

How to know when it's time to for SD-WAN

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This checklist is based on some of the common issues, challenges, and sentiment that can appear within organisations prior to SD-WAN implementation.

Particularly those where rip-and-replace isn't a viable strategy. You'll find the themes cover four main areas: **connectivity, cloud, cyber security and collaboration.**

1 Scalability challenges

- Traditional MPLS is taking too long to provision and roll out.
- VPNs are becoming harder to scale and manage the more sites and remote workers a company adds.
- Acquisitions have meant segmenting traffic to keep lines of business separate, and/or integrating new technology into networks.

3 How layering should look

- Turn on new branches quickly without affecting existing infrastructure.
- Applications and access remain the same and use either the site's existing connectivity or a new link.
- Zero touch deployment, monitoring and management to deploy sites centrally without local engineering visits.

5 WAN speed, bandwidth & routing

- Firewalls to provide scalable central management, local security enforcement and QoS for every branch office.
- Application-aware security ensures business-critical SaaS applications are assigned the highest priority and the best suitable uplink.
- Automatic prioritisation enables direct internet breakout for every branch office.

7 Cyber security examples

- Ability to micro-segment traffic and data flows, to isolate attack vectors in the event of a breach.
- Creation of encrypted tunnels for data transmission between sites, for example with dynamic multipoint VPNs.
- Frequent key rotations, and/or Diffie-Hellman key exchanges, for users to safely share secret keys over insecure channels.

2 Hybrid connectivity requirements

- Work across multiple types of connectivity, not only ethernet and leased lines.
- Cover remote workers' home connectivity plus 4G & 5G.
- Configure failover to keep business critical apps running while minimising performance impacts.

4 The need for internet breakout at every location

- Flexibility for remote locations and 4G and FTTC compatible.
- Built for leveraging SaaS applications such as Microsoft 365 that boost overall traffic yet require very low latency.
- Application visibility with analytics and reporting from within a single reporting dashboard.

6 Cost savings to be realised

- Unified, simple hardware solutions and cheaper connectivity options compared to private networks and MPLS.
- Simple upgrades of features and policies instead of individual site-based policies, upgrades and maintenance.
- Reduced CapEx and evolution to an As-A-Service model, while still layering over necessary legacy systems.

8 Disaster recovery features

- Multiple connectivity sources per site for load balancing.
- Primary and backup networks running simultaneously and synchronising data.
- Automatic re-diverts in cases of outages, with integration into all major cloud platforms.

