**Cambridge mc²**
**Management Consulting**

# Case Study
# Ciena

A Rapid Strategy Stress Test enabled Ciena to
accelerate its Go-to-Market Strategy for Africa

# *Overview*

Ciena is a US-based networking systems, services, and software company that
specialises in optical and routing solutions for telecommunications and cloud providers.
They design and manufacture high-performance networking hardware and software,
including optical transport, switching, and automation solutions. Their technology
helps carriers, enterprises, and governments build more efficient and scalable networks,
particularly for high-bandwidth applications like 5G, cloud computing, and AI-driven
networking.

Africa is a key strategic market for Ciena, whose technology powers MainOne, a leading
West African service provider, connecting 10 West African countries and facilitating digital
transformation across the region. Ciena also has a partnership with Angola Cables to provide
low-latency connectivity to and from Africa, improving international connections.

Ciena is also playing an active role in advancing outlined 5G technology on the continent,
emphasising its focus on routing and switching aggregation components, network slicing, and
monetisation. It has initiatives to help customers build greener and more environmentally friendly
networks, especially in African regions prioritising sustainability.

# The *Opportunity*

Ciena engaged Cambridge MC to provide external insight and support to augment and accelerate the
success of its Go-to-Market plans for the region.

Ciena aims to grow their market share in the region with a precisely focussed strategy that targets their
market with key propositions and solutions. Cambridge MC were engaged to review this strategy and their
plans for the region, identifying opportunities and gaps.

# *Approach*

We used our Rapid Strategy Stress Test methodology which provides:

1.  Target geographies, opportunities, and partners for resource effectiveness and success maximisation

2.  Assessment of Ciena's Go-to-Market Strategy including identification and testing of key assumptions

3.  Identification of new opportunities and any gaps in the strategy

4.  Recommendations on how best to capitalise on the market and accelerate their route to success

This included carrying out target addressable and Ciena-addressable market sizing by country for the Optical, Data Centre Interconnect, Routing and Switching portfolios; Competitor market share analysis; analysis of current and planned data centre build in the target countries; future trend analysis, including Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental trends by country.

We put Ciena's GTM strategy and plans through our Stress Test framework, scoring Ciena's capabilities against best-in-class, across 11 parameters such as Market Potential, Adaptability to Local Needs, Pricing and Marketing & Demand Generation. Recommendations were made against each of the 11 areas relating to opportunities to accelerate their GTM strategy.

In order to support effective targeting of resources into key countries, we developed a country prioritisation framework looking across 15 parameters, such as GDP growth, energy supply, stability of regulatory environment, and ease of doing business. We provided recommendations on which countries to target and prioritise as well as which countries to de-prioritise. This quantitative assessment was supplemented with the real world experience of our Africa experts.

# *Outcomes*

Our recommendations were well-received and this is now an on-going project with scope for it to be extended to other regions. Outcomes included:

1.  **Amendments to Strategy:** We challenged their prioritisation of countries, refined the pricing methodology, and suggested their resources in the region should entail an altered strategy.

2.  **Fractional Sales Support:** We recommended that fractional sales capabilities are sought, plus additional work to identify the most appropriate GTM partners for Ciena to maximise on their chances of success.