and more than half are Fortune 100.

"DesignXpert is the best network architecture product on the market. I have seen many others but I have never seen anything as good as Netformx.

Bryan Payne, AT&T Business

About Netformx

Netformx® provides Guided Selling Solutions to meet the challenges of selling sophisticated high-technology products. Its solutions enable network equipment manufacturers, system integrators, and enterprise end-customers to design, verify, and acquire network equipment quickly, easily, and accurately. Netformx customers and partners include Cisco Systems, Nortel Networks, SBC Communications, Pomeroy, IBM Global Services, Dimension Data, Adtran, Symbol, De Te We, Swisscom, Hewlett-Packard, AT&T and others. Netformx is headquartered in Santa Clara, California with distribution partners overseas.



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DesignXpert Platinum Edition delivers the following advantages for AT&T:

■ Up to 50% Time Savings:

"Netformx saves us a lot of time — and time is money," Payne explained. "On a very large enterprise design, Netformx can save between 30% to 50% of the time it takes to do the same job manually."

■ Rapid ROI:

One AT&T project — a \$3 million network implementation for one of the world's largest

airlines — serves as a good example of how quickly Netformx generates ROI. The hardware vendor did some preliminary work and handed the job over to AT&T for integration. Payne ran the design through DesignXpert and caught a configuration error. This simple validation saved AT&T from a \$100,000 parts error, as well as at least another \$100,000 in the time it would have taken to determine why the network was not working.

"Customers expect the hardware vendor to give them an accurate design, but that doesn't really happen," Payne revealed. "The hardware vendor's design is about 95% accurate — but one error can cost hundreds of thousands or even a million dollars. And using Netformx, we have the potential to save that kind of money on almost every project."

■ Validated Design Accuracy:

"Netformx provides validation right at our fingertips," said Payne. "We don't have to ensure that everything is correct on a device-by-device basis. DesignXpert does it for us and keeps us from making mistakes. The tool ensures we have accurate designs and it is a huge time saver for us. Time saving and accuracy — the two most important advantages in our business."

■ Design Confidence:

"If I design a network with Netformx, then I know it is built on the latest and greatest technology available," Payne confirmed. "And I always revalidate a design prior to placing an order, to ensure I have used the newest and best options. If I had to do that manually, validate a 500-line item design, then show it to the customer, and then revalidate it, it would take a lot longer and I could never get the same level of confidence."

The Bottom Line: Speed and Accuracy Make AT&T More Competitive

"Netformx makes us competitive in many ways," Payne concluded. "Speed gives us a competitive edge; we can present more design options; and our drawings and presentations look better. That's why I always go to Netformx first. Once you get hooked on Netformx, there is no going back."