



# A NOVICE'S GUIDE TO BUYING SD-WAN



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## INTRODUCTION

Technology moves at such a rapid pace that it's hard to keep up and separate buzzwords from actual tangible tech that you can implement within your business environment. Plus, it doesn't really help when it's mostly sales hyperbole and marketing fluff.

Since 2014, there has been a lot of noise around software-defined wide area network (SD-WAN) or network virtualisation in general. Well, it was the year when commercial SD-WAN technology took shape according to Gartner. SD-WAN brought along even more buzzwords – SDN, NFV, VNF – much so that enterprises are struggling to know what they can actually achieve and whether to adopt it.

**But all we can say is, the SD-WAN hype is real.**

This guide is for IT and networking leaders exploring SD-WAN for the first time. You may be considering moving to the cloud, overhauling your network, or introducing a software overlay to your existing network. Whatever your business case, we cut through all the blabbers and provide an overview on the types of SD-WAN service providers and how SD-WAN can benefit your organisation.



PICK YOUR  
SD-WAN SERVICE  
PROVIDER LIKE  
A PRO





Selecting a service provider can often be a nightmare-fuelled experience. At some point, it sounds like everyone is selling the same solution and every proof of concept (POC) looks good.

**How do I decide?! Well don't sweat it, let us help you.**

Firstly, there are vendors, like Cisco, Fortinet, Versa, Velocloud, that sell SD-WAN appliances and software. Unless you're big or game enough to build your own SD-WAN systems and operational management functions, we'll suggest you look for a service provider instead. Service providers use a vendor's SD-WAN technology as a foundation and give you the option to have the orchestration and management handled by them, or even by yourself.

There are large number of service providers offering SD-WAN solutions. Understanding the technology powering them as well as solutions, capabilities and functionalities are key in deciding which service provider is right for your business. Each SD-WAN service provider has a different perspective based on its expertise and commercial roots.





## Evaluate a service provider's track record as well as the solution



Some providers claim to have the newest, flashiest solution that will completely revolutionise your business. Tell me, you don't actually believe everything they say? Take a look under the hood and you may realise that they are actually capitalising on product trends via rebrands or adding features to an older product.

Older WAN products cannot be rebuilt or redesigned in the same way as a true SD-WAN solution, meaning they can't provide you with the service you deserve in regard to quality of service, performance and security.

Ensure the solution is purpose-built and have a proven track record of customer success. Often, a well-established operator will partner with or acquire an SD-WAN service provider, which will then be sold under the larger brand. In such cases, do your research on the original company but trust what you know about the telco – if it's a multinational with a great reputation, it may (or may not) have done appropriate due diligence before establishing the partnership.



## Who dares win. Ask the service providers these questions during your research stage:

- ✓ Who are the customers successfully been deployed on the SD-WAN solution?
- ✓ How many sites does this involve, and what is the geographical reach?
- ✓ How long did the deployment take?
- ✓ Was the solution purpose-built and how it benefits the customers' end users?
- ✓ Is the solution future proof and covering the latest technology trend?

If a service provider can't answer any of these questions, it's probably not a suitable choice to begin with. The response will give you a sense of the service provider's success rate and sustainability. Give yourself some credit! If no respected companies have been onboarded and successfully deployed, the overall SD-WAN and network may not be robust enough for your enterprise.

Zero-touch, fast deployment and ease of configuration, network management and monitoring could be lacking if the solution is the patchwork of a previous product and not purpose-built. SD-WAN promises to be what it says it is, highly adaptable, secure and easy to use. There is really little excuse for anything less than top-quality service.



# 1

## NEW PURE-PLAY SD-WAN PROVIDERS

- Challenging traditional service providers with innovative technology and processes.
- Can struggle with customer demands, scalability and enterprise-grade service level agreement (SLA).
- Relies on other service providers, which could affect reliability and interoperability.
- You may be left to your own devices when it comes to network optimisation. Sink or swim, baby!
- Since they will be using various network providers for the infrastructure, you'll be at the mercy of that value chain. Should they decide to vary routing or send your traffic the long way around, there's nothing you can do.





## 2

### INCUMBENT TELECOMS SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Offer extensive network and professional services, often through the development of their own products owing to years of industry experience, or through strategic acquisitions.
- Often strongest in their own countries or regions.
- Usually not the most agile or flexible operationally. Good luck scaling your WAN or resolving any major issues.
- Innovation is often slow which can lead to integration issues. May or may not suit your current network infrastructure.
- Adapting to changes in your requirements might be a challenge for this sort of provider.
- May also be unwilling to allow your own last mile connections to be integrated into their solutions. Money talks, since this is a valuable revenue stream for major telcos.



