

BUSINESS CONNECTIONS



Charleston Battery Scores Big With the Community



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BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

Sometimes it makes sense to take a step back and ask, "What works now?" With technology changing so quickly, a tool that covered you two years ago may now be woefully out of date — or you may be stuck with something you no longer need. This issue of *Business Connections* examines some current solutions and their best uses. On page 3, we answer the question, **What Can You Do With a Gig?** With gigabit internet speeds becoming more widespread, it's easy to get caught up in the hype. Gigabit service might be just what your company requires to make everyone more efficient—but, depending on what you actually use internet service for, it could be more than you need. Read on to learn what makes the most sense for your business.

Then, turn to page 4 for more helpful information about internet service. **Choosing Shared Bandwidth vs. Dedicated Bandwidth** isn't always easy, and this article will walk you through the practical considerations. The bottom line: shared bandwidth is less costly, but also slower, while dedicated bandwidth is more expensive, yet faster. What you should choose depends on how your company operates.

The Business Spotlight on page 6 focuses on **Charleston Battery**. This professional soccer organization has grown with the technology age and relies on 1 Gigabit internet service from Home Telecom to provide Wi-Fi in the stadium and video for games and events. Finally, on page 7, we offer **7 Tips for Increasing Facebook Engagement**. Facebook is still a great way to engage with customers, but you need to be strategic to make the most of the application's ever-changing algorithm.

Now's a great time to take stock of your current solutions and see if any adjustments would help you be more efficient or cost-effective. Home Telecom is always here to help you do it.

Sincerely,

William S. Helmly
President & COO
Home Telecom



live life ahead.

What Can You Do With a Gig?

How lightning-fast online speeds can transform your business



Earlier this year, Home Telecom expanded our Gigabit internet offering to all areas serviced by fiber-to-the-premises, giving many in our service area access to some of the fastest internet in the nation. But what does that mean for you? Read on to find out why Gigabit internet could be great for your business.

Improved online experience. With Gigabit internet, both downloading and uploading are much faster. You'll especially notice a difference in speed if employees send large email attachments, frequently access online databases, or view videos online. You can stream high-definition (HD) video content with little or no delays or buffering. All of this means more efficient employees and more satisfied customers.

More devices possible. The more devices that are signed on to a slower network, the worse performance becomes. With Gigabit internet, this phenomenon is unnoticeable. That means employees and guests can use the network freely for bandwidth-heavy tasks, even when each person uses multiple devices.

Better collaboration. You can stay in closer contact with customers, vendors, and employees with technologies like file sharing, instant messaging, Voice over IP (VoIP), and teleconferencing. These services all improve in quality with higher bandwidth. Video conferencing, in particular, is becoming more popular, and can cut down on the need for traveling or commuting for in-person meetings.

Cost savings and revenue generation. Faster online speeds enable you to cut costs in several ways. Tasks get done more

quickly, so your employees can be more efficient each day. You may also be able to consider work-from-home arrangements for some employees, at least on a part-time basis, which could reduce the amount of office space needed. Finally, you can serve customers better and faster, meaning you'll probably see more of them, leading to increased revenue.

