The CIO’s guide to SD-WAN

Why it’s time for a new kind of network
More applications, more complexity, more problems, more opportunities.

We’re doing business in a bold new world. Technology, data and digitalization are changing the way we work, and it’s all crashing together to drive skyrocketing demands on the corporate network.

With the widespread adoption of cloud-based applications, mobile solutions, IoT and big data, today’s IT leaders are looking for ways to evolve their networks to scale up, simplify management and drive down costs — while improving security, scalability and flexibility.

Every new technology generates and consumes new types of data, demanding more performance and agility from your network.

One thing is clear: your legacy network architecture isn’t going to cut it.

You and your teams need a new approach to the network — and a new set of tools to manage it.

SD-WAN has arrived just in time.

Sprint Business The CIO’s Guide to SD-WAN
Let’s talk about “traditional” networking

Traditional networks were designed to leverage a flat architecture that supported on-net applications and assumed all locations had the same needs (not a world we recognize anymore).

These networks were built to meet simple goals: connecting branch offices, transferring data, and keeping information secure.

While there are benefits to having the same basic architecture across all branches, these networks simply aren’t flexible or dynamic enough.

Today, your networks need to carry different types of data from new applications with different priorities, running on a wide range of devices, at different locations, and across a range of data centers and in the cloud.

Legacy infrastructure might just make the grade now. But when you need to add new services, move more applications to the cloud, or want visibility into how traffic travels through your WAN (and how you can improve this), your legacy network will increasingly let you down and slow you down.

More importantly, legacy networks will stretch your resources even further. Your limited budgets, tight deadlines, and stressed engineers will struggle to keep up — much less support innovation.
What is SD-WAN?
A software-defined wide area network (SD-WAN) can help you do things differently

SD-WAN is a software-based technology that dynamically routes applications and data through your WAN in a more intelligent way.

That means you can get a faster, more efficient network that can address the performance management challenges you’re facing today — and will continue to face in the future.

It means you’ll streamline site deployments while getting greater visibility into network traffic.

It also means you can support new applications without breaking a sweat — all while improving QoS.

SD-WAN is a whole new way of managing your enterprise apps and network, but it’s one with a whole new set of rules to follow.

This ebook will help you get your head around what SD-WAN is, and explore the four key benefits it can offer you, your people, and your network.

Who is SD-WAN for?

Not every business needs SD-WAN, but you should certainly be considering it if your business:

- Is based across multiple sites
- Is investing (or planning to invest) in new cloud solutions
- Plans to invest in new technologies such as IoT, big data and the cloud
- Needs to get more out of existing infrastructure
- Is diverting too many resources to managing your network
Network management made easy

Manageability is one of SD-WAN’s strong suits.

SD-WAN lets you control application performance through a single, centralized portal — regardless of the transport type.

So you can view all your business applications, even cloud services, in a single place. You activate and configure services remotely, with just a few clicks.

And you manage your WAN at an enterprise level instead of one site at a time.

With a single reporting and management hub, you can also better understand application performance, take steps to identify and address performance issues, and ensure critical applications perform as expected.

SD-WAN offers an easier way to manage your WAN, so your IT teams spend less time staring at network traffic graphs and troubleshooting, and more time adding value across the rest of the business.
Intelligent traffic routing

The SD-WAN management platform analyzes all your network traffic and link performance.

It then lets you prioritize different applications based on pre-defined preferences to ensure your most critical applications get the very best quality of service.

The SD-WAN controller intelligently routes application traffic through the best path, based on network throughput, availability and your defined policies — improving application speed, performance and reliability.

It can also perform link remediation techniques dynamically, reducing the impact of packet loss, and ensuring high-priority real-time traffic performance remains stable.

Most importantly, it can do all this automatically, without your admins needing to lift a finger.

And when you do want to revise application business policies, your SD-WAN portal gives you all the performance reporting you need.
A new network, without a rip and replace.

As a software-based layer that rides over your existing networks, SD-WAN means you get a modern network without necessarily having to invest in new infrastructure.

So you can keep your cables, services, solutions, and cloud subscriptions as they are.

Application-driven design allows you to design the right WAN solution based on the performance requirements of your individual locations.

You can support hybrid WAN deployments (that combine private MPLS and public Internet transport) and also support an Internet-only transport approach.

With SD-WAN, you design the right solution for each site, to use existing bandwidth more efficiently at your branch locations and to augment your private network with more cost effective access alternatives (e.g. broadband, fixed wireless) where applicable.
Smarter integration with the cloud

Whether you’re just getting started with cloud, or are looking to add more services to your existing SaaS apps, it can be tough to integrate new cloud services with an existing on-premises setup.

And it can be even more complicated if you have cloud services from different vendors.

An SD-WAN brings your business applications together, helping you manage their performance under a single interface (whether they’re in the cloud or not). It makes it easier to see and manage cloud services alongside on-premises applications.

By unifying the visibility of your applications through an SD-WAN, you can scale easily, and make the move to the cloud with confidence.

What about security?

As with any new network technology, there may be concerns about security and potential vulnerabilities introduced by using the internet as part of your corporate network.

When you talk to a vendor about SD-WAN, ask these questions:

• Will their solutions integrate with other security and UTM tools?
• Can they offer additional security, such as edge VPN devices?
• How reliable and secure is their network?
• What’s their track record for delivering secure solutions and services?

While SD-WAN is not a security solution in itself, it should be designed to seamlessly function within your existing security posture.
Consider a fully managed SD-WAN

SD-WAN is all about making your network leaner, more agile and simpler to manage.

While it's certainly easier to manage an SD-WAN than a conventional network setup, you may still want to lessen IT strain and consider a fully managed solution that includes implementation and configuration management.

If that's the case, it's worth looking into a managed SD-WAN service.

By offloading management to a partner, you can get all the benefits of SD-WAN while committing even fewer resources and minimizing hassle.

A managed SD-WAN can help you get even more:

- **Flexibility**
  Letting you re-focus resources on more strategic activities

- **Reliability**
  With a partner constantly on the lookout for issues and ready with remediations (often before they cause a problem)

- **Support**
  Whether it’s in the design stages or when you’re optimizing your network a managed service offers you support at every step
Conclusion: In with the new

Chances are, you’re struggling against the limited flexibility, visibility and scalability of your legacy network infrastructure. If so, SD-WAN delivers a simpler, better way to manage WAN traffic.

The benefits are significant:

- Simplify network management, by centralized control through a single management portal
- Improve the user experience by more intelligently routing application traffic
- Get more for less with a new way of managing your network that doesn’t require an entire rip and replace of your existing infrastructure
- Move to the cloud safely, without disrupting you, your people or your network

As your business changes, these advantages will pay dividends many times over.

The bottom line: SD-WAN is a powerful opportunity to modernize your WAN without starting over from scratch.
If you’re convinced by the promise of SD-WAN, but not so sure about where to get it, talk to us about what Sprint Business can offer.

Our SD-WAN comes complete with:

• A simple, monthly cost that keeps you flexible

• A leading network that can offer 99.9993% uptime

• Airtight security, and the ability to integrate across the Sprint security portfolio

• Your choice of a fully-managed or co-managed service

• Bend-over-Backward™ support at every stage of deployment
Let’s talk

Take a look at this business case to see what Sprint Business is doing with SD-WAN — and what it can do for your business.

Contact your local Sprint representative today to learn more. Call 1-866-653-1056 or see more details on sprint.com/sd-wan