

Planning for WAN: 8 tips for smart cloud migration and network transformation.

Today's digital businesses are relying more and more on cloud-optimized network services for delivering innovation and achieving a competitive edge. Wherever your business is in the cloud and WAN transformation process, this checklist sourced from a new IDG report and IT leader survey will help you develop a smart strategy and solid transition plan.

1

Identify your end goals.

Take time to identify needs and challenges that can be met with cloud-based services, learn what's worked for other companies, and explore what best aligns with your business goals.

2

Do your homework.

When you're under the gun, extensive research can seem like a luxury but choosing a network solution and provider is one of the most important decisions for any business. From up-time data and download speeds to security stats, industry trends and third-party audits, the more information you can gather, the better. Maximizing success takes putting in the work during the research phase.

3

Assess current connectivity needs.

Before forming an action plan, it's vital to conduct an inventory of fixed sites and remote employee and customer requirements, as well as how they interact with applications. Mapping out your network will give you a holistic view that can help pinpoint which platform, or combination of platforms, most feasibly and effectively fits all your organization's use cases.

4

Embrace the mix.

For some enterprises, like those with heightened privacy and security challenges, cloud computing will only be part of their network mix – and that's fine. It's what hybrid-cloud, Ethernet, private-line and SD-WAN networks are made for. The key is knowing where cloud fits best and where it doesn't.

5

Go in phases.

For most enterprises, a phased migration approach is best. This allows for the energizing effect of quick wins, fine tuning and learning, a reduction in security and revenue risk, and the flexibility for achieving short-term needs while taking concrete steps toward long-term transformation.

6

Build momentum with quick wins.

Starting out by migrating the most cloud-ready applications first can generate an immediate revenue and performance impact that builds excitement and buy-in even as you work to explore optimizing additional services for the cloud.

7

Partner with experience.

Perhaps the most critical factor in a successful cloud migration is aligning with a partner that has the experience, underlying network assets and global network breadth to ensure a seamless and secure end-to-end transition and that sets up future growth potential.

8

Learn, refine and evolve.

Take advantage of the flexibility inherent to your adaptive network by testing and tweaking your cloud plan and solution mix to make sure your network is always tuned to your business and ready to seize market opportunities today, tomorrow and beyond.

"I think the first place to start is understanding where you are in the digital transformation journey and then understanding where you are in terms of customer-facing applications."

- Dave Cooper, Vice President, Global Network at CenturyLink

"Contact your peer group and find out what software-defined networking services and technologies your peers are using for your industry."

- Survey respondent

"Before you try to delve into these technologies to see what they can do, you need to understand your own profile and your roadmap vis-à-vis cloud."

- Survey respondent

"Most enterprises are well aware that they're not going to necessarily be 100% cloud based."

- Dave Cooper, Vice President, Global Network at CenturyLink

"One main thing that really sticks in my mind is ... a phased approach. There have to be different phases and that's really for business optimization and reducing risk."

- Survey respondent

"Migrate the applications that make sense, while at the same time developing applications with all the resiliency and availability that you need for the customer experience."

- Dave Cooper, Vice President, Global Network at CenturyLink

"Think through how you will break down the current network as the new one is implemented. That requires a very thorough plan. That's where some of our consultants helped us."

- Survey respondent

"Look at things holistically, not just looking at the networking aspects. Look at software-defined everything!"

- Survey respondent

The benefits of WAN transformation.

For enterprises that have deployed SD-WAN, Hybrid-WAN, Ethernet WAN, or a mix of all three, and who measure their benefits, the positive impacts are clear.



Data Security

79% see improvements in multi-layered network response to security threats of up to 31%



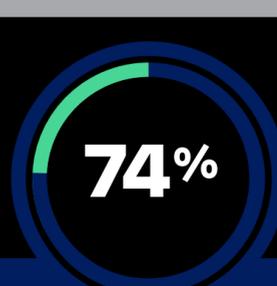
Network

91% see improvements in network speed/performance of up to 29%



Revenue

90% see improvements in networking costs of up to 28%



User Experience

74% see improvements in on-demand connections of data center to public cloud of up to 34%

IDG, *How a Software-Defined Network Advances Digital Transformation*, April 2019.

CenturyLink software-defined Adaptive Networking solutions are ready to help you lay a secure foundation for digital business connectivity, flexibility, control and innovation.

Learn more about preparing for your WAN and cloud transition in the full IDG report.

[Read the Report](#)