IDC | ANALYZE THE FUTURE

IDC WAN Readiness

ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Sponsored by NTT Communications

NTT Communications

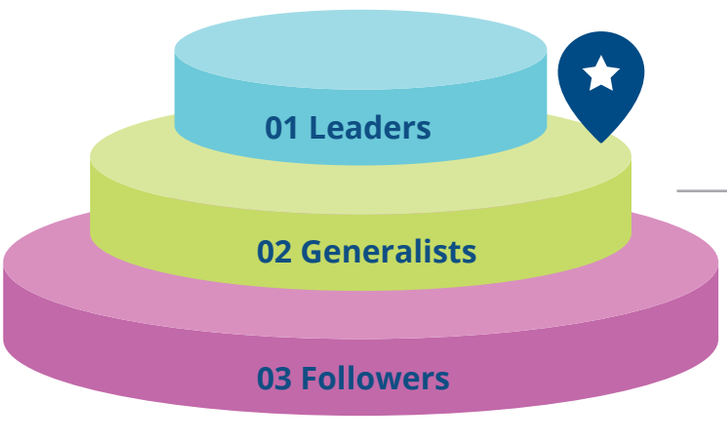
INTRODUCTION

Thank you for completing the IDC WAN Readiness Assessment, sponsored by NTT Communications. Digital transformation drives network requirements and requires a network that enables business outcomes. As such it needs to go hand in hand with an evolution of the network. This tool has been developed to provide you with a benchmark of the readiness of your wide area network (WAN), backed up by independent research and IDC's in depth understanding of this market. The survey aggregates input from 300 network experts and decision makers to understand how advanced different organizations are in terms of their WAN investment and approach.

Based on this survey, IDC has scored the individual responses and built a comparison framework to group organizations into 3 increasing levels of WAN Readiness based on their approach to WAN Infrastructure, WAN Intelligence and WAN Operations. Based on your responses, this report provides you with tailored guidance to help you progress on the road toward a WAN that provides you with the improvements in terms of scalability, flexibility, manageability, cost effectiveness and security that will enable your organization to cope with the requirements of tomorrow.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Organizations can only reap the full benefits of digital transformation if this goes hand in hand with an evolution of their WAN. IDC has created a framework to help organizations assess the readiness of their WAN. It scores organizations on their approach to infrastructure, intelligence and operations. Based on a survey of 300 network influencers and decision makers we class organizations into three levels of maturity: **Followers**, **Generalists** and **Leaders**. Few organizations at the top end of the curve, with the majority considered as WAN Generalists.

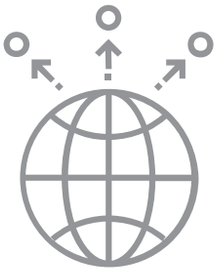


YOUR POSITION
GENERALIST

Based on all of your responses to the IDC WAN Assessment Tool, you are positioned as a WAN Generalist (Level 2 of 3), which means you are generally inline with your peers.

These results indicate that there is plenty of room for improvement for most organizations when it comes to their WAN. To turn your WAN into a driver of digital transformation, you should aspire to outperform your peers and progress on the maturity ladder.

WAN INFRASTRUCTURE



Network requirements are accelerating as organizations are embracing digital transformation. At the same time the strategic importance of the WAN is increasing, as the business becomes more and more reliant upon it. There are a number of building blocks that can help improve the WAN infrastructure to address these requirements. These include hybrid architectures, local Internet break-outs, cloud connectivity and SD-WAN.

Based on your responses, you are in line with your peers when it comes to your WAN infrastructure capabilities, which is consistent with your overall performance as a WAN Generalist.

You mostly buy WAN infrastructure on an ad-hoc basis, which means this is an area to focus on given your overall status of WAN Generalist. The increasing strategic importance of the WAN should be reflected in your approach to buying WAN solutions. You should develop a long term technology roadmap for your WAN infrastructure and purchase consistently. This will help you improve performance, interoperability and cost effectiveness.

