Choosing the Right SD-WAN Solution
How to Make the Best Choice for Your Business
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Introduction

Maintaining secure and efficient network operations for your HQ and branch locations can be complex and time consuming for both you and your IT department - regardless of how big or small your organization may be.

SD-WAN offers the ease of deployment, central manageability and reduced costs that organizations seek to stay competitive while continuously improving the customer experience. SD-WAN is a new simplified and more effective way of deploying hybrid WAN solutions. At the center of SD-WAN, the controller continuously monitors the network path to detect problems before they affect applications, and dynamically routes traffic to a different path if required.

SD-WAN is popular because it gives administrators the ability to control network management with software. This agility allows for better use of bandwidth by aggregating network connections and optimizing traffic for different applications. SD-WAN also provides an end-to-end solution that gives administrators a single view of the network.

It’s simple to make a strong business case for SD-WAN, since it’s a solution that’s proven its effectiveness at providing cost savings while also delivering applications quickly, reliably and securely.

“The top perceived benefits of SD-WAN solutions relate directly to improvements in networking/connectivity, including better performance, improved scalability, and increased network agility.”

Spiceworks Research Report
Why Organizations are Choosing SD-WAN

Larger data loads and applications are moving to the cloud, creating ever-increasing traffic on company networks. As a result, IT decision makers are turning to SD-WAN solutions to overcome latency and poor performance.

In addition to improving performance and reliability, SD-WAN offers businesses the ability to easily add bandwidth on-demand from existing broadband connections. Security features, like firewalls and application policies, can be centrally managed with the powerful software orchestration interface.

SD-WAN utilizes software to simplify the delivery of WAN services to remote locations, such as branch offices. It’s one of the reasons SD-WAN has become so popular among vertical markets with dispersed locations, including retail and financial services. These types of businesses count on SD-WAN’s high bandwidth, low latency and exceptional reliability to keep their staff productive and their customers coming back.

SD-WAN has emerged as one of the hottest topics in the WAN industry. It will become one of the key building blocks of network evolution, driving the flexibility, manageability, scalability, and cost effectiveness that organizations require in their balancing act between rapidly growing requirements and much flatter budgets.²

Jan Hein Bakkers, IDC
SD-WAN gives organizations the ability to create an overlay atop an enterprise’s existing network, creating a flexible, secure networking solution that doesn’t require ripping and replacing connections.
What Type of SD-WAN Solutions Will Help My Organization?

Organizations need SD-WAN solutions that are more than a software toolset. At a time when applications within the enterprise are exploding and are moving to the cloud, companies are looking to SD-WAN as a genuine network solution for responding to and staying ahead of the dynamic application environment that can negatively impact their network’s quality of service.

A solid SD-WAN solution should have the ability to dramatically enhance and accelerate an organization’s ability to procure and administer their corporate network. It should provide companies with a next-generation networking solution that can better utilize network connections, reduce costs and complexity, and increase both visibility and agility.
What Should I Look for in an SD-WAN Provider?

It’s important to do your research and choose an SD-WAN provider that offers the features, services and business benefits to meet the needs of your organization, from centralized management and zero-touch provisioning to dynamic path selection and, of course, reduced costs. You also need to consider the risks of implementing SD-WAN on your own. From the cost of the equipment to the complexity of configuring the network, you can avoid a lot of headaches by letting a reputable service provider deploy and manage your network.

When selecting a provider for SD-WAN solutions, there are a number of issues to be considered, from technical capabilities to effective collaboration to support services.

It’s important to know that the provider can:

- Host and operate the cloud infrastructure, including directors, analytics, and controllers
- Handle all capacity management, release certification and upgrade management of infrastructure
- Collaborate to design a solution to meet your specific requirements
- Manage the initial configuration of the system and appliances
- Deploy updates and handle trouble tickets with 3rd party vendors
- Let you take over control of the network when you’re ready
- Provide all of your network connections to efficiently manage bandwidth
CenturyLink® SD-WAN combines deep network design and management expertise with leading software controls and the ability to work over multiple connection types. The result is dramatically improved flexibility, greater bandwidth, increased visibility into network usage and vastly simplified control. It provides zero-touch provisioning, automated configuration and centralized management based on programmable DevOps-ready interfaces and APIs.

CenturyLink SD-WAN removes the burden of managing multiple access providers as it creates an overlay network decoupled from the WAN, links and hardware. With CenturyLink SD-WAN, you can take advantage of all available WAN connections and proactively manage traffic at the application layer so it dynamically selects the best available path.

With CenturyLink SD-WAN, you can provision and manage your entire network portfolio, from public to private access and cloud connectivity. As a result you will simplify IT operations for the entire enterprise, increase efficiency and optimize performance, and significantly improve branch (network) security.

CenturyLink SD-WAN includes the features, benefits and the associated business outcomes organizations demand, including the ability to:

- Use MPLS for latency sensitive traffic while providing maximum bandwidth availability over public Internet connections
- Add new locations without a lengthy deployment window
- Support bandwidth-intensive applications and workloads
- Increase security through encrypted WAN traffic and greater traffic visibility
- Simplify remote office management
- Gain more and better visibility into network use
- Align network services to user and application needs
- Simplify IT operations for the entire enterprise

YOUR BUSINESS IS ONLY AS STRONG AS ITS CONNECTIONS.
CENTURYLINK SD-WAN OFFERINGS INCLUDE:

**GENERAL OFFERINGS**

CenturyLink SD-WAN offerings include basic and premium packages. Both packages include:

- Plug-and-play solutions for every site
- Flexible provisioning and management
- Routing and application sharing by connected sites
- A unified network that addresses all of your needs from a single provider
- Customer administration options from fully managed to co-managed
- Advanced analytics to better understand and improve performance
- Ongoing optimization to provide applications that perform, at, or above expectations

**BASIC SD-WAN PACKAGES**

CenturyLink Basic SD-WAN packages include:

- Site equipment
- Software licenses
- Management portal
- Use of infrastructure controllers
- Zero-touch installation
- Ongoing configuration assistance
- Standard reporting package

**PREMIUM SD-WAN PACKAGES**

CenturyLink Premium SD-WAN packages include:

- Secure internet access at each site
- Groups and zones
- Ability to chain service requests
- Detailed analytics
- Performance tuning
- Wireless backups (available as a redundant connectivity option)
Conclusion

Your business can’t afford to wait any longer to update its networking solutions. Every day you delay can be costing your organization money, time and opportunities for growth.

Now is the time to increase efficiency and employee productivity by simply updating your network with an SD-WAN solution from CenturyLink.

Discover the full value of CenturyLink SD-WAN solutions.

LEARN MORE
