SD-WAN & Transformational Network Services

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SD-WAN is an extremely significant transformational networking solution. It is an important enabler for the greater use of Internet transport technologies in an enterprise's networking mix and can potentially provide numerous other benefits. Many of the technology components of SD-WAN have been around for some time but have now been brought together in a much more accessible and usable way, with credible SD-WAN solutions available from many different vendors.

SD-WAN operates at the edge of the network and is designed to make best use of the available network transport in a much more agnostic fashion than in the past; you'll hear the term separating out the network underlay (data plane) and overlay (control plane). Benefits are purported to include:

- Reduced network transport costs
- Much easier and quicker set-up and re-configuration
- Increased performance
- Easier aggregation of available bandwidth
- More dynamic prioritization of available network resources and policies with applications' needs
- Greatly enhanced network visibility and analytics

However, realizing these benefits is more challenging than the vendor marketing would suggest. The range of vendors itself can be daunting, each with pros and cons, and each continually trying to convince you that they offer the best fit.   Additionally, building a robust business case for "spending" money on SD-WAN requires commercial modeling of the various components of such solutions and, often, harmonization with an assessment of likely transport costs (and savings) within an Internet first strategy assessment. Understanding what your requirements are is not as straight-forward as in the past. Some typical considerations might be: managed service vs. do-it-yourself; the role of Internet break-out; implementation from your existing architecture; roll-out constraints; and SD-WAN license tiers and capability. Finally, we've seen many enterprises who have struggled to push their strategy forward or have been caught in more costly than necessary arrangements with suppliers through lack of competition.

TC2 successfully employs a progressive RFI+ approach for sourcing SD-WAN services and selecting the optimum supplier for your needs. Our methodology, specifically customized for SD-WAN, helps unblock the paralysis caused by the complexity of the analysis and engages with suppliers in structured yet flexible way. This allows an enterprise to make informed choices on potential vendors and the alternative solutions. Typically, we see this leading to pilot activity that is then used to confirm the supplier of choice. We have established an effective process and templates that allow an enterprise to progress their SD-WAN initiatives efficiently, swiftly and with competitive tension to extract real commercial improvements from the suppliers.