

business trends

Bridging The Competitive Gap Between Small And “Big” Business

(NAPSA)—A major challenge for many of today’s small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) is reducing the competitive gap against “Big Business” with speed, network efficiencies and superb customer service all factors in leveling the playing field. According to research conducted by several organizations, including the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the top three communication network challenges facing SMBs include network security, network management and support, and finding affordable data services to support everyday business needs. Broadband providers such as Allied Riser Communications (ARC), are closing the competitive gap between SMBs and large companies by offering broadband solutions to SMBs.

A recent Gartner Group study reveals that by 2003, small businesses will face a 50 percent chance of an Internet attack, with 60 percent of them not detecting it. If an attack occurs, it can knock Web sites offline for extended periods of time or permanently. This challenge can be countered with ARC Watch™, a “plug-and-play” managed firewall solution that delivers multiple levels of network security for customers with varying network sizes and needs.

Another challenge for SMBs is the continuous monitoring, management and support required to operate a data network. According to the Information Technology Association of America (ITAA), the greatest need for IT services and workers is in smaller, non-IT firms, but due to the difficulty and expense of recruiting and retaining qualified IT professionals, many SMBs turn to external IT service providers. ARC’s Professional IT Services solution offers SMBs customized, cost-effective IT support, ranging from one-time network project services to weekly



maintenance of critical business systems.

Today, a digital divide between business segments exists because SMBs often are outspent by larger organizations to gain access to bandwidth and speed. Services such as LightSpeed Office™ bundle include Internet connections from 192Kbps to 1.5Mbps, multiple customer-branded e-mail accounts, Web hosting, professional IT services, remote access and customizable desktop business portals, thus eliminating the costly, piecemeal approach of purchasing their broadband data services from multiple carriers.

In-building providers make it easier and more affordable for SMBs to realize the value of broadband networks with service bundles offering a range of high-speed connectivity, business communication applications and managed IT services. ARC delivers bundled data solutions to the desktops of SMBs, saving customers time and money by eliminating the need to consult and negotiate individual contracts for multiple providers. Instead, SMBs can receive broadband services and a single monthly bill from one provider.

For more information about high-speed broadband solutions, visit www.arcbroadband.com/pr.