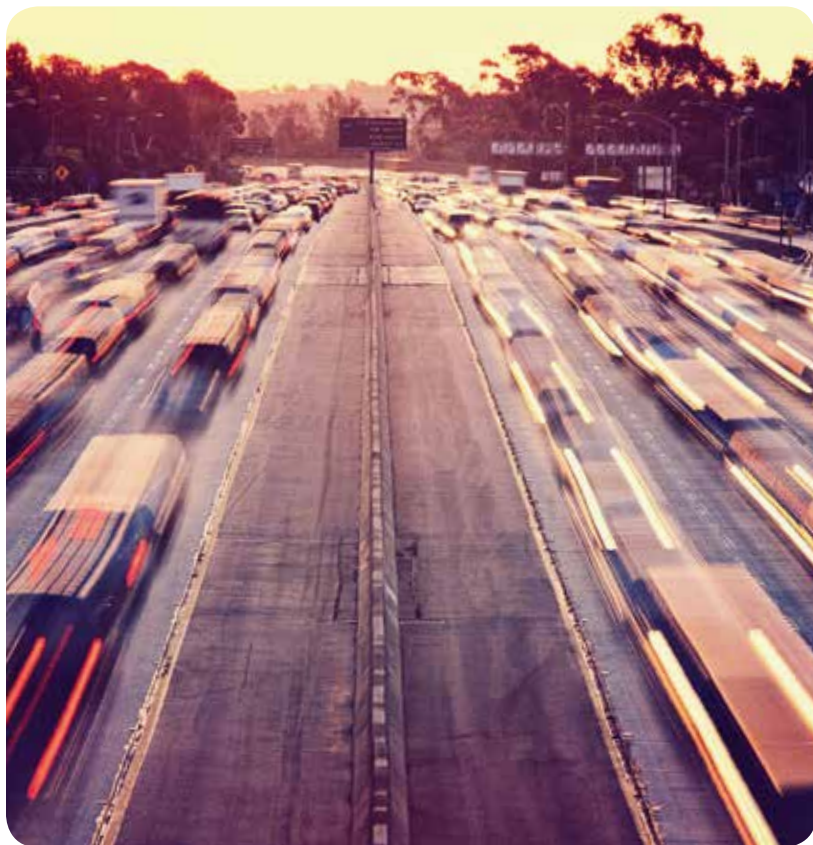
Future-proofing for your business. New technologies are being developed all the time, and who knows what tomorrow may bring? To stay competitive, you need to be prepared for the next application, database, internet-enabled device, or machine that can help drive your business. With Gigabit internet, your business will be ready.

In addition to these business advantages, Gigabit internet helps the community by attracting new companies; enabling people to work at home who might otherwise have to leave the area to find a job; and ensuring health care, information, and government services can take advantage of current technologies to better serve local citizens.

To learn more about pricing and availability, please contact Business Services at 888-571-5775.

Shared Bandwidth VS. Dedicated Bandwidth

What's the difference between them and when should each one be used?



As a business owner or manager, you have important decisions to make regarding your internet service. One consideration that sometimes causes confusion is the issue of whether to use shared bandwidth, dedicated bandwidth, or a combination of the two.

Defining the Terms

Shared bandwidth means you use the same uplink to your ISP as many other customers. This is most likely the type of connection you have at home. With shared bandwidth, speeds are advertised as something like “50 Mbps.” But, this speed is the fastest you can expect, and may be slower at any given time, depending on other limiting factors like the number of other users online.

By contrast, **dedicated bandwidth** is bandwidth that’s allocated for use by your business only. Since you’re not sharing it with anyone, your internet speeds are not affected by other users and will not fluctuate. If you choose 50 Mbps dedicated bandwidth, for example, that is the download and upload speed you will consistently experience.

A Crowded Interstate vs. Your Own Lane

To further clarify the distinction between shared bandwidth and dedicated bandwidth, it helps to use an analogy. For that, we

went to one of the experts at Home Telecom—Charles Jenkins, Business Services Sales Manager.

Jenkins routinely discusses bandwidth options with business customers and likes to use the analogy of vehicles traveling on an Interstate highway. He says, “There are thousands of people who use I-26 to travel to Charleston for work every day. During the morning commute, three lanes are congested with heavy traffic. You can get where you’re going, but the vehicles are moving more slowly than usual, and it will take longer to reach your destination than at other times of day. By 10:00 am, however, there’s less traffic, and you can move faster. The difference in speeds at different times is like shared bandwidth, which offers different data transfer speeds depending on the amount of online activity.”

Jenkins adds, “If you had a lane on I-26 just for your personal use, that would be like dedicated bandwidth. Without anyone else in the lane to encumber movement, you could always travel more quickly.”

