Start Talking SD-WAN

Gartner predicts by the year-end of 2018, 10% of enterprises will have replaced their WAN routing with SD-WAN based path forwarding, up from less than 1% today.

Although still in the infancy stage, it's not too soon to start talking about SD-WAN with your customers. Many providers are making significant strides to advance this emerging WAN solution and experts predict exponential market growth this year. Already hot on IT decision makers' radar, now is an ideal time to get in the game and begin strategic conversations. As customers look to replace hardware, more and more will look to this emerging WAN technology.

What is SD-WAN?

SD-WAN (software-defined WAN) is a wide area network deployment method using virtualization and application to control and establish WAN and devices across branch offices.

Customers can simplify the management, configuration and maintenance of WANs with a minimal level of IT expertise. Secure paths are created across multiple WAN locations with zero-touch provisioning. Bandwidth can be virtually allocated and network traffic controlled from a single, centralized location.

Key Benefits

- Improved cost control by paying for bandwidth based on usage
- Lower financial investment in setup, management and maintenance of WAN equipment
- Reduced workforce expenses with limited or no IT personnel off-site
- Faster provisioning times and increased branch uptime/availability
- Ability to manage network traffic from a single control source
- Greater security and visibility for WAN traffic

Potential Customers

SD-WAN fits perfectly with enterprises of varying sizes, locations and vertical markets. Consider starting the conversation with customers meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- Managing WAN connectivity in-house for multiple locations
- Using managed WAN services
- Interested in optimizing performance of cloud-based applications such as SalesForce, Office 365 and hosted voice or e-commerce business
- Open to refreshing WAN equipment and improving network connectivity
- Looking for security intelligence built into network (vs. purchasing separately)

Keep in mind although currently best suited for enterprise customers, interest for SD-WAN will trickle down to SMBs as the market matures.

Common Pain Points

- High cost of WAN connectivity caused by WAN transport, equipment and personnel expenses
- Slow provisioning of network resources and traffic congestion
- Hassle of complex devices and hardware updates
- Difficulty in adapting or scaling to developing business needs
- Inadequate level of network performance for emerging cloud computing

Discovery Questions

- What network services do you currently have in place?
- If you have an existing MPLS, what are you looking to change about your current MPLS network services?
- What sort of planned events do you have on your network that affect your bandwidth usage?
- How do you manage your bandwidth at your branch/remote site?

Provider Landscape

Despite advancements, many carriers fail to offer true SD-WAN that is capable of replacing MPLS. Most services still require the use of physical routers and equipment, eliminating the cost-savings and convenience associated with fully automating and managing WAN through virtualization. Customers can also face geographic limitations with some providers requiring data centers be within a specified distance. When sizing up providers keep in mind that some are simply start-ups that have not proven themselves in the marketplace and may dissolve quickly. Currently TBI partners can confidently offer SD-WAN solutions through our platinum partnership with Verizon, one of the only reputable providers to deploy true SD-WAN. Stay tuned in the coming months as the landscape dramatically changes and more providers offer these solutions.

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