POINT OF VIEW

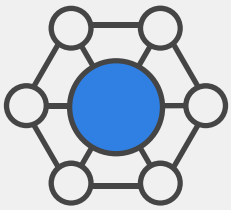
Moving Beyond Fragmented Cloud Security with Unified SASE

Executive Summary

Over the past two decades, organizations have steadily embraced the cloud as a platform for business applications. This shift accelerated during the pandemic with the broad adoption of remote work. Today, many organizations have endorsed a hybrid approach to the workplace with branch office workers, hybrid employees, and on-premises workers leveraging a mix of cloud services and applications, private cloud, and the internet.

The combination of a hybrid workplace and a multi-cloud environment has created a fragmented and complex cloud security infrastructure. Traditional security approaches cannot handle this complexity. A unified approach to cloud security is what's needed to eliminate the silos created by point solutions, to simplify day-to-day management, and to offer fast diagnosis and remediation of problems.

Unified SASE connects users to applications and the web using a unified client. Single-pane-of-glass management ensures consistent network performance and powerful security with built-in intelligence that dynamically adapts to the needs of a hybrid workforce. Adopting a SASE solution that is unified, flexible, and intelligent ensures robust hybrid-work security, more operational efficiency, and a superior digital experience.



According to Gartner®, "By 2027, 45% of new SASE deployments will be based on a single-vendor SASE offering, up from about 20% in 2023."[1]

Building an Efficient SASE Solution

Today, SASE solutions consolidate a wide variety of networking and security services, including cloud access security broker (CASB), secure web gateway (SWG), zero-trust network access (ZTNA), Firewall-as-a-Service (FWaaS), software-defined wide area network (SD-WAN), digital experience monitoring (DEM), and data loss prevention (DLP).

SASE solutions secure a hybrid workforce and multi-cloud workflows and avoid the complexity of traditional security approaches. However, SASE places a substantial burden on administrators who need to master the interfaces of many different tools. Also, the thin edges of the network, including IoT and BYOD, are often unsupported, creating vulnerabilities.

A unified SASE approach addresses these deficiencies, offering consolidated security management from the network edge to the cloud, a variety of deployment options, including on-premises, cloud, and hybrid, sophisticated threat detection and remediation using AI, and the incorporation of generative AI to simplify operations.

SASE Must Be Unified

Too often, network and security teams solve issues with seemingly harmless "one-off" point solutions. Unfortunately, this approach can undermine a SASE installation. Examples include deploying a VPN solution for remote access and installing individual point products for each security service edge (SSE) feature, like SWG, CASB, and ZTNA. This leads to inconsistency in corporate security policies and controls and a gap in an organization's security posture.

One-off actions increase inefficiency and add to network and security complexity, with the corresponding risk of security misconfigurations and troubleshooting issues. That is why unification is the solution.

A unified SASE solution, combining Secure SD-WAN and a cloud-delivered SSE from a single vendor, simplifies security management, enhances visibility, and streamlines operations across an organization's entire infrastructure, from the network edge to the cloud, resulting in improved user experience, faster onboarding, and reduced costs.

As large enterprises evolve beyond basic connectivity concerns to demand advanced features like automation, edge security, and easier-to-use services, the SD-WAN and SASE vendors that meet those demands will also pick up steam.[2]

SASE Must Be Flexible

A flexible SASE solution can effectively secure and manage a diverse, distributed network infrastructure by incorporating such features, providing robust support for modern enterprise needs. It also provides adaptable, unified security management across an organization's entire network infrastructure, regardless of location or device, supporting various deployment scopes and bandwidth requirements to secure users, applications, and devices everywhere.

SASE Must Be Intelligent

In today's threat landscape, reactive security isn't enough. A modern SASE solution must leverage AI and GenAI to provide proactive, real-time threat detection and mitigation, streamline operations, and enhance overall security posture and operational efficiency across SD-WAN and SSE environments.

Conclusion

SASE isn't just a solution, it's a strategic advantage that empowers organizations to confidently embrace the future of work. To thrive in today's complex digital world, organizations must prioritize a SASE solution that is unified, flexible, and intelligent. This approach ensures robust security and operational efficiency, empowering organizations to embrace the hybrid workforce and multi-cloud strategy without compromising on security.

By consolidating security functions, offering flexible deployment options, and leveraging AI-driven insights, a comprehensive SASE solution enables businesses to navigate the evolving threat landscape and adapt to the dynamic needs of a distributed workforce. The right SASE solution empowers organizations to embrace the future of work and multi-cloud environments securely and confidently.

[1] Gartner, Forecast Analysis: Secure Access Service Edge, Worldwide, Nat Smith, Neil MacDonald, Christian Canales, Andrew Lerner, Jonathan Forest, John Watts, Shailendra Upadhyay, Charlie Winckless, 10 October 2023.

[2] Jeff Vance, 6 SASE and SD-WAN Trends to Watch, SDXCenter, January 16, 2024.

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