



Why Businesses Choose SD-WAN for Their Network Management Needs

As businesses move to improve network connectivity and make life easier for their customers and staff, many companies are turning to software-defined wide area networking (SD-WAN). This specific network architecture makes it easier for businesses to bundle services and applications and control them from one centralized hub. Regardless of where an individual is logging in from, SD-WAN makes it easier to connect and collaborate.

As of 2020, it was estimated that 43% of businesses¹ had already adopted SD-WAN, with exponential growth expected as the technology becomes more advanced and widely available. This is a massive jump from just two years earlier, when only 18% of businesses surveyed said they had already put it into place.

With growth only set to increase moving forward into 2022 and beyond, businesses looking to reap the benefits

of SD-WAN must ensure they truly understand how this technology works and what it will take to set up within their organization.

What Is SD-WAN?

SD-WAN helps to simplify connections between a variety of locations and services, making it easier and more efficient for your employees to get online, no matter where they happen to be working that day.

In addition to serving as a pipeline between locations, SD-WAN can also help offer customizable connectivity and bandwidth that can be managed according to your organization's unique needs.

In the past, these services and connectivity were available through a hardware-based approach, with routers directing traffic between locations. Now, with the

growing availability of cloud architecture, SD-WAN can utilize this increased functionality and capacity to offer users a streamlined and consistent experience driven by AI and machine learning, which can continually optimize and improve how your network traffic is directed and managed.

Why Choose SD-WAN?

With cloud architecture continually improving, it's no surprise that SD-WAN adoption continues to grow.

Some experts estimate it to be one of the fastest-growing segments of the enterprise network market, with compound revenues growing at a rate of 30.8% per year.² However, businesses aren't just adopting SD-WAN because they want to be on the cutting edge. They embrace it because it offers real, tangible benefits for their businesses.

Here are some of the most meaningful benefits you'll experience when switching to SD-WAN.

Strengthens Connectivity to and From the Cloud

We've officially reached a point in history where operating a business in a multi-cloud environment has become the standard. When you're operating in this type of environment, directing traffic with routers no longer makes sense.

Instead, adopting SD-WAN can help you navigate your multi-cloud environment by facilitating connectivity to and from each cloud service. This strengthened

connectivity does not come at the expense of bandwidth or network capacity – in fact, it helps your organization better use your network resources, so you can better control how traffic is managed across multiple locations.

Improves User Experience

No one likes waiting for a sluggish connection to establish or experiencing lags or delays during a video call. There are huge costs³ associated with even minor delays, such as lost productivity, employee frustration and low morale, and a poor customer experience that leads to decreased conversions and sales.

Fortunately, improving your connection to various cloud services and locations offers a considerable boost in your overall network performance. This improves your user experience across the board and helps keep your employees happy and productive. Implementing SD-WAN is a smart step toward making this happen.

Simplifies Operations Through Automation

One of the most critical benefits of using SD-WAN is that solutions can utilize AI and machine learning to develop rules and policies that simplify your operations. SD-WAN is also compatible with various transport services, including LTE, VPN, and MPLS, making it simpler to build an intelligent network using simple integrated infrastructure.

The ability to gain additional capabilities and controls without needing to rely on human intervention gives businesses the opportunity to scale up and down at will, offering the potential for exponential growth.

Reduces Costs

Instead of paying for capacity, services, or hardware that you don't need, opting for SD-WAN over traditional options like MPLS gives businesses the chance to build a custom solution that works for their needs. When spread out across multiple branches or locations, these savings can be substantial.

Additionally, you won't have to deal with ongoing maintenance of aging hardware, which can be a massive drain for a growing business. Many businesses that implement SD-WAN also find that their personnel costs become more reasonable as management of network operations and bandwidth is automated.



Improves Cybersecurity Posture

Implementing SD-WAN doesn't just offer cost savings in terms of networking and setup fees. This solution can also make securing your technology much more straightforward and cost-effective.

With cybersecurity concerns on the rise and researchers estimating that 93% of businesses⁴ are vulnerable to bad actors, making the security of your business simpler and easier has never come at a better time.

SD-WAN does this by offering greater holistic visibility and control over your network, putting you in a position to identify threats and take action against them faster.

Provides Much-Needed Flexibility

The flexibility of SD-WAN is another significant benefit that organizations looking to grow at their own speed find beneficial. Instead of having to make expensive capital investments in hardware and other inflexible systems, businesses can leverage SD-WAN's easy scalability.

This gives them the confidence to build towards ambitious growth targets, knowing that their connectivity, bandwidth, and network capacity can always rise to meet their needs.

Relevant Use Cases for SD-WAN

Taking the leap into the implementation of SD-WAN may be intimidating, but positive, relevant examples of use cases in action can help make the path forward less bewildering. Let's discuss two of the most relevant use cases for SD-WAN.



Branch Offices

Using SD-WAN to offer branch offices⁵ universal connectivity, speed, and reliability is one of the primary use cases of this technology. SD-WAN allows for seamless sharing of network resources across various locations with no compromise in quality, thanks to intelligent traffic prioritization.

Implementing SD-WAN also adds a layer of security to all of your branch locations. This is due to the increased visibility and control offered by SD-WAN, allowing a business's IT department to keep a much closer eye on each branch, even when it's not geographically proximate.

Implementing SD-WAN can also significantly cut bandwidth costs since businesses can eliminate fees associated with backhauling traffic to their data center and back to each branch office.

Multi-Cloud Access or Multi-Cloud Environments

Utilizing more clouds inherently means more complexity, and working in a multi-cloud environment requires solutions that are built for this type of connectivity. Otherwise, it's easy to find yourself hamstrung by slow and insecure connections that put your productivity and security at risk.

SD-WAN makes it so much simpler to manage your multi-cloud environment since it supports the connectivity each branch office needs to leverage the clouds of their choice. It also offers increased capacity for incident and disaster recovery since it can provide redundancy if one vendor or service happens to go down.

Additionally, managing a multi-cloud environment without the end-to-end visibility and transparency SD-WAN provides can be challenging. Every cloud environment is unique, and managing the policies and standards of each without a centralized strategy can cause enormous challenges for any IT department.

Operating with multiple clouds is much easier once you've set up SD-WAN, as it can help you achieve a unified solution with integrated security that doesn't take an entire department to set up and monitor.

Working With SD-WAN for a More Connected Future

Adopting SD-WAN over more traditional options like MPLS often marks the beginning of a future no longer dictated by bandwidth and capacity limits or exorbitant hardware investments. These custom-built solutions offer increased reliability, flexibility, and performance, making it easier for businesses to empower their staff and keep customers satisfied. They also provide the unique ability to scale up and down at will, giving companies much-needed flexibility as they continue to grow.

However, getting started with your own [custom SD-WAN solution](#) can be intimidating. That's where we come in.

At Firefly, our SD-WAN solutions help keep your teams connected, no matter where they're located. We can help you by designing the perfect solution for your needs, then walking with you every step of the way as it's implemented. With our help, your users will enjoy dynamic, on-demand connectivity that helps to foster enhanced communication within your organization and with your customers.

Want to see for yourself how SD-WAN solutions can benefit your business? [Contact us today](#) to discuss what a customized SD-WAN solution looks like for you.

Sources:

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