

Chief Transformation Officer Fletcher Keister shows how the Lumen platform creates business value

By Fletcher Keister, Chief Transformation Officer

The majority of global IT decision makers in a June 2020 Quadrant Strategies survey* say the 4th Industrial Revolution will have a substantial impact on both society and the future of business, and 90 percent believe that a business' ability to quickly acquire, analyze, and act on data will be a key factor in determining if they will be a technology leader in the future.

Many see the 4th Industrial Revolution as centered around technology, but as a top-level IT decision maker, I think about how we organize ourselves around work more effectively: how we transform skill sets and workflows to more effectively deliver experiences—both for employees and for customers. At Lumen, my big concern is to help customers transform how they manage their applications and infrastructure—ensuring our enterprise networking capabilities can deliver an experience that others in our space can't.

A Platform to Create Business Value

IT decision makers care about providing applications that are successful and data that people can acquire, analyze and act upon, without having to worry about what's underneath. It's more about how our customers use our network to deliver the capabilities they need to run their business: the way we deliver the most easily consumed network capabilities. On top of that, it's about how customers create unique business value on our network. We're building a platform, and we're



exposing it to our customers in a way they can build their companies on top, without having to worry about the infrastructure. Our customers can focus on what they want to do: deliver better experiences to their customers.

As an IT decision maker, I can get bogged down with layers of infrastructure that I have to manage. If you can take that burden away from me so all I have to do is plug-in and connect, that frees up a lot of dollars, a lot of energy, a lot of time to focus on the thing that really drives value to the business: the experiences we deliver to customers.

Historically, when buying telecommunications services, IT decision makers had to worry about the time it took to plan for something, design it, order it, and have that thing delivered. It could be many months. We're developing a platform that we will fulfill and provision with automated flow-through—with the network inside it—in minutes rather than months.

The Lumen™ Platform will take a lot of uncertainty and complexity out of the process. It will remove a lot of wasted management time to ensure that things happen in a coordinated way. It will foster customers' creativity and application innovation to uniquely differentiate themselves in their markets. That's what we mean by "easy to consume" and "differentiated experiences."

Agnostic Orchestration

Often, I get vendors saying to me, "Why don't you just go all-in to the cloud. It will make everything better." In reality, that's not true, and the June 2020 Quadrant Strategies survey* backs this up: four in five global IT decision makers say that a centralized cloud model cannot support their workload demands.

Some things are easy to put in clouds, but some things are not. So there's "hybrid cloud"—determining which things to put in a public cloud and which things to keep in an on-premises, cloud-like environment. But there's also a lot of discussion these days about the edge—how nearby applications perform better, with lower-latency access to data and information.

Distributed applications may need to operate in the cloud, at the market edge and on-premises. Other applications may need to move across those domains as business requirements change. The challenge is in orchestrating applications across those domains while keeping everything secured and safe.

You can go to a hypervisor vendor, and they can orchestrate across everything in their hypervisor-specific world. Cloud service providers can do the same thing inside their cloud environments. But none of them have the incentive to truly allow enterprise customers to orchestrate agnostically across multiple domains.

Nine in 10 global C-Suite leaders say fiber infrastructure is essential to connect to a distributed cloud network, according to the Quadrant Strategies survey*. The Lumen Platform brings the fiber network up underneath the cloud, the edge and the premises, and we give our customers tools to agnostically orchestrate across whatever cloud platforms, edge platforms and on-premises datacenters they choose to use.

New Online Dynamics and Experiences

With Covid-19, we're seeing what may become permanent changes. According to the Quadrant Strategies survey*, two in three global IT decision makers believe the changes to business operations brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic will remain and represent a long-term shift in business strategy, and 83 percent say working remotely will become the "new normal" in the wake of COVID-19.

Ideas about virtual working and in-office working are changing. But people crave human connection. So as things settle, I think it will become a hybrid world. The office will become collaborative spaces where people come in and work together, celebrate together and have special moments together. Then people can move back out and work remotely. That has big implications on enterprise networking solutions. We must seamlessly and securely support people who depend on consumer broadband connections for access to the network, just as we support them when they're bound to a branch office or a headquarters location.

Secondly, in a world that has already gone heavily digital, it's going to go more so. Think about healthcare, for example. Because of Covid-19, the adoption of telemedicine is going through the roof. All of a sudden, most appointments are being managed remotely. Why would you ever go back to 100 percent being in the office? People's willingness to engage in digital experiences is rapidly increasing. That makes our ability to deliver experiences that much more important.

** In June 2020, Lumen sponsored a Quadrant Strategies online quantitative survey with 2,464 Senior IT Decision Makers and C-suite executives from large and midsize organizations in the US, UK, Germany, France, Australia, Argentina, Colombia, Brazil, Singapore and Japan.*

<https://news.lumen.com/Chief-Transformation-Officer-Fletcher-Kiester-shows-how-the-Lumen-platform-creates-business-value>