The Business Benefits of
SD-WAN

What Is **SD-WAN?**

Software-defined wide area networking (SD-WAN) has become a go-to network management tool for businesses with dispersed locations – or employees.

At their core, SD-WAN solutions provide an efficient and secure way to connect clients, employees, and customers to a company's data center. This software driven technology was developed as businesses shifted to digital tools like software as a service (SaaS) and other cloud solutions, which overloaded traditional wide area networks (WANs). This was an issue many companies discovered when the pandemic forced them to embrace remote connectivity.

How Does **SD-WAN Work?**

SD-WAN connects end users directly to a company's central or virtual data center. SD-WAN:

- Simplifies WAN management
- Reduces latency
- Offers easy scalability
- Gives IT teams full visibility and control across multiple functions and connections
- Is Edge compatible

Typically, businesses use an integrator or 24/7 cloud management network services to aid with security, management, and necessary technology upgrades, which helps lower costs.

SD-WAN enables efficient, always-on, remote access for:

- Work-from-home employees
- National and international clients or customers
- Companies with multi-branch locations

4 Key Benefits of SD-WAN

Businesses often experience issues with current network bandwidth, speed fluctuations, inconsistent connectivity, and app performance degradation – all of which lead to a reduced general ability to meet current needs. As more companies migrate to cloud-hosted applications, SD-WAN provides four key benefits.

Enhanced Visibility
Network administrators gain a broad view of the network to spot problems and quickly take steps to resolve them.

Security
Features include zone-based firewalls, intrusion prevention, URL filtering, advanced malware protection, and more.

4 Key Benefits of SD-WAN (continued)

Centralized Management

SD-WAN centralizes the network's control plane, simplifying management for dispersed workers and locations.

Application Control

Network administrators can prioritize more important applications to ensure performance where it's necessary.

These benefits come together to offer cloud-first businesses the support you need to keep your network running smoothly and managed easily.

SD-WAN Provides **Enhanced Cybersecurity**

As of 2021, cyber criminals were capable of infiltrating 93% of company networks in just two days.[1] Protecting customer and client-sensitive data has become critical for every industry. SD-WAN helps secure your network in three ways.

- **Central and Singular Management** - Network traffic all leads to one place, and the network visibility provided by SD-WAN allows IT managers to set up zones. In a security breach, companies can isolate part of the network without disrupting the entire traffic flow.

- **End-to-End Encryption** - The direct connection to the data center via the internet makes it easy to encrypt data and limit user access to unsafe or compromised apps or websites (URL filtering).

- **Vendor-Configured Security Features** - Many of **Firefly's** third-party partners like Cisco, Palo Alto, and Fortinet have advanced next-generation firewalls (NGFWs), zero-trust models, and proprietary AI-powered protocols.

SD-WAN's Industry Impact: **Healthcare**

Healthcare has seen a 51% increase in security breaches and leaks since 2019.[2] Protecting sensitive data (including regulatory compliance) and keeping smart, life-saving machines operating is crucial. SD-WAN's network visibility makes it easier to implement encryption, data loss prevention, anti-malware protection, and remote browser isolation.

Hospitals are modernizing care with increased telehealth services, smart device use, and even remote surgery options – not to mention legacy technology like patient records. SD-WAN can support cloud-based applications that help centralize information for healthcare organizations.

SD-WAN's Industry Impact: **Finance & Insurance**

Finance and insurance companies now compete in a global market using cloud services like Amazon Web Service, Google Cloud, Salesforce, and other SaaS applications. SD-WAN is the backbone to keep these applications performing well across any number of branches. Advanced SD-WAN technologies have functionality that helps improve cybersecurity, protect client and customer data, reroute data efficiently, and enable scalable data storage as the business grows.

SD-WAN's Industry Impact: **Retail**

The common thread among industries is consistency, easy access, and security. For retail, customer experience is job number one. The explosion of bluetooth enabled paying options, chip cards, business-specific app development, consistent delivery or curbside capabilities, and more requires reliable and immediate network access. During COVID, one-third of consumers[3] became first-time users of contactless payment. Customers ultimately benefit from effective e-commerce – creating repeat business for retail organizations.

Firefly Is Your **SD-WAN Resource**

Firefly's extensive knowledge and industry connections can strengthen and secure your current network. And you won't find cookie-cutter **SD-WAN solutions** here. We listen, take a customer-first approach, and provide customized SD-WAN options that meet your needs, from the most basic solutions to those that are fully managed.

Our partnerships with industry-leading providers mean you get expert support when you need it. We'll unearth the best fit for your business – and serve as your advocate and technical resource throughout the growth process.

Get Started With **SD-WAN**

Firefly keeps your team connected with secure, always-on technology – no matter their location. Most importantly, we provide unbiased and unfiltered **SD-WAN** recommendations that fit your specific needs and minimize transition costs.

Learn more about our latest SD-WAN knowledge and experience, and **contact our team** to get started!

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Sources:
1. Daunting cyber security statistics to know for 2022 - CyberTalk
2. https://www.cybertalk.org/2022/03/14/daunting-cyber-security-statistics-to-know-for-2022/
3. https://www.networkworld.com/article/3613671/sd-wan-is-a-revenue-generator-for-retail.html