

REDUCE YOUR NETWORK'S TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP

Discover cost efficiencies with a
modern SD-WAN solution



Grocers need more flexibility in their network. Nearly 50 percent of shoppers now buy groceries online at least weekly.¹ Apps, WiFi and connected devices support their experience in-store. At the same time, these rapid changes in consumer expectations have reshaped the demands on IT infrastructure that often relies on dated private networks like MPLS.

Enterprises can save up to 25 percent of recurring network costs when moving to a hybrid SD-WAN architecture with MPLS.³

The more locations you have, the greater the cost savings.

Software-defined wide area networking (SD-WAN) offers increased performance alongside efficiencies that can reduce operational costs. Not only does it allow for networking with less expensive internet connections, its architecture provides much more flexibility in the way bandwidth is managed across different stores and applications. SD-WAN can also be deployed in a hybrid configuration to retain private networking for the most sensitive data. In fact, one study found that enterprises can save up to 25 percent of recurring network costs when moving to a hybrid SD-WAN architecture with MPLS.²

This brief will explore the ways SD-WAN from a managed provider can reduce expenses for grocery retailers while maintaining the high standard of reliability and security their operations require.

More efficient connections

In most MPLS networks, an on-premises data center sits at the center of a hub and spoke configuration connected to other locations. Each needs an individual connection to the hub for access to both the internal network and the internet. By contrast, every location in an SD-WAN connects directly to the internet and also uses it to reach other network resources. Without the need to backhaul traffic through a central location, internet performance can improve significantly — benefiting employees using web-based apps, as well as customers connected to WiFi. This architecture can also eliminate the expense of leasing individual MPLS connections for each store. The more locations you have, the greater the cost savings. Plus, SD-WAN creates opportunities to integrate offerings from cloud service providers that can be less expensive than running your own data center.

Better bandwidth allocation

One challenge of operating any multi-site network is making the best use of the bandwidth you're purchasing for each location. MPLS connections are designed to deliver a fixed amount of bandwidth across a single type of connection sized for the largest amount of traffic it might have to handle. This can result in wasted bandwidth during normal operations and no longer reflects the dynamic traffic patterns of many grocery retailer networks that connect to multiple cloud applications.

An SD-WAN service provider can help you select the best type of connectivity for each location.

SD-WAN solutions handle dynamic networking with ease. They can save operational expenses by optimizing traffic to use all of the available bandwidth within a connection. This means you can design a highly reliable, high-performance network without overbuying connectivity. An SD-WAN solution will also offer traffic shaping, application recognition and traffic prioritization, giving your team better tools to manage the network efficiently.

Flexible connectivity

An SD-WAN service provider can help you select the best type of connectivity for each store, warehouse or office. MPLS can be replaced with fiber internet connections, broadband or a hybrid architecture that includes both public and private networking. You can tailor your connectivity based on the specific needs of each location and its applications, whether those include e-commerce platforms, point-of-sale systems, in-store WiFi or cloud-based inventory solutions. You can buy the bandwidth you need to ensure network performance with the assurance you are not overspending.

Streamlined management

Technical talent is in short supply across industries, leading many organizations to adopt SD-WAN as a managed service. This can reduce the workload of network maintenance, making IT more efficient. The right provider can offer 24/7/365 support, as well as connectivity solutions for a more holistic approach to your network.

Grocers face the same cost and competitive pressures they always have, now with an additional focus on digital customer experiences. A managed SD-WAN solution shifts networking from an upfront capital expense to a predictable monthly operating expense with no hardware to purchase or maintain. It can also improve performance for evolving retailers, protecting reliability while providing multiple opportunities to reduce expenses.

[Learn more](#)

1. B. Aull, S. Begley, V. Chandra and V. Mathur, "[Making Online Grocery a Winning Proposition](#)," McKinsey, July 2, 2021.
2. "[Enterprise Networking: Building the network of the future with SD-WAN](#)," Deloitte, 2021.
3. Ibid.

About Spectrum Enterprise

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