


# Real-life learnings in SD-WAN

**Part 1:** Discover how real businesses have responded to industry disruptions—and succeeded in SD-WAN

**Enterprises face a myriad of disruptions each day, but the networking technology to help businesses adapt to change is evolving fast, too. Learn how companies address COVID-19 challenges with adaptable solutions.**

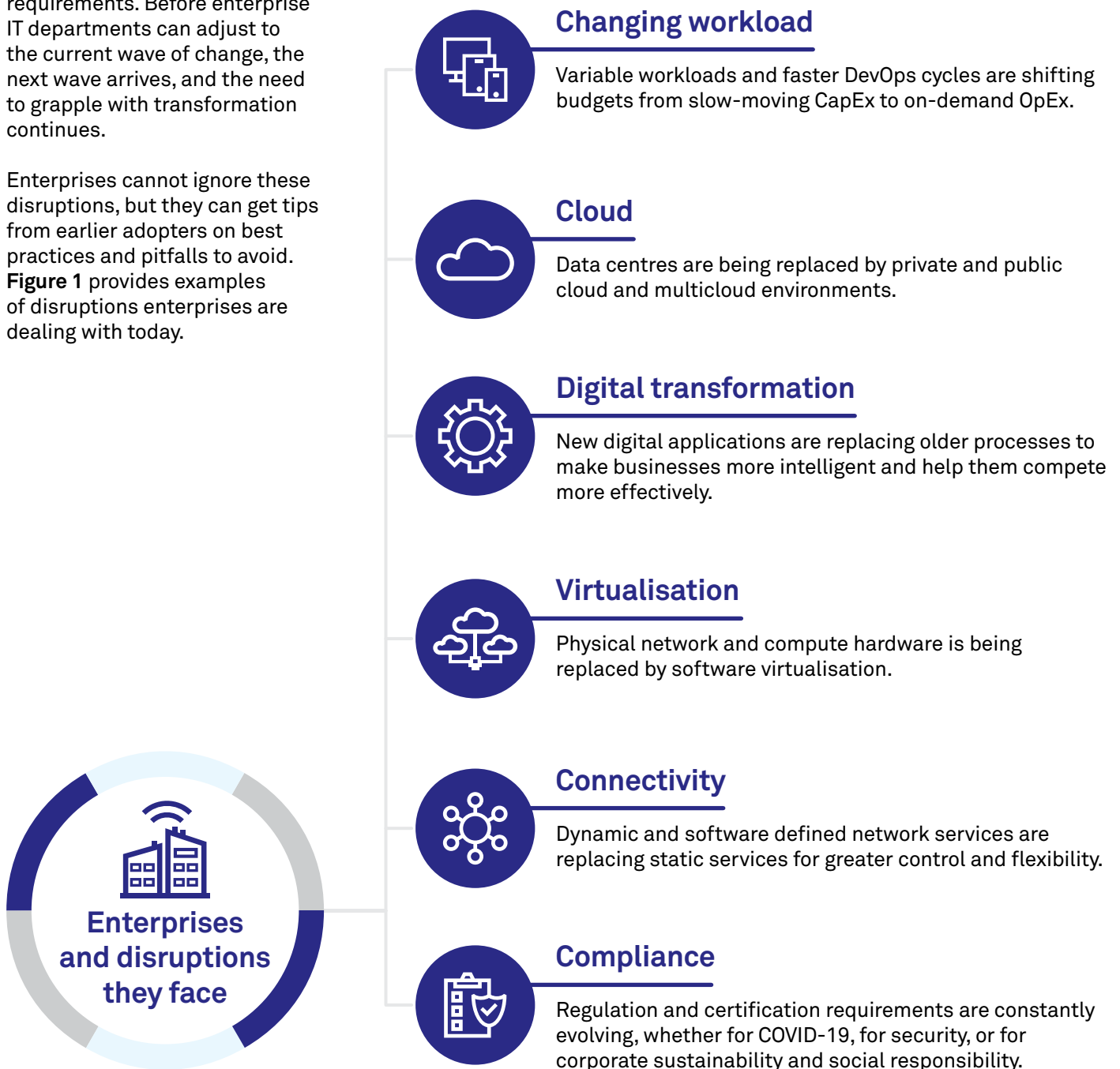


# Respond to industry trends with best practices for the win

Enterprises contend with ever-evolving information and communications technology (ICT) requirements. Before enterprise IT departments can adjust to the current wave of change, the next wave arrives, and the need to grapple with transformation continues.

Enterprises cannot ignore these disruptions, but they can get tips from earlier adopters on best practices and pitfalls to avoid. **Figure 1** provides examples of disruptions enterprises are dealing with today.

