Zoom is a leading provider of cloud-based enterprise communication solutions that help users hold individual video or audio calls, convene virtual meetings for up to 1,000 people, conduct webinars for 50,000 attendees or host webcasts for over 1 million people. Its customers range from the individual online user all the way to the largest Fortune 100 enterprises in North America.

According to founder and CEO Eric S. Yuan, Zoom’s primary mission is to build a “frictionless communications service that brings happiness to customers.” In practice, that means that Zoom customers can empower people to accomplish more by making it easier for team members to communicate and collaborate whether they’re in the same room or on opposite sides of the globe. This collaborative spirit also drove Zoom’s efforts to find a company it could trust for its communications infrastructure.

Maintaining high quality and keeping costs low during rapid growth

Zoom's business is growing at an astronomical rate. According to Harry Moseley, Zoom’s Global CIO, the service handled more than 80 billion meeting minutes and through August 2019 has already double what it logged in all of 2018.

Growth of this magnitude comes with challenges like handling more customers and more employees while managing an expanding industry footprint. For Zoom, it’s all about the ability to scale, knowing that its IT structure can support rising user demand.

“Our company’s growth is not a hockey stick, it’s a rocket launch. It’s just going straight up…”

- Harry Moseley, Global CIO, Zoom

“We can handle that growth because of the way we scale our platform and the fact that we monitor our service utilization so that when it gets to 50% we automatically scale up.”
Reliability is a key part of Zoom's brand promise and its ability to stay ahead of the competition. Because video conferencing is a real-time application and requires high-quality, 24/7 network availability, reliability was also a major factor in Zoom's choice of a service provider. Users notice every glitch, and any inconsistency can provoke customers to try competing services. With that in mind, Zoom only considered service providers that were able to deliver high quality levels and could maintain them over time.

Because the Zoom team was looking to expand its global presence, they needed their network infrastructure provider to be global as well. By positioning networking resources closer to the edge, they could reduce latency. Another important factor was the depth of technical resources available to quickly troubleshoot and address potential issues. One of the most critical requirements was the ability to automatically and seamlessly failover to other circuits before video conferencing customers suffered a noticeable reduction in quality.

Because it is a highly competitive market, cost was also a factor in selecting a provider. But Zoom had to carefully weigh cost efficiency against providing a quality, reliable service around the world.

Strategically, Zoom wanted a company with the same vision and dedication toward customer happiness. They knew that simply adding more and more providers to accomplish the technical scale required was not practical. The complexity of managing multiple relationships would grow unwieldy at some point and sap management's time and focus away from growth. Therefore, the ideal service provider needed the resources to help Zoom manage today's requirements as well as shape and manage the company's future growth.

Finding all those factors in a single provider led them to one company.

A collaboration backed by comprehensive network and internet solutions

Zoom chose CenturyLink as its primary network provider because of its expansive worldwide fiber network and reputation for providing reliable infrastructure. As a video-first communications company whose customers demand that services will always be available, bandwidth and reliability are paramount.

In addition to network scale, reliability and having a common vision, the ability to have a close working relationship was also a critical consideration. To drive collaboration, the CenturyLink team established relationships with Zoom's executives from the CEO on down. This created a common view of the business that facilitated the growing relationship.

“The number one thing is don’t let our customers down,” said Yuan. “We’re going to do everything we can to deliver happiness to our customers. Because of that, we needed a very reliable, very solid trusted partner like CenturyLink working with us to deliver service to our customers.”

To accomplish this, Zoom relies on CenturyLink global network in a variety of ways. CenturyLink Wholesale Voice Services support the audio portion of Zoom Conferencing in the US and Latin America, plus Zoom Phone (a cloud-based phone system) in Latin America. CenturyLink MPLS networking connects their data centers.

Access to CenturyLink data centers around the world is also a key part of growing or improving Zoom's services in various markets. For instance, a colocation facility at a CenturyLink data center in Brazil makes it easier for Zoom to service customers in the region. by relying on its IP transit links and point-to-point waves to connect to its global data centers.

CenturyLink provides services across Zoom’s infrastructure, including integrated solutions such as:

- CenturyLink® MPLS/IP VPN to connect their data centers in California and NY
- CenturyLink® Wavelength Services to connect their data centers in North America, Latin America and Europe as well as to key high-volume customers
- CenturyLink® Direct Internet Access at all major sites, including a colocation facility in Brazil
- CenturyLink® Voice for conferencing and Zoom Phone support

“Reliability and availability are very important because customers who depend on our service want to make sure that at any time Zoom just works...”

- Eric S. Yuan, founder and CEO, Zoom
This comprehensive connectivity solution empowered Zoom to scale globally. The MPLS backbone created the foundation for the entire Zoom solution, allowing the failover ability to avoid service interruption. Wavelength connectivity safeguards the quality of the experience for their users them added levels of security built into the network.

The solution brought Zoom closer to its customers, powering their ability to communicate effectively and giving them the ability to deliver CenturyLink networking solutions make collaboration easier and assist Zoom in delivering the highest-quality customer experience – virtually anywhere in the world.

“The size of CenturyLink’s global network means that we can count on them knowing which services we need no matter where they’re needed around the globe…”

- Alex Guerrero, manager of SaaS, Zoom

The rocket launch of global growth continues

Zoom is one of the fastest-growing unified communications firms in the world. Valued at a billion dollars prior to its IPO in April 2019, Zoom commanded a market cap of more than $14 billion after its first day of trading as a public company. And Zoom doesn’t see its growth slowing down any time soon. Plans are already underway to expand Zoom’s global reach further into Europe, South America, and Asia Pacific and focus on introducing new features and innovations. The company views its relationship with CenturyLink as a key component of that growth.

“Zoom has had historical growth. Our challenge is to be able to keep up with customers’ needs and add capacity to our network,” said Guerrero. “CenturyLink’s global network is one of the biggest networks in the world, and that capacity will be critical to our business as we grow.”