SD-WAN has emerged as one of the key building blocks of the network of the future, with the promise of improved network and application performance and visibility, particularly in a cloud environment. At the same time it aims to drive flexibility, while providing cost effective bandwidth and reducing complexity. You are not yet deploying SD-WAN, which means you are lagging behind given your overall rating of WAN Generalist. You should start exploring today what SD-WAN is about and assess what benefits it may or may not bring to your business.

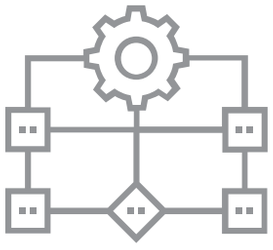
WAN INTELLIGENCE

Network intelligence can play a key role to optimize the network and to ensure application performance expectations are met. Intelligent services like WAN optimization, application performance management, real time monitoring and replay functionality can drive visibility into network and application and significantly improve performance.

Based on your responses, you are in line with your peers when it comes to your use of Network Intelligence, which is consistent with your overall ranking as a WAN Generalist.

You have a reactive stance to network optimization. You are only triggered into action by device notifications. To catch up with other WAN generalist, you should pursue a more proactive and structural approach to ensure network performance and cost effectiveness keep up with growing demands. Explore network intelligence and analytics solutions that can help you understand and optimize network and application performance.

At the same time you manually configure QoS to prioritize traffic. This is more advanced than many other WAN Generalists and certainly improves performance for key applications. SLAs for application performance and even user experience should be your next objective, and automatically adaptable networks can help you meet them.



WAN OPERATIONS

As organizations progress in the digital era the business demands they place on their networks are typically accelerating. They want their networks to empower innovation, increase agility, improve efficiency and drive competitive differentiation, but these networks have often become too complex from an operational perspective to deliver this easily. Task like connecting new sites, provisioning new functions, updating policies or connecting partners or cloud providers can prove quite challenging and stand in the way of delivering the desired business outcome.

Based on your responses, you are behind your peers when it comes to your use of WAN operations, which means this area is less developed than your overall ranking as a WAN Generalist suggests.

WAN management is mostly automated, but there are still some manual tasks left. This puts you at the forefront of the WAN Generalists in this space. To stay ahead, you should explore how these can tasks be automated and start thinking beyond that. Integrating automation with policies and intelligence will put you on the road toward self-optimizing network orchestration.

Security plays a critical role in WAN strategy and operations. It is seen as the #1 WAN challenge and the vast majority of companies indicate they are improving network security in response to accelerating requirements. This makes managing security an increasingly important part of WAN operations. You have centralized access policy and controls, but manual tasks can be quite a strain on your resources, while longer response times to threats can leave your WAN exposed. To catch up with the majority of WAN Generalist you will need to start doing this in a more automated and dynamic manner. This will drive your efficiency and consistency, speed up update cycles and reduce risk.

CONCLUSION

Digital transformation, with cloud at its heart, is changing the networking paradigm and driving requirements to unprecedented heights. The WAN needs to change to cope with these requirements and enable organizations to reap the full benefits of digital transformation. Organizations will need networks that provide more flexibility, manageability, scalability, cost effectiveness and security.

Essential Guidance

1. You should focus on further developing a strategic roadmap for the evolution of your WAN. Assess the current status of your network, and where you want it to be in the future. Prepare a gradual migration path that leverages the existing infrastructure where possible. Hybrid architectures, cloud connectivity, local Internet break-outs and network virtualization should feature prominently on this roadmap.

2. From an operational perspective the WAN is increasingly hampered by complexity, inefficiency and tedious processes which can make everyday tasks such as adding sites, updating policies or connecting to cloud services a real struggle. This prevents the network from delivering the desired business outcomes, like gaining agility, increasing productivity, and improving differentiation. Explore how centralization and automation can help you streamline your WAN operations.

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3. SD-WAN has emerged as a solution that can integrate much of the above. The promise of SD-WAN is to deliver improved network and application performance, availability and visibility, particularly in a cloud environment, driving flexibility, while providing cost effective bandwidth and reducing complexity. Build on your early deployments of SD-WAN, and start plotting a roadmap toward a more widespread use of network virtualization that can help you reap the benefits in terms of flexibility and efficiency