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5 Digital Transformations to Expect from SD-WAN by the year 2020

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When you think of disruptive innovation impacting your enterprise, you don't expect it to arrive at the network layer.

You already have a WAN for connectivity. *We're done here, right?*



Not by a longshot. By 2020, we'll see unprecedented transformation driven through the network. New solutions entering the market every day. Existing vendors starting to deliver every capability a business needs through the network edge, with optimized bandwidth. 2019 is the year SD-WAN (software-defined wide area network) will emerge as a force for digital transformation. Not only connecting networks like your old WAN did, but delivering applications, security, and speed to the edge at a new level of business value.

With that in mind, here are five Digital Transformations to expect from SD-WAN by the year 2020. Ignore them at your peril!



1. **Customer Experience (CX) Success with Rich Media**

One of the primary advantages of SD-WAN is the ability to deliver high-bandwidth applications like real-time IoT feeds and audio/video conferencing through optimal routes on a piece-by-piece basis to any device on the network edge, while maintaining a jitter-free experience.

Let's say you are an innovation lead at a bank, looking to experiment with digital and video to enable remote account service to customers with a human touch. You could offer this service to customers at home or on their phone, or even have remote CSRs pop in on-demand in a life-size, high-definition video walkup kiosk in the bank branch, for a complete banking experience without the lines. Or, have a live videoconferencing session directly on the automated teller machine (ATM) to give a personalized touch and upsell clients into new banking products.

2. **Providing a Common Digital Language between the Executive Suite and IT**

SD-WAN is consolidating the lexicon between the CXO and the IT shop around the network edge. Since most business planning considerations have both financial and operational levers, both sides of this house can meet at the network edge to align business goals and the digital means of delivery at the same time.



Take a quarterly interdepartmental meeting with the CIO, fresh from a management meeting where she's been tasked with improving customer satisfaction and retention rates, while continuing to shave 5% of operational cost from IT. Now instead of the VP of IT providing technical and security excuses why they can't deliver, they can respond with SD-WAN policy settings for improving QoS (Quality-of-Service) of network apps and services to existing customers, while at the same time optimizing cost by proposing service level trade-offs across the company's suite of applications and user groups. And the policies IT has to implement? They're made using this same lexicon - which app, which site, which levels of performance, security, and compliance.

3. **The Network Eats the Software**

Remember when software was 'eating the world?' Now software punts the ball of differentiation back to the network. Pre-millennials can't help but think of the dawn of the Internet and the early days of Java 25 years ago, and the slogan 'The network is the computer.' Unfortunately, network computing became known instead as a clunky experience using a shared network computer or remote VDI to crusty old VM images for apps that the business couldn't afford to upgrade.

By contrast, modern SD-WAN fights back to the forefront, providing a total network management infrastructure with real automation, that securely delivers any software functionality to any user endpoint using shared infrastructure. With foresight we can see the 2020 endgame, as the network BECOMES the business surface, with APIs, seamless and secure connectivity to hybrid private and public cloud infrastructure, threat-resistant security, and optimal routing by user group or segment to truly become a differentiator.

4. **Instant Out-of-the-Box Business**

Expect SD-WAN to provide a complete IT delivery mechanism with a single management console. Connectivity, apps and services, cybersecurity, reliability, and monitoring can be downloaded onto one computer, or delivered in a box, with no network technician having to travel on-site to run cable and troubleshoot the systems for hours.

A large multichannel retail and financial did exactly this, simply by mailing store managers one intelligent edge device from [SD-WAN vendor CloudGenix](#) which could be



hooked up to internet service and started within 15 minutes. This allowed more than 2,000 branch location managers to instantly self-install a whole networked suite of always-updated company apps for employee workstations, and secured wi-fi for guest devices. The result? Nearly 100 branches installed each week with few if any hiccups.

5. **Birth of the Super-VAR Partner**

Are resellers and managed service providers exciting? They will be when mid-size growth companies start leaning 100% of their digital expectations onto the skilled MSP who delivers and supports all IT functions for the company thanks to domain expertise and ever-easier to manage SD-WAN solutions that are highly flexible and cost efficient.

Every company needs a digital strategy to grow, but they don't need to be software companies. If I own a chain of medical clinics, why should I invest my time figuring out security and identity, or multi-cloud routing, or bill payment and insurance, customer support systems, back-office payroll, or anything that doesn't fit my core competency of helping patients?

A new class of Super-VARs will leverage industry-specific IP and SD-WAN, aggregating an appropriate mix of applications and data services, and serving it up to specialized interfaces to digitally transform businesses with lightning-quick implementation times.

The Intellyx Take

No technology space is moving faster than SD-WAN right now. The market for new business-edge networks is growing exponentially, as it connects hardware, data and applications that are better-performing, easier and cheaper to deploy on commoditized infrastructure, whether on-premises or in hybrid private and public cloud environments. The coolest thing about the rise of SD-WAN is that super-power cachet it brings to digital transformation. It offers the potential for even a laggard company to leapfrog decades of innovation and investment in a single bound.

Who knows what life will be like by the year 2020? One thing seems certain, SD-WAN will have already delivered disruption to some, and digital transformation for others.

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