Questions to Consider

Jenkins recommends you ask yourself the following questions before making a decision about which type of bandwidth is best for your applications:

- **How big a deal would it be to your business if your internet speeds slowed down sometimes?** Perhaps you have a small business with relatively light internet usage. In a case like this where speed is not critical, the less expensive option of shared bandwidth may be the right choice. However, a larger business that's highly dependent on consistently fast internet speeds would be better served by the guaranteed speeds of dedicated bandwidth, which come with a Service Level Agreement.
- **Do you offer Wi-Fi to customers and visitors?** Many businesses have dedicated bandwidth for use by their employees and shared bandwidth for guests in the lobby of the building. Restaurants may opt for two shared connections—one for Point of Sale and credit card transactions, to provide increased security—and the other for the Wi-Fi network used by customers.
- **Do you upload large files on a regular basis?** Medical offices and other health care providers need to upload large files containing high-resolution scans and X-rays, which requires the faster upload speeds offered by dedicated bandwidth.
- **Do you use web-based applications?** The 100-percent reliability of a dedicated connection is best for businesses using web-based applications such as Microsoft CRM or accounting software.

If you had a lane on I-26 just for your personal use, that would be like dedicated bandwidth. Without anyone else in the lane to encumber movement, you could always travel more quickly.

— CHARLES JENKINS, BUSINESS SERVICES SALES MANAGER, HOME TELECOM

"In the past, dedicated bandwidth only made sense for the largest businesses," notes Jenkins, "but with a greater need to connect internally, with vendors, and with customers, the guaranteed link offered by dedicated bandwidth is now essential for businesses of many sizes. In addition, the cost of dedicated bandwidth has come down considerably over the years, so that has been a factor in more businesses choosing a dedicated connection. The message here isn't that one type of bandwidth is bad, and the other good. But, one may be more appropriate based on a company's needs. In many cases, businesses employ both to accommodate a variety of uses and provide a strong internet continuity plan."



HOME TELECOM CAN HELP YOU CREATE A BANDWIDTH STRATEGY

Home Telecom's experienced and knowledgeable staff is well versed on the bandwidth needs of different vertical markets including medical, food service, retail, banking, data centers, higher education, and more.

With Home Telecom's assistance, Saint Clare of Assisi Catholic Church chose a 50 Mbps shared bandwidth package as well as MyWiFi Pro. Father Gregory West, Pastor at the church, says, "We are a two-year-old Catholic faith family with more than 1,700 members so far. With six full-time staff, we need fast and flexible internet service to power all the devices we use to share the Good News. Home Telecom has provided us with a superior package at a price well below their competitors."

We can help you make informed decisions about shared bandwidth vs. dedicated bandwidth for your specific applications. To discuss the best bandwidth strategy for your business, call your local Home Telecom office.



Charleston Battery

This professional soccer team scores big with the community and fans



Professional soccer team Charleston Battery was founded in 1993 by Tony Bakker, who is also the founder of Blackbaud, a company that provides software and services for nonprofit organizations. In 2000, Bakker built the soccer-specific MUSC Health Stadium, where the team now practices, with private funds. Along with the Richmond Kickers, the Battery is the longest continuously operating soccer team in the U.S.

Exciting Changes Ahead

This year, the team changed ownership. It was purchased by B Sports Entertainment, which installed a new 3,000-square foot video board in the stadium. B Sports also has plans to renovate the stadium's pub, and increase fan experience and engagement within the stadium through use of a mobile app. Sarah Cardamone, Director of Marketing and PR for the Battery, notes that changes related to the pub will be particularly exciting. "Currently, it's only open on game days," she says. "We plan to have someone run it full time, so it can be open every day."

The Battery plays in the United Soccer League, which includes 31 teams and is split between east and west. In addition, says Cardamone, "They recently played a pro team from Scotland as well as the Nigerian Olympic team. The interest in soccer in the U.S. is going through the roof now, and the league is expanding to accommodate that, with more teams joining all the time."