**Figure 1: Inevitable disruptions faced by all enterprises**



Source: Omdia

These disruptions affect all aspects of IT from basic infrastructure to applications and security. The trends are interdependent. For example, a move to the cloud affects network traffic patterns, changes the security model required to protect the expanded attack surface, and needs migrated applications to be optimised for the cloud to perform optimally end-to-end.

The technology architecture itself is becoming more complex as enterprises pull apart infrastructure—from centralised applications to microservices, from central data centres to distributed multi-cloud environments, and from a single private WAN, public internet, dedicated and broadband, wireline, and wireless.

The complexity between all these elements is immense, yet corporate leaders demand flexibility from IT and require changes to be made in hours or days.

Enterprise IT leaders face many pressures with it comes to adopting new technology. The technology must be the right price-performance fit. It must be flexible to scale up or down, and must be compatible with, sync with, and optimise with existing assets. The technology should have a long lifespan so that the organisation does not need to revisit its choice in a year or two.

The challenge to IT leaders is to find the right balance, but IT leaders are not on their own—there are experienced service providers that can help with the transformation process.

Transforming the network is fundamental to addressing overall disruptions to technology. Enterprises use hybrid networks, software-defined wide-area network (SD-WAN), virtualised networking, bandwidth-on-demand, and cloud connectivity to become more flexible and adapt to changing needs.

Network transformation equips business leaders with the tools to build adaptable networks that match evolving business needs. Enterprises on this journey can tap on the best practices defined by earlier adopters.

# Enterprises respond to COVID-19 by seeking adaptable solutions

As the world emerges from COVID-19's worst impacts, enterprises are resuming stalled projects and initiating new projects with lessons learned.

No industry was left unscathed by COVID-19. For example, financial institutions moved further online to serve their customers; manufacturers facing labour shortages leveraged technology for more automation; enterprise IT teams that could not access sites favoured virtual functions over physical appliances.

**Figure 2** highlights what IT leaders learnt from the pandemic.

**During the peak of the pandemic, a Europe-based retailer of essential goods closed over 20% of its branches, consolidated its resources, digitally transformed, and changed its business model. As circumstances improve, the retailer is choosing to open a smaller number of new branches at more appropriate sites.**



**An Asia-based retailer of non-essential goods kept its doors closed during the pandemic as part of government mandates. The retailer digitally transformed its business to reach customers online. Both retailers become more agile through an adaptable and flexible architecture that conserves and redirects resources as needed.**

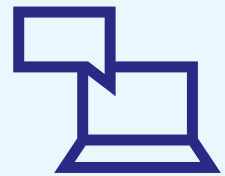
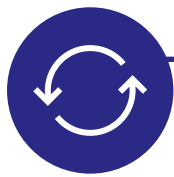


Figure 2: Enterprise IT leaders' observations as the world recovers from COVID-19



### Expect change

Business requirements move quickly, and change is inevitable. Be ready to respond. Technology architecture, licence, and service subscriptions can be designed to be more flexible and support changing requirements.



### Avoid lock-in restrictions

Contracts can be restrictive, making it costly and difficult to change terms. Static, long-term contracts are unsuitable for uncertain business environments. Negotiate separate shorter term contracts for different services with built-in flexibility that allows for changes during the contract period to limit lock-in.



### Take speedy action

Be able to react quickly to support remote workers during the pandemic and to meet changing government and corporate emergency policies for remote working. The faster a business can pivot, the smoother the transition back to regular day-to-day operations.



### Favor supportive partners

Service providers are necessary. Continue to work with service providers who were trustworthy, flexible partners during COVID-19. Drop suppliers who were rigid and unsupportive. Ultimately, a supportive partner can work hand in hand to solve any problem. An inflexible partner becomes an obstacle.



### Make security universal

A changing IT architecture impacts the potential attack surface. Rethink security to cover all bases. Assess each access request as a potential threat regardless of where the request originated. A 2021 Omdia global enterprise survey found that 59% of organisations experienced a significant increase in cybersecurity incidents since the start of the pandemic.

Source: Omdia

# Findings and recommendations to help you win in SD-WAN in a post-COVID world

Based on Omdia's research and discussions with IT executives, network transformation is a pressing issue for enterprises and is a fundamental part of digital transformation.

IT decision-makers are trying to build a long-term strategy in an uncertain environment with unpredictable business requirements, conflicting technology vendor messages, and restrictive budgets. IT executives need the flexibility to adapt, channel resources efficiently, and still deliver high standards of security and performance.

