Empowering Teams, Optimising Spends: 5 Reasons Why SMBs are Choosing SD-WAN

Modern businesses are constantly looking at solutions that are smarter, simpler and faster, transforming productivity metrics and pushing profitability like never before. For SMBs, network management is a key differentiator. Personal solutions aren’t designed for multi-site business usage while traditional, MPLS lines are meant for larger enterprises with sufficient budgets and in-house staff.

How, then, do these companies approach connectivity? How do business leaders ensure their organisations are ready to scale, can hire fast and add new locations, without dramatically increasing IT costs?

Consider a national bank, with multiple branches and a different IP subscription at every site. Only the corporate office and regional headquarters would have dedicated IT staff, who’d travel constantly to manage localised network hardware. Any extension would require added investments, more effort, and new security complexities.

This is where SD-WAN or ‘software-defined wide area network’ can help. A virtual layer centralises the entire structure, simplifying control with a GUI dashboard. Without the need to invest in hardware or personnel, the company can expect up to 25% CAPEX reductions.

While conventional network upgrades take months to complete, an SD-WAN rollout can be deployed in less than a week. That’s why SMBs are considering a move to SD-WAN, to achieve the following:

1. **Contain networking spends and maximise returns**

A core feature of SD-WAN is that it works with almost everything. Whether your underlying architecture is MPLS, Ethernet, Wi-Fi or even Broadband based, SD-WAN integrates the entire framework. Existing investments and components remain in place and continue to generate returns.

All that’s needed is one-click provisioning of SD-WAN to unify the entire structure.

SD-WAN also simplifies the addition of new offices or operational centres. Even if the headquarters have a dedicated MPLS line, new sites can adopt lower-cost internet connections without sacrificing security.

SD-WAN allows SMBs to improve and expand their networks without a major jump in costs.

1. **Keep your businesses running round the clock**

A fragmented network causes frequent downtimes, disturbing workflows and customer services. An order that can’t be processed because of network failure will impact customer loyalty, and employees today demand flexibility, logging in from multiple locations at any hour of day.

SD-WAN helps maintain a responsive network, 24 by 7. In case of link failure, traffic is routed to another system within the organisation automatically, with zero downtime. IT admins can specify the exact thresholds for routing – like office location, time of day, service level measurements, or system delays. The network responds intelligently and intuitively.

With SD-WAN, business processes are always up and running at a cost that’s easily digestible for a small to mid-sized company.

1. **Reduce IT efforts and the need to have in-house networking experts**

IT teams typically work out of corporate headquarters, but other locations (shops, service centres, warehouses, and so on) might not have dedicated personnel. This makes the network difficult to configure and IT heads must continuously travel to address any issues. While support is on its way, the location faces downtime.

SD-WAN solves this with auto-provisioning – it installs itself. The local manager simply plugs in the virtualization appliance to start deployment.

The IT team at central headquarters can remotely configure and manage all the linked sites with one application. They can define firewall, security measures, and other networking rules, saving travel, training and IT hiring costs.

1. **Empower teams to work faster, smarter**

An efficient and profitable organisation begins with productive employees, and ready access to business apps is critical to productivity.

One of the major benefits of SD-WAN is AAR or Application-Aware Routing. Hardware-specific control is replaced by software, enabling dynamic control and the ability to allocate resources, at any given moment, to best effect. Applications load faster, video calling becomes glitch-free, and your network resources don’t sit idle.

Employees at any location can get the best app performance possible, combined with a highly responsive user experience.

1. **Tighten security measures with minimal investment**

A traditional network requires each branch to have its own security protocols, an expensive and complex ask. That’s why companies generally force-route all traffic to the primary HQ for validation before allowing access. This slows down traffic, making cloud, internet, or intranet app access extremely sluggish.

What SD-WAN does, is remotely set up security measures for each location.

With a strengthened firewall and data encryption on site, there’s no need to route traffic back to the HQ. This also preserves data integrity – especially relevant for sectors like medical and financial, dealing with sensitive user data.

**Streamline adoption – partnering with experienced SD-WAN providers**

With a business that’s rapidly growing and your workforce exploring new avenues for revenue generation, SMBs have little time to address day-on-day connectivity issues.

SD-WAN is perfect for IT teams looking to centralise control. Right from corporate headquarters, a dashboard gives full visibility of performance across locations. The network can be remotely configured, making repeated issues and constant manual intervention, a thing of the past.

Selecting a provider who can customize SD-WAN packages for SMB-specific needs is the first step for successful transformation. This reduces Total Cost of Ownership dramatically – and frees up resources to focus on mission-critical tasks.