# 3

## INDEPENDENT NETWORK SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Accelerated SD-WAN services to differentiate from incumbent telcos.
- Usually large-scale investment has been made in software-defined controllers, with userfriendly user interface, zero-touch provisioning and cloud orchestration.
- Adds speed to deployment that a lot of incumbents struggle to compete with.
- Extremely agile and adaptable to security and network requirements.
- Provides highly customisable solutions and flexible network connections. If you're still on a super long-term contract, it's about time to review your network service provider.
- Allows enterprises to select physical or virtual routing platforms.
- Fully-managed or co-managed solutions are typically available, with a combination of over and underlay on your existing network services.
- Able to offer more flexible and cost-effective pricing and connectivity options.



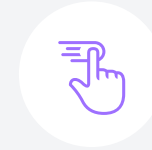
## BUYER'S CHECKLIST (1/2)



- ✓ Is the solution scalable enough to grow as your organisation expands?



- ✓ What is the total cost of ownership? Is it an all-inclusive purchase or do you still have more to buy?



- ✓ Is it true zero-touch provisioning? How fast and easy is it to provision multiple sites?



- ✓ Global reach and partner ecosystem - what services, apps and locations do you need/can you access globally?



- ✓ Would a hardware appliance, a virtual appliance or no appliance be the right footprint?



- ✓ How integrated is the security in the solution you're being offered?



## BUYER'S CHECKLIST (2/2)



- ✓ What bandwidth controls are required, and how will branch sites deal with restrictions and selection capabilities?



- ✓ What do you expect from the SD-WAN architecture - e.g. full orchestration controller, extensive analytics and reporting, access to major public clouds?



- ✓ What are the key features you need from the SD-WAN solution?



- ✓ Do you have the visibility of your application and network performance/condition?

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SDN is an architecture, whereas SD-WAN is a technology you can buy.

**Andrew Lerner**  
Gartner Analyst

WHY SHOULD  
I BUY FROM  
EPSILON?











You may be convinced that an incumbent telco is probably the best choice because you have been working with them for the past five, ten or twenty years. But remember, SD-WAN is an overlay technology – it's about improving the overall network performance, security and orchestration. You can still use your existing transport underlay and use SD-WAN for centralised control.

Our SD-WAN solution is built for the enterprise – fast to deploy and easy to use. It supports your visibility, agility, scalability and security requirements even further through increased application control, analytics and speed. Of course, the price is also designed for the modern enterprise.

Epsilon SD-WAN promises high performance, secure enterprise networking with centralised orchestration and integrated security. It supports all types of and backed by our global network connectivity fabric for reliable connectivity between branch offices, data centers and leading connectivity public clouds.



## TRADITIONAL SD-WAN

-  Software overlay – throughput subject to the underlying infrastructure performance
-  Portal with limited features
-  Software overlay – latency based on best effort route
-  Low CAPEX
-  No or limited security features – need additional appliances
-  Fast deployment

## EPSILON GLOBAL, SECURE SD-WAN

-  Optimised network and application performance with enhanced security
-  Pay-per-use OPEX model
-  Optimised routing for low latency and end user experience
-  Fast, cloud-native deployment
-  Integrated security solution without the need for separate appliances
-  Centralised orchestration with comprehensive application visibility and control

# SD-WAN BY EPSILON







## KEY FEATURES

**Speed of Deployment** – Increase speed to market with our plug and play deployment model, enabling you to centrally provision services more quickly and easily and reduce time for on-site deployments.

**Centrally Managed Platform** – A comprehensive SD-WAN solution with WAN optimisation and security features in a single integrated solution.

**Visibility and Control** – Gain visibility on what business applications are running over your network, take control on how these applications are steered throughout your networks for optimal application performance and end user experience.



**A Simple Model** – Improve performance and response time of latency-sensitive application; and eliminate repetitive transmission of duplicate data by using byte level data reduction techniques to ensure backups completion within the allocated time.

**Trusted Networking** – Supported by our carrier-grade, MEF-certified ethernet network with access to hundreds of points of presence and major cloud service providers globally.

**Seamless Cloud Security Integration** – Tight integration with market leading cloud security and Zero Trust Network Access (ZTNA) providers with the ability to enforce consistent security controls and policies anywhere and everywhere across your network.

**Global Reach** – Established relationships with world-leading network providers across the globe, enabling you to efficiently connect no matter where you are located.



Ok, there's no need to tell you more than what you already know.

Beyond the key features, download our SD-WAN data sheet [here](#) to learn more if you have some time to spare.



**DOWNLOAD NOW**





## LOOK NO FURTHER

SD-WAN is the natural evolution of next-generation WAN technology.

We are pretty confident in delivering secure, global and reliable networking for your business. Call us?

**Contact us to discuss your WAN transformation**

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