Omdia uncovered fundamental points in research, including:

**87% of enterprises expect to have some form of SD-WAN deployment by 2023.**



**SD-WAN deployment is complex and companies do experience teething issues.**



**To minimise surprises, almost all enterprises rely on partners to help them with their SD-WAN deployment.**



**Adopters gain more value when SD-WAN is deployed together with hybrid networking.**



**Enterprises prefer large network operator partners for their network transformation initiatives.**



**Business needs are constantly evolving. IT executives appreciate flexible service provider partners that support changing business requirements.**





Enterprises that are considering, embarking, or looking to expand their SD-WAN deployment can pick up tips from early adopters on how to make the project a success:

**For outstanding non-adopters, it is high time to evaluate SD-WAN.**

61% of enterprises globally are testing or have deployed SD-WAN, and penetration should increase to 87% by 2023. COVID-19 pushed the need for remote administration and made enterprises realise the necessity for greater management control. SD-WAN gives administrators visibility into the network and applications, allows for more intelligent traffic handling, and brings value to the business.

**Adopters can consider new applications of SD-WAN.**

SD-WAN can be applied in many ways in an organisation. Many large enterprises already have several SD-WAN platforms playing different roles. Some SD-WAN platforms manage the enterprise WAN, some address security, some handle site wireless LAN (WLAN), and some administer remote workers. Adopters can consider how they might use SD-WAN in roles where functionality, at least for now, does not overlap at all.

**Network transformation is well-managed by experts with full-service offerings.**

Full-service providers have the network assets and expertise to provide and manage a broad range of network services. This includes multiprotocol label switching (MPLS), virtual private networks (VPNs) and internet; wireline and wireless; and a host of managed network, security, and professional services. Full-service network providers supply networks and support over wide geographical areas. They are well positioned to combine best-suited network underlay and SD-WAN overlay for each site and circumstance.

**Unlock more value by combining SD-WAN deployment with hybrid networking.**

Enterprises that deploy both SD-WAN and hybrid networking are more satisfied and derive higher net benefits than those with only SD-WAN. Full-service providers are uniquely positioned to help enterprises balance these factors in network transformation. This includes recommending complementary network transformation options to enterprises that leverage both hybrid networking and SD-WAN.

**Outsource more of the job to the experts for higher satisfaction.**

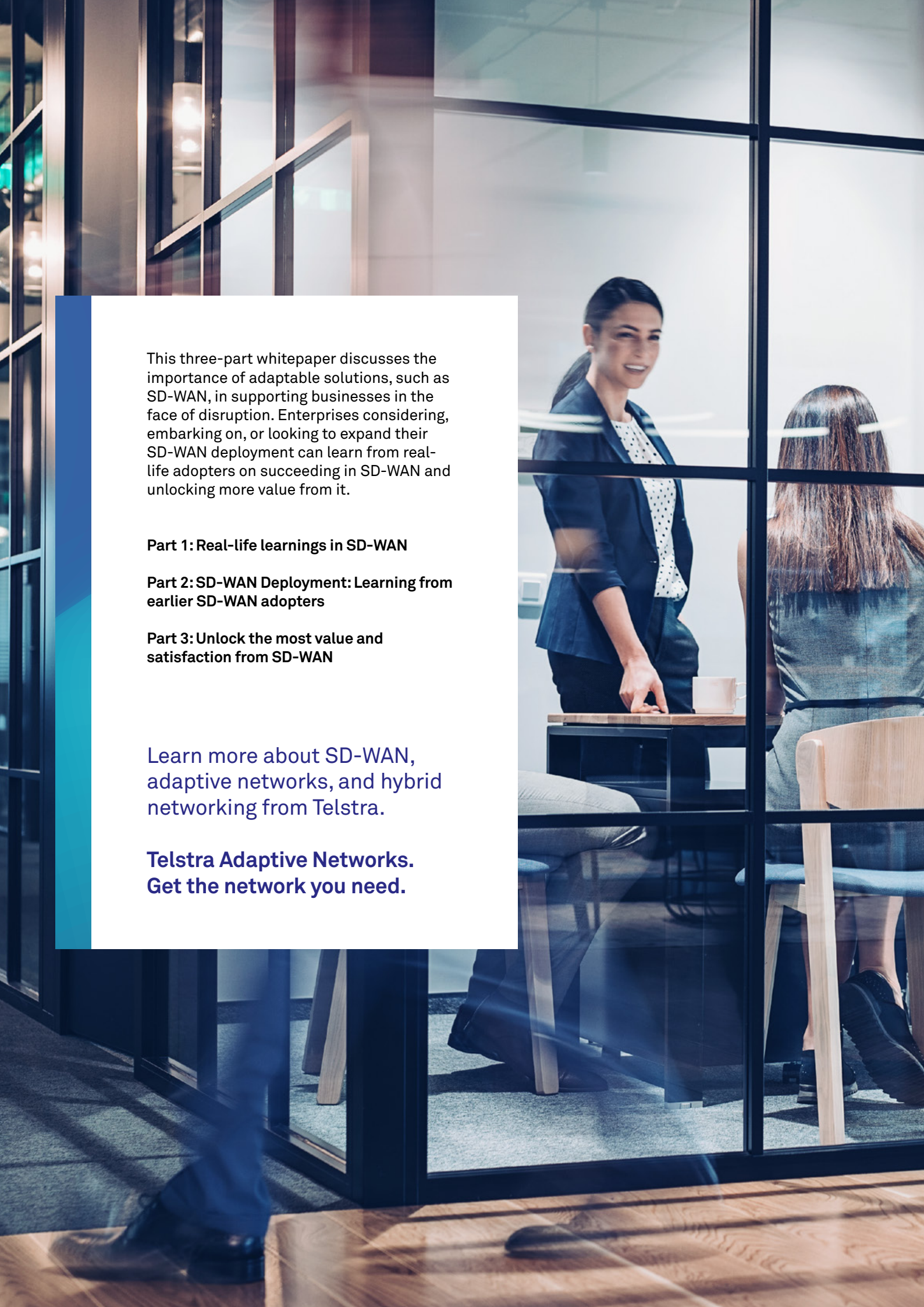
More than 90% of SD-WAN adopters are satisfied with their deployment to date. Enterprises that outsource more tasks to partners are more likely to be highly satisfied compared to those that outsource fewer tasks.

