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BridgeWave Communications Protects the President By [Jeff Goldman](#)

[BridgeWave Communications](#) was founded in 1999 with a focus on the LMDS market. "It took us three years to realize that this market did not have customers that were in a position to pay... so in late 2002, the company restarted with the same management team and decided to go after the gigabit point-to-point market," recalls Amir Makleff, the company's president and CEO.

As a result, Makleff says, the company first entered the unlicensed 60 GHz point-to-point market in 2004, and added 80 GHz licensed products in 2006. "What's unique about those frequencies is that there is an incredible amount of spectrum available—multiple gigahertz of spectrum—and it enables very, very high-capacity, low-cost solutions, compared to the more traditional licensed frequency bands that microwave radios have served," he says.

In the U.S., BridgeWave works with four key distributors: [Hutton, Talley, Tescos](#), and Winncom. "We have a very strong dominance in the U.S. distribution channel with a lot of partners, because they like the products... they're very loyal to us," Makleff says.

The product line

Makleff says BridgeWave's strongest selling point comes down to performance, particularly under adverse conditions. In response to rain fade, the company's AdaptRate feature can temporarily downgrade a 1 Gbps link to 100 Mbps to maintain connectivity at the lower capacity, or the AdaptPath option can switch over to an alternative link when needed. "We've certified multiple other products that can be used as a backup, and we do the switching automatically... some of the distributors carry them as one SKU, so you can order one part number and you'll get both products already integrated," he says.

The company also offers 256-bit AES encryption and a built-in Ethernet switch. "We have the only gigabit product that runs AES 256 encryption at full rate without any degradation... and we also introduced a built-in Ethernet switch... so that when you want to drop 100 Mbps to connect to a camera or an access point or a WiMAX base station, you don't need to have an external Ethernet switch—we already have it built into the product," Makleff says.

BridgeWave's product line is easily broken down into [60 GHz](#) and [80 GHz](#) solutions. Within those categories, Makleff says, standard products include one-foot antennas, while extended-range options add a two-foot antenna. Other options are extremely straightforward: Gigabit Ethernet, AdaptRate, AdaptPath, and AES encryption are all available as enhancements to the basic product offering.

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The company also offers a full range of upgradeable products. "We've found that a lot of CLECs and ISPs that are price-sensitive want the future-proofing to go to 1 Gbps, but they don't want to pay for it up front," Makleff says. "So we've introduced a product that is field-upgradeable with a software key... you buy a 100 Mbps product, and two or three years later when you decide that you want to go to a gig, you don't have to even touch the radio. You key in a software key, and it upgrades to a gigabit automatically."

A growing market

BridgeWave's newest product, released in July of 2008, is the SLE100 point-to-point bridge. "This is a 100 Mbps-only product, and unlike the rest of the products that typically are connected with fiber, for this one we did a power over Ethernet connection," Makleff says. "And the most important feature, which is what an ISP cares about, is price: the list price per link is below \$10,000... and this is up to half a mile, all weather, 4.5 or 5 nines of availability any place in the U.S., and very easy to install."

In comparison, Makleff says, the upgradeable 60 GHz product costs \$14,900 per link. "We have sold that product in the past to a lot of small service providers who think they will need to upgrade to the gig in the future, and they want the robustness," he says. The full 1 Gbps 60 GHz product costs about \$20,000 per link, and the company's most expensive solution, the extended-range 80 GHz product with AdaptRate, AdaptPath and AES encryption, lists at \$47,000 per link.

In June of 2008, BridgeWave announced that it had received \$10 million in a Series 4 funding round led by [Intel Capital](#) and [Core Capital](#), and Makleff says that announcement is a good indicator of where the company's headed. "We expect to see major growth in the future as backhaul needs more and more capacity to support LTE and high-end WiMAX deployments—and we are going to roll out some new products in the foreseeable future... that will better address this emerging market space of nex-gen backhaul," he says.

Wireless surveillance

The company [recently announced](#) that its gigabit wireless products played a crucial role in security at the January inauguration of President Barack Obama. BridgeWave's equipment provided the network backbone to support mission-critical video surveillance traffic run by local and national security agencies during the Presidential inauguration. BridgeWave's AR80 and AR80X were deployed by Connectivity Solution, a value-added re-seller specializing in the design and deployment of wired and wireless solutions.

Article adapted from [ISP-Planet.com](#).



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