



Intricate IT solution diagrams with Netformx DesignXpert and Discovery increases customer wins

With intense competitive pressures and razor-thin margins, it is imperative to generate customer proposals and quotes quickly yet ensure that they will be profitable. However, there is a bewildering and continually changing array of products, services, and vendor promotions that make it complicated to create an accurate and timely solution design. In addition, most enterprise, government, and education technology designs begin with an existing or “brownfield” environment, but customer records may not reflect the latest network configuration. This makes it difficult to plan network migrations or to identify opportunities to up-sell or cross-sell as equipment is nearing end-of-support or needs to be upgraded.

Sharing the Netformx value proposition across the industry

Mike Hurley CCIE, CISSP first started using Netformx solutions when he was CTO at a midsized VAR where he managed more than 25 presales engineers. The company was then acquired by a national VAR that multiplied the number of employees by a factor of 10. He introduced Netformx to the larger company and they embraced it. Mike worked there for many years and was a big proponent of DesignXpert and Discovery. Since then he has been an IT Consultant and is taking the Netformx value proposition to even more companies. He shares examples of benefits he has reaped by using Netformx solutions.

Solution diagrams provide value to customers and increase partner efficiency

Before DesignXpert, the engineers Mike worked with created Visio diagrams and then manually extrapolated the parts list in CCW, which doubled the time to create a quote. Rather than spend that extra time, it was easy to revert to just doing Bills of Materials (BOMs). But that had a negative impact on company sales since CIOs prefer to have a business discussion, i.e., “A picture is worth a thousand words (or part numbers).” Netformx DesignXpert made it easy to create diagrams of the customer’s sites, locations, etc., which were very helpful in explaining the solution to executives. The customer conversations got deeper and were much more engaging. Many customers said they decided to go with the company because of the solution diagrams. The final solution design can then be automatically fed into CCW.

Netformx Discovery and DesignXpert streamline the design process

Netformx Discovery™ and Netformx DesignXpert® help solution providers automate manual processes, enabling engineers and architects to quickly upload their customer’s actual network configuration and rapidly create validated multi-vendor design diagrams and proposals.

Netformx Discovery automatically creates a baseline of the customer’s actual multi-vendor network and identifies upgrade, replacement, and enhancement opportunities. In minutes, the network can be inventoried and documented, including configuration details, from topology down to node level.

Netformx DesignXpert shields the user from the complexity of products, services, and vendor incentives so they can quickly deliver professional and personalized multi-vendor proposals (including design diagram, BOM, and SOW) that increase profitability and customer satisfaction. Accessed via desktop or virtual cloud, DesignXpert streamlines the design process with its advanced graphics-based capabilities that make it easy to create detailed, rich graphical network drawings, designs, and schematics. The design tool provides seamless integration with Cisco Commerce Workspace (CCW) and with Visio®.

The customer’s actual baseline network, uploaded from Netformx Discovery, enables rapid creation of accurate designs. DesignXpert presents alternate SKUs that are eligible for rebate and designs are validated against the industry’s most complete Netformx KnowledgeBase™, freeing users from needing to understand exactly how to construct each element used in the design canvas. This ensures completed designs are accurate and can be deployed successfully the first time, eliminating costly configuration errors.

Design drawings are a big differentiator



"As a network consultant, I work with intricate designs. Netformx DesignXpert allows me to create a visual representation of my design that I focus on with customers instead of the Bill of Materials (BOM). Then I can easily convert the diagram to a Cisco CCW

estimate or BOM to continue the sales cycle. This level of interaction with customers differentiates us from competitors, and I couldn't imagine doing it without a tool like Netformx."

– Mike Hurley CCIE, CISSP, IT Consultant

According to Mike Hurley, "DesignXpert provided a positive experience for everyone. It streamlined the design process and reduced the level of engineering effort required and the time to create a quote by almost 50%. This was a big plus for the customer's experience. The company engineers liked DesignXpert, too, since it simplified their job. And sales executives loved it because proposals were getting turned around quickly."

The value of working remotely using the cloud

Mike and his teams were a mobile workforce, using one computer at work and another at home, which created standardization issues. In addition, since DesignXpert is a large program, some older laptops were not able to keep up.

The company was already doing a cloud-first initiative so had been looking into Amazon solutions, such as Amazon WorkSpaces, a managed and secure remote desktop solution. However, when they tried using it for DesignXpert it wouldn't install. They discussed the use case with their Netformx team, and within a couple of weeks DesignXpert was fully supported and worked flawlessly on WorkSpaces, providing a high level of performance, even on lower-end laptops.

More importantly, it provided a consistent experience no matter what device the engineers were working on.

Netformx Discovery uncovers new business opportunities

In working with his customers, Mike found that many didn't know what equipment they actually had in their network, which made it difficult for them to manage their support contracts. They were asking Mike's team to determine what equipment they had and what needed to be replaced. Thanks to Netformx Discovery, they were able to quickly do a network assessment, automatically creating a baseline of the customer's actual network. That generated new business opportunities for the company. They were able to take over managing their customers' maintenance contracts, identifying expired agreements and assets past date of support, and creating opportunities to cross- or up-sell.

Overall Netformx value: customer experience, efficiency, responsiveness

Mike provided this summary of the benefits of using Netformx:

"The soft Netformx value is its impact on customer experience. When we create network diagrams, we are supporting a customer-intimate relationship. And since the process is automated with DesignXpert, it would be crazy not to do it. It provides us a competitive edge.

The hard Netformx value is time savings. We need to do more with less or the same headcount, especially now with COVID-19 hiring restrictions, so we need to find ways to be more efficient. Netformx streamlines processes to do just that.

Netformx as a company is very responsive, providing an excellent partner experience. We've never had to wait very long for a response, whether with sales or support tickets, and usually got calls or emails back within a few hours or the same day."

Spreading the word about the Netformx benefits

Most recently Mike has been working as a consultant with a small, regionally based company that is a Cisco Premier Partner. They support a variety of verticals, from K-12 and higher education to healthcare and financial services.

They are evaluating how to go to market, and he is helping them set up and optimize their processes. Mike is seeing all the issues he has seen before. Especially in healthcare, their customers have large and diverse networks, with many locations, and don't have a clear understanding of their assets. They use Visio and legacy solutions when discussing BOMs with their customers.

Mike's goal is to set standards, so the customer has the same experience regardless of which engineer is working on the quote. And that engineers have the same user experience whether they are working in the office or remotely.

All these are ripe for the streamlining and automation provided by Netformx tools, including DesignXpert and Discovery.

Once again, Mike is looking to Netformx to provide the needed automation and efficiencies that will streamline their business and improve their customer's experience.

About Netformx

Netformx helps Cisco Partners design and deliver multi-vendor IT solutions quickly and effectively, increase revenues, and create an improved buying experience for their customers. The Netformx application suite streamlines the entire sales lifecycle from pre-sale to renewal while optimizing use of Cisco incentives, promotions, discounts and rebates to grow profit margins. Powerful tools comprising business intelligence, actionable insights, collaboration and automation, coupled with close integration with Cisco, enable Partners to eliminate manual work, improve efficiency and achieve better business outcomes and customer success.

Netformx has 2,000+ customers globally including ALE, AT&T, Bell Canada, BT, Cisco, Dimension Data, Insight, Logicalis, Optus, SMP, and Telstra. The multi-vendor KnowledgeBase™ contains client and vendor products, services, and program compliance data from vendors such as Cisco, ALE, Check Point, Juniper and Riverbed.

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