Secure SD-WAN should be 5G ready

Four important considerations before choosing your service provider

As 5G networks are being rolled out around Australia, most major providers now offer 5G coverage, at least in parts of the country. While 5G hasn't been completely rolled out yet, its introduction holds enormous potential for business applications through its offering of faster speeds, lower latency, and the ability to perform network slicing.

To take the lead into the next generation, businesses must harness the power of this revolutionary technology. To make the most of what 5G will bring, organisations must also consider what other technologies they'll need as part of their stack.

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The role of secure SD-WAN in leveraging 5G

Secure software-defined wide area networks (secure SD-WAN) will form a crucial part of the 5G equation. The vast increase in data traffic requires not just additional bandwidth but also a smarter way to manage and prioritise that traffic for a more cost-effective, performance-oriented experience. The right secure SD-WAN solution can help blend various network underlays to balance the load.

Secure SD-WAN is a critical technology to help secure networks and improve performance. It has been the driving force behind the transition from branch to cloud and will become even more important as we move towards 5G. In fact, together, secure SD-WAN and 5G represent the future of networking.

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Choosing the right secure SD-WAN provider for 5G

As organisations gear up for 5G, choosing the right service provider will be instrumental in determining how successfully they will be able to integrate 5G and related technologies into their business operations.

There are four important considerations to factor in when choosing a provider:

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1 **Built-in security that can maintain strong performance even at 5G speeds**

New intelligent edges accessed at 5G speeds create new attack vectors. Just as 5G enables businesses to leverage emerging technology at speed, it also makes it faster for cyber adversaries to launch attacks that can't be defended in real time without automated solutions underpinned by artificial intelligence (AI).

In most SD-WAN solutions, security is an afterthought, often bolted onto the networking solution. This creates potential cybersecurity risks compared with a secure SD-WAN solution with AI-driven security built in from the start. With a next-generation approach, the SD-WAN provider can provide consistent security enforcement across flexible perimeters in real time.

2 **Ability to retain control over the SD-WAN network with support from a proven vendor and partner**

One of the key benefits of secure SD-WAN is its ease of management. It's important to choose a vendor that can help further simplify centralised management, deployment, and automation to save time and respond quickly to business demands. And, it's important to support the secure SD-WAN solution with a service provider that can help maximise the return on investment.

Organisations must avoid situations in which they lose control over their SD-WAN. A managed service can transfer much of the workload of managing the SD-WAN to a service provider which can be highly desirable for some organisations. It's also important to choose a service provider that offers flexibility in how the secure SD-WAN is managed. Co-managed models can provide significant benefits such as the ability to self-service when network changes are needed. This lets the organisation control its secure SD-WAN within a managed services framework, thus reducing risk.

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3 Ability to prioritise critical applications and enable self-healing WAN

SD-WAN solutions are revolutionary because of their ability to prioritise network traffic so that critical applications always get the bandwidth they need, when they need it. However, many SD-WAN solutions only support limited use cases, user numbers, or specific environments.

A self-healing WAN can bridge the gaps when internet outages occur, avoiding a negative impact to the user experience. Manually reconfiguring or intervening with the SD-WAN every time there is an internet connectivity issue can negate the benefits of SD-WAN and create administrative headaches for the IT team.

Therefore, it's essential to choose a service provider that meets all use cases and includes advanced self-healing WAN automation to provide a consistent user experience.

4 Comprehensive analytics and reporting that deliver visibility into network performance

It's important to be able to understand whether network performance meets the service level agreements (SLAs) in place with service providers. An integrated secure SD-WAN approach means that businesses can use a single console to manage all networking and security needs, rather than introduce the complexity of separate management consoles for networking and security. When network security and controls are more deploy integrated, it delivers end-to-end visibility through a single pane of glass management.

Centralised visibility into how the network is performing based on comprehensive analytics and reporting is invaluable to organisations looking to maximise the user experience.

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The way forward

As the Australian business landscape begins to adopt 5G in earnest, the winners will be those organisations that can easily and cost-effectively manage their network availability, connectivity, and security via a secure SD-WAN solution.

TPG Telecom and Fortinet have partnered to deliver a 5G-ready secure SD-WAN solution underpinned by a high-performing network underlay. To find out how TPG Telecom can help your business get ahead of the 5G curve, contact us today.