In addition to the professional league, the Battery hosts summer camps for children including three weeks of

half-day camp, three weeks of full-day camp, a weekly Junior Academy program for competitive players, and a weekly Tiny Tots program for children aged three to six. Current and former Battery players are coaches.

The Battery Gives Back

Including the team players, the Battery organization consists of 35 people. Those who aren't on the field still appreciate the opportunity to be part of soccer and work in the professional sports industry.

The Battery gives back to the community in a big way. Each home game features a different nonprofit organization, which is recognized at halftime and allowed to set up a table on the concourse to help attendees learn more about them. In addition, players volunteer at soccer camps and other events for kids.

To keep pace with technology, Charleston Battery gets 1 Gigabit internet service from Home Telecom. Cardamone notes, "Our Gigabit internet continuously powers free Wi-Fi to the entire MUSC Health Stadium. It also provides video service for stadium offices as well as for games, concerts, and our new Films on the Field event."

“Our Gigabit internet continuously powers free Wi-Fi to the entire MUSC Health Stadium.”

— SARAH CARDAMONE, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND PR, CHARLESTON BATTERY



7 Tips for Increasing Facebook Engagement

Simple strategies to encourage likes, comments, and shares

Facebook remains a powerful way to inform fans of new products, give them a convenient way to contact you, increase loyalty, and provide an easy format for them to share information about you. The companies that get the most engagement are those that actively make a point of fostering it, and that know how to work effectively with Facebook's most recent algorithm update. Here are some strategies you can use today to increase engagement on your company's Facebook Page:

- 1. Post information related to your brand.** Consider the example of a bookstore. It will be more likely to get a response when it posts items related to books (such as authors' birthdays, book quotes, or publication news) than when it posts generic comments such as, "TGIF."
- 2. Post questions and invite followers to respond.** The bookstore could post something like, "What's your favorite book to cool off with?" on a hot summer day.
- 3. Use media beyond just text.** Photos, videos, and links, in that order, get the most responses.
- 4. Post exclusive content.** Make your page worth visiting by posting information fans won't find anywhere else.
- 5. Post regularly.** Consider posting more than once or twice a day.
- 6. Take advantage of personal accounts.** Facebook's new algorithm favors personal account posts over business page posts, so ask employees to post your company's content.
- 7. Post more frequently during heavy Facebook usage times.** People tend to use Facebook more on weekends and toward the beginning and end of the week, as well as between 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

Finally, consider paying for Facebook advertising. Facebook provides detailed information to help you choose the best options for your company.

WHO'S MINDING YOUR BUSINESS?

CAOIMHE ZETT
Video/Social Media Coordinator

As Video/Social Media Coordinator at Home Telecom, Caoimhe Zett researches new video enhancements, supports the company's video services and deployments, and creates content for its social media platforms. She notes, "The most rewarding part of my job is listening to customer requests and launching solutions that exceed customer expectations."

Zett graduated from the University of South Carolina in 2009 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and then started working for Home Telecom. She began as a marketing representative and later moved to her current position.

Home Telecom is a good fit for her because, she says, "Within the company, we focus on the customer experience first and work backwards to figure out how best to achieve that goal. That's the standard I hold myself to as well."

In her spare time, Zett enjoys watching the Gamecocks play, going to the movies, and fishing with her husband.





HOME
TELECOM

Power the Speed of your Business

Upgrade to Gigabit Internet Speed!

With Gigabit Internet from Home Telecom, your Business can:

- Upload and download large files faster
- Online collaborate/video conference over a high quality connection
- Back-up critical data to the cloud quickly
- Support an influx of devices
- Maintain the security of your network with our FREE Internet Security Software

Call or visit us online to upgrade today!

*All services/speeds not available in all areas. All Internet speeds are "up to" speeds and are not guaranteed. There are many factors that may cause actual speeds to vary that are outside of our control such as equipment used and external network conditions. Some restrictions may apply. Contact your Home Telecom Business Representative for more information.



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