**Work with a service partner that offers flexibility.**

Enterprise IT departments face fast-changing technology and market conditions. They need ways to respond quickly to unexpected change. Static, restrictive, long-term contracts do not meet the need for flexibility. Enterprises can choose partners that limit lock-in, allow changes to contracts, and offer more dynamic pricing options.

**Look beyond cost savings for even more valuable benefits.**

Cost is typically an early driver for enterprises to explore SD-WAN. Mature adopters rank benefits such as greater security, improved network performance, and improved reliability with faster troubleshooting and recovery as top benefits. In the end, cost savings become a low-priority benefit.



This three-part whitepaper discusses the importance of adaptable solutions, such as SD-WAN, in supporting businesses in the face of disruption. Enterprises considering, embarking on, or looking to expand their SD-WAN deployment can learn from real-life adopters on succeeding in SD-WAN and unlocking more value from it.

**Part 1: Real-life learnings in SD-WAN**

**Part 2: SD-WAN Deployment: Learning from earlier SD-WAN adopters**

**Part 3: Unlock the most value and satisfaction from SD-WAN**

Learn more about SD-WAN, adaptive networks, and hybrid networking from Telstra.

**Telstra Adaptive Networks.  
Get the network you need.**



# Appendix

## Methodology

The data used in this white paper is drawn from Omdia's Global Enterprise Network Services Insights 2021 survey. Omdia conducted this global survey in 2Q21 across nine markets. The survey reached 404 enterprise executives across a range of industries, polling about their experiences related to a range of network transformation practices. Surveyed companies ranged in size from 100+ employees to 10,000+ employees. Respondents had executive IT and network/WAN specialist roles and were involved in ICT purchase decisions for their companies.

## Author

**Adeline Phua**

Principal Analyst, Network Transformation Services  
[adeline.phua@omdia.com](mailto:adeline.phua@omdia.com)

## Get in touch

 [askananalyst@omdia.com](mailto:askananalyst@omdia.com)

 [www.omdia.com](http://www.omdia.com)

## Omdia consulting

Omdia is a market-leading data, research, and consulting business focused on helping digital service providers, technology companies, and enterprise decision-makers thrive in the connected digital economy. Through our global base of analysts, we offer expert analysis and strategic insight across the IT, telecoms, and media industries.

We create business advantage for our customers by providing actionable insight to support business planning, product development, and go-to-market initiatives.

Our unique combination of authoritative data, market analysis, and vertical industry expertise is designed to empower decision-making, helping our clients profit from new technologies and capitalise on evolving business models.

Omdia is part of Informa Tech, a B2B information services business serving the technology, media, and telecoms sector. The Informa group is listed on the London Stock Exchange.

We hope that this analysis will help you make informed and imaginative business decisions. If you have further requirements, Omdia's consulting team may be able to help your company identify future trends and opportunities.

## About Telstra

Telstra is a leading telecommunications and technology company with a proudly Australian heritage and a longstanding, growing international business. Today, we operate in over 20 countries outside of Australia, providing data and IP networks and network application services to thousands of business, government, carrier and OTT customers.

## Get in touch

 [tg\\_sales@team.telstra.com](mailto:tg_sales@team.telstra.com)

Select your region:  
Americas, EMEA, North Asia, South Asia

 [www.telstra.com/international/adaptive-networks](http://www.telstra.com/international/adaptive-networks)

## Regional office headquarters

### Americas

44th Floor, 40 Wall Street, New York, NY 10005

### EMEA

2nd Floor, Blue Fin Bldg. 110 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0TA

### North Asia

Level 19, Telecom House 3 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

### South Asia

8 Cross St, PWC Building #22-01, Singapore, 048424

