How FTTH powers economic growth, education and sustainability

By Matthew Campbell   19 Jun 2020

Fibre-based, ultra-high-speed access networks are revolutionising the way we connect with each other and the rest of the world. Changing how we work, learn and socialise, Fibre to the Home (FTTH) enhances the quality of life, empowering us to move confidently towards a digital future.

Matthew Campbell, head of SME and FTTH at Seacom

But beyond its obvious consumer and business benefits of bandwidth capacity, speed, reliability, security and scalability, FTTH contributes to the economy, environment and education sector. By building next-generation communication networks and driving the development of new services and solutions, FTTH boosts economic growth, improves e-learning and promotes a sustainable future.

Economic and efficiency benefits

Without FTTH, we wouldn't have been able to adapt to the current situation as well as we have. With access to quality broadband and high-speed connectivity, many South Africans can continue to work from home and contribute to the economy, lessening the impact of the pandemic on our country's GDP.

However, there are still a lot of people in lower LSMs who don't have access to this kind of connectivity, and this presents a prime opportunity for growth in the FTTH industry.

From a productivity point of view, local businesses have been able to keep going without their employees working from offices. In fact, many large corporates are revising their business strategy, questioning the necessity of office space and the costs associated with it. Giving their employees a fibre line that connects to their home is a lot more cost-effective than running a high-rise building with monthly expenses.

FTTH offers a practical solution in the modern business landscape, and we'll likely see more businesses making remote working permanent. For example, many of our call centre clients have decided not to take any of their staff back into the office for the foreseeable future as they've realised that working from home is not only more efficient but also makes more sense from a cost-saving perspective.

Low environmental impact

We are becoming increasingly aware of how our actions and business decisions affect the environment, with the end-goal of building a sustainable future for our children. A quote by Wendell Berry comes to mind: "The Earth is what we all have in common." As such, choosing a form of connectivity that is ethical and environmentally-friendly is an important consideration for most people and companies of today.

In comparison to other networks, FTTH presents a very low environmental-impact connectivity solution. The cost of building and operating fibre networks is minimal, without the need for high volumes of energy or the launch of new power plants. And as they are mainly deployed in built-up areas, fibre networks don't typically destroy plant or animal life.

As more people use FTTH to work remotely, they no longer need to commute to and from work, leading to reduced greenhouse gasses, carbon emissions and deforestation. Even the small environmental cost of installing new fibre infrastructure is offset by these massive environmental savings in the long run.

Education and employment opportunities

The e-learning space is another area that FTTH elevates. Through reliable, high-bandwidth connections, almost anyone can access online learning resources that weren't available before. People who didn't previously have access to education do now, and they can further their knowledge whenever it's convenient for them. This is especially important for those who work during the day or take care of family and can't find the time to complete their education.

And with more education opportunities come increased job possibilities. Not only are locals able to apply for better jobs with these online qualifications, but they can earn money from home if they choose to, with more online jobs being created. Therefore, FTTH opens employment doors that were previously shut for South Africans.

More important than ever before, connecting your home to a world-class FTTH solution that is backed by resilience and redundancy is crucial for us to remain productive and united during a crisis.

ABOUT MATTHEW CAMPBELL

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