



Business Needs, Integrated Solutions Driving Network Security Priorities

New findings reveal where enterprises place value and focus when it comes to cybersecurity solutions and the service providers they work with.

Emerging cybersecurity initiatives generate lots of buzz but aren't likely to shift the focus of IT and business leaders away from fundamental issues such as cost and best-of-breed solutions. A recent survey indicates that the top concern of IT leaders is to find solutions and managed services providers that can shore up and automate core threat detection and remediation security capabilities.

IT decision makers are evaluating vendors on their ability to meet network as well as security needs, provide advanced security experience to close current enterprise skills gaps, and support legacy as well as new systems. The survey by Comcast Business and CIO included 146 respondents, more than 60% of them in C-level roles (CIO, CISO/CSO, CTO, or COO). Companies from a range of industries with more than 500 employees were represented, with 70% of the respondents from companies with 2,500 or more employees.

Blocking and tackling key issues

Defending business networks against fast-changing and malicious attacks is a constantly evolving challenge for IT and business executives, but despite ongoing developments in advanced security technologies, the decision makers indicated that they are most focused on fundamental needs.

Business needs won out over technology features and functionality in vendor selection criteria, with 52% indicating that cost is the top differentiator, followed closely by the ability to understand and meet business demands (49%). Next in line are technology concerns such as comprehensiveness of solutions (39%) and top-rated solutions (38%).

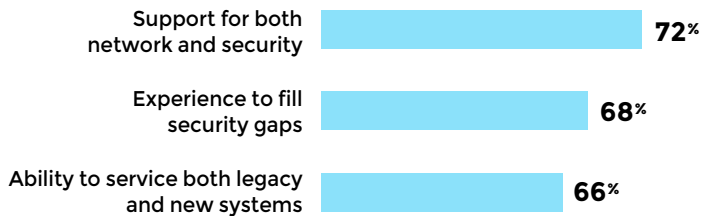
The data illustrates the growing attention by IT decision makers to key business issues rather than the promise of emerging services and solutions. Although high-visibility [zero-trust](#) and secure-access-service-edge (SASE) framework solutions are on the radar, they are not yet perceived as key vendor differentiators by most of the respondents.

That likely reflects uncertainty about evolving definitions in these quickly evolving categories as well as the ability to determine winning solutions. "Currently, the single greatest hurdle the market is facing is a high degree of hype and confusion," according to an [IDC analysis of SASE and zero trust](#). "In its current state, SASE must be explained over and over again and customer expectations must be managed."

Looking for full-spectrum services and support

Still, according to IDC, vendors are under pressure to combine networking and network security into a single as-a-service offering, and that is also reflected in the Comcast Business/Foundry survey. In evaluating managed service providers, the top criterion, indicated by 72% of the respondents, is support for both network and security.

IT LEADERS SEEK INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS AND EXPERTISE FROM MSPS



IT and business leaders need a lot of help from managed services providers (MSPs), but the leaders are not looking for piecemeal solutions. Just 1% of the survey respondents said they are not interested in MSP solutions.

The vast majority of those seeking MSPs are again heavily focused on business challenges: 68% want MSP partners with advanced security experience that can help their business close the current skills gap in that area, and 66% want them to be able to service legacy as well as new systems. Furthermore, 61% indicated that 24 x 7 support is essential.

Evaluating future capabilities

IT decision makers may not yet be smitten by promises of a better cybersecurity future, but they are aware of and interested in emerging solutions.

More than 40% said they are looking for MSPs that can provide automation through artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) as well as related [Alops](#) (AI for IT operations) capabilities. Although SASE may not be a top selection criterion yet, 26% indicated that they are looking for solution vendors that can secure the network edge.

Building on a mature foundation

As enterprises increasingly embrace edge in their environments, a strong security foundation is imperative for protecting the integrity of digital assets that run on the cloud and rely on networks, servers, applications, and internet-connected devices.

As more enterprises continue to support hybrid workforces and cloud migration, critical data and applications are also moving out of the traditional data center to the edge. As security perimeters evolve, every access point and network element becomes a potential security breach risk.

Malicious actors are persistently targeting these assets, and new threats are continually emerging. Organizations must be able to apply secure access no matter where their users, applications, and devices are located. Greater integration of network and advanced security capabilities is essential. With IT organizations already strapped in meeting security challenges, service providers may be essential to closing skills gaps, simplifying growing complexity, and providing around-the-clock protection of devices.

Comcast Business can help enterprises be ready for tomorrow's security threats with the next generation of global secure networking.

Learn more [here](#).

