THE PROS AND CONS OF SD-WAN IN CHINA

Is your multi-national business considering how to improve its China-based networks? By now, you've likely heard about software-defined wide-area networking (SD-WAN), and you know it runs over the internet. But what is the reality for an internet-based networking technology in China? Here, we break down the pros and cons of SD-WAN in the China market.

PRO: RAPID "BRANCH-IN-A-BOX" DELIVERY

- Rapid, zero-touch provisioning of Virtual Network Functions (VNFs) gets branch sites turned up in hours/days – even besting China Telecom's industry leading 45-day average MPLS install times.

CON: ADDED DIY DIFFICULTY IN CHINA

- Getting caught operating unlicensed virtual private networks (VPNs) or failing to account for large daily variances in latency running traffic over the public internet are just two of the many complexities that can hamper SD-WAN deployments in China.
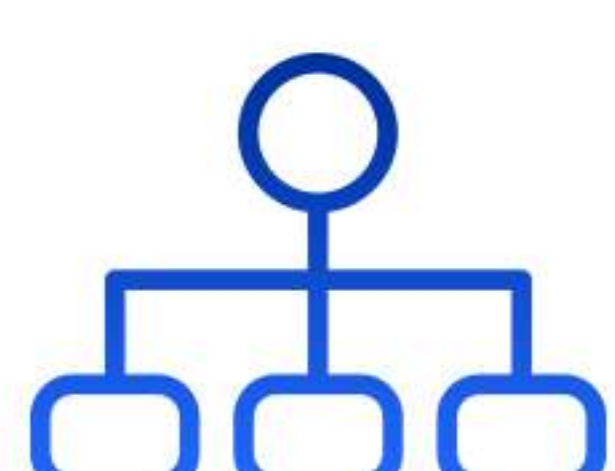
PRO: LESS BACKHAULING FROM THE BRANCH

- SD-WAN lowers transport costs and delay associated with backhauling branch internet traffic via multiprotocol label switching (MPLS) VPN to the data center to apply security policies.

CON: SECURITY ISN'T SD-WAN'S FORTÉ

- Only 20% of enterprises have deployed SD-WAN in China as traffic over the public internet presents greater levels of exposure to malware and hackers compared to a centralized, single-provider MPLS VPN security model.[1]
- Moving to a distributed security model in China requires closely managing IPsec encryption and next-generation firewalls (NGFWs) with unified threat management (UTM) for branch-to-cloud or branch-to-internet connectivity.

PRO: INCREASED VISIBILITY AND CONTROL FOR APPLICATION PERFORMANCE

- Multiple interface programmability, visibility, and centralized control enable better application performance and service level agreement (SLA) management.
- China Telecom partners Versa, Silver Peak, and Cisco have application programming interfaces (APIs) that natively integrate with CT's global MPLS network.

CON: SD-WAN LACKS COMPATIBILITY STANDARDS AND SERVICE FOCUS

- Some SD-WAN vendors want to portray themselves as service providers, saying they can "interoperate" with MPLS and offer last mile connectivity, but they often lack open virtual customer premises equipment (vCPE) platforms or APIs for native integrations with MPLS.
- These vendors also do not provide local technical support capability for hybrid WAN deployments in China.
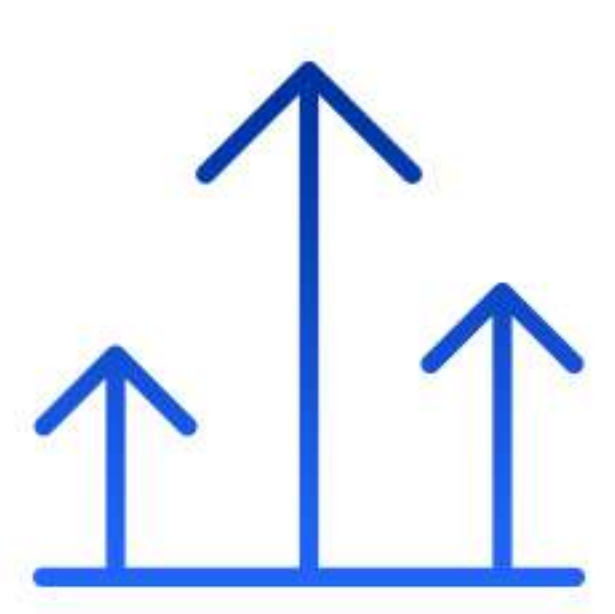
PRO: ABILITY TO DO MORE WITH YOUR BUDGET

- There is much skepticism around the 50% average savings over MPLS touted by SD-WAN vendors, but there is no debate that with SD-WAN you can do more with your IT budget.
- According to Gartner, the North American market so far has been the easiest to realize savings from SD-WAN.[2]
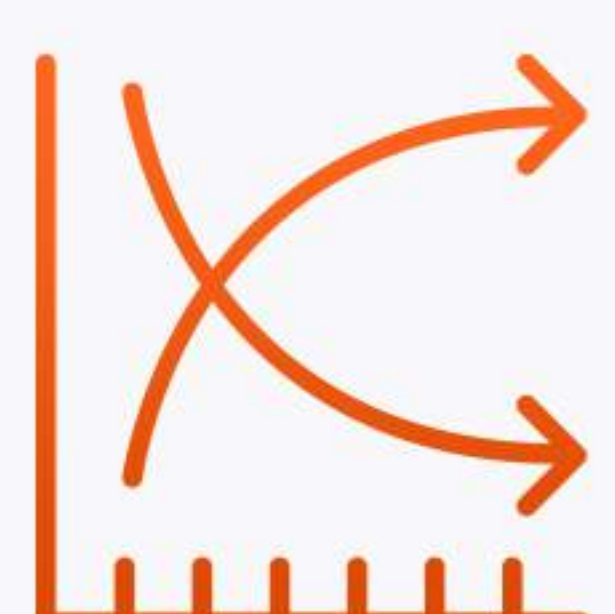
CON: THE COST-SAVINGS BENEFIT OF SD-WAN IS UNCLEAR IN ASIA/PACIFIC (APAC)

- According to Gartner, in the APAC region, higher prices for both private and public network services across different countries and access types present a greater challenge for achieving SD-WAN savings.[2]
- Based on a weighted average, enterprises could see a 24% overall increase in MRC in APAC by moving to SD-WAN.[2]

About China Telecom Americas Hybrid WAN

As China's leading communications service provider operating China's largest IP network (ChinaNet / AS4134), next gen global MPLS VPN network (CN2 / AS4809), and now a 26-site SD-enabled cloud exchange network (AS 36778), China Telecom Americas is uniquely positioned to help IT departments quickly stand up and co-manage custom hybrid WAN architectures that improve network efficiency, flexibility, and security while reducing overall Total Cost of Ownership (TCO).

Ready to explore hybrid WAN?

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