

# 5 practical tips for implementing SD-WAN

Read Forrester's how-to guide to getting started without getting in over your head (from IT leaders who have been there)

While SD-WAN offers dramatic improvements in performance, reliability and ROI, adopting it can be a complex process. With security, management, optimization and more to keep track of, it's no surprise that companies need all the help they can get to navigate the learning curve. From an in-depth survey<sup>1</sup> of IT and networking decision-makers about their SD-WAN experiences, Forrester has created five simple recommendations that can help you start—and stay—on the right path.

## 1 Start small

Limiting deployment to a few test locations lets you find the best approach while minimizing risk. SD-WAN can be deployed over existing WANs, so there's no need to rip and replace hardware or disrupt all your current WAN applications.

## 2 Understand that hybrid is the new norm

Today, enterprises should be using a variety of connectivity options to support their networks. By combining several approaches, they can improve overall performance, optimize costs and ultimately spread risk out.

## 3 Focus on the results, not the technology

Many IT and networking professionals focus on how third-party products work instead of what they're achieving. Spend your time and effort setting up SLAs and metrics to help you evaluate both the service and the vendor.

## 4 Focus on metrics that identify customer experience or revenue growth—not just costs

Winning, serving and retaining customers should be top priorities. Cost effectiveness is important to measure, but you should develop other metrics to help you understand the impact of SD-WAN on your business.

## 5 Focus on your core competency

Is your team's time best spent designing, deploying and managing the SD-WAN network—or elsewhere? By partnering with a proven third-party SD-WAN provider, you can focus your internal IT resources on tasks that will enhance your organization's competitiveness.

Visit the *Fuel for thought* hub to download the full Forrester Consulting thought leadership paper, commissioned by Windstream—*SD-WAN Networks Enable Modern Digital Business Ecosystems*—and find out why companies just like yours are turning to third-party SD-WAN providers to help enable their digital transformation.

Download the study at  
[windstreambusiness.com/enabledigitalecosystems](http://windstreambusiness.com/enabledigitalecosystems) >

<sup>1</sup>SD-WAN Networks Enable Modern Digital Business Ecosystems, an August 2017 commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Windstream Enterprise."