

Palo Alto Networks Prisma SD-WAN Delivers Exceptional User Experience, Holistic Network Security, And IT Operations Automation

Palo Alto Networks commissioned Forrester Consulting to conduct a Total Economic Impact™ (TEI) study to better understand the benefits, costs, and risks associated with Palo Alto Networks Prisma SASE.¹ This abstract will focus on Palo Alto Networks Prisma SD-WAN and its value to organizations.

To explore this topic, Forrester interviewed a senior director for the network team at a hospitality organization that has Prisma SD-WAN deployed at more than 1,000 sites.

Traditional WAN networks designed around hub-and-spoke architecture rely heavily on a number of physical data centers to be the focal points of data for an organization. Often, this means uneven bandwidth demand spikes can put significant stress on network capacity and cause performance issues. Business interruptions often happen because links and traffic between remote sites take some time to restore connections.

Forrester research from 2021 found that 75% of global decision-makers said their organization has implemented, is implementing, or plans to implement hybrid WAN.² Thus, SD-WAN becomes the inevitable next step for organizations to support better application control, improve customer experience, and increase networking agility.

Prisma SD-WAN is a fully cloud-native platform that can be deployed at branch and distributed sites. Once deployed, Prisma SD-WAN creates an end-to-end secure network fabric that is overlaid on the access points.



Time savings in SD-WAN policy management
98%



Reduced likelihood in data breach
50%

INVESTMENT DRIVERS

The interviewee said their organization adopted Prisma SD-WAN to reduce the complexity of managing the different tools in its environment. This complexity resulted in challenges such as:

- **Inability for the security environment to scale with the business.** As organizations grow, the complexity around different areas they need to secure also increases. At a certain point, companies will cross a threshold where their network becomes too distributed for them to manage effectively. This is especially true for organizations with remote and hybrid workers or workers distributed among many sites and branches.

The senior director at the hospitality organization noted: “Our distributed management model was our biggest pain point. Our organization has grown so much. Having these individually managed routers has become a nightmare to



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“Having Prisma SD-WAN in place allows us to have traditional endpoints that are always on and client access that is more secure than what was in place previously.”

Senior director, hospitality

manage. This is especially true when wanting to make changes to policy.”

- **Performance challenges of the security tech stack that create security gaps and risk of breach.** In addition to internal limitations, organizations are also forced to face increasingly complex digital attacks externally, and the consequences of these attacks can be significant. Forrester research found that enterprise sites can be down for an average of 3.3 hours after an outage, which could potentially result in millions of dollars in lost business value.³ The senior director noted: “The attacks were becoming more sophisticated, so we had to continue to stay ahead of that. We are always asked to up our activity.”
- **Operational inefficiency related to security and network operations teams that took valuable resources from other priorities.** The interviewee also shared that managing their organization’s security environment involved a lot of manual tasks that created a time and cost burden for its team. The senior director noted: “Historically, we have to touch every single router in the environment [to make any policy changes]. Setting up something could take weeks of multiple people’s time.”

PRISMA SD-WAN FEATURES

Understanding that simplifying the security and network operations is key, the interviewee’s organization chose to invest in Prisma SD-WAN for the following reasons:

- **The ability to centralize management of security and networking tools.** The senior director noted looking for a main platform to control the different tools in their organization’s security and networking environment, including SD-WAN. They said: “Centralized management was the main value driver [of adopting Prisma SD-WAN]. This ensures consistency of configuration at a much higher level [than we previously had] and ensures a much higher configuration compliance.”
- **Better integration with other Palo Alto Networks solutions.** Additionally, the senior director said their organization also looked for solutions that could integrate well with each other and with other solutions at their company. The interviewee added: “Integration with other Palo Alto Networks hardware was also important. We know the product and company’s brand in the security space. Not having to think about integration with other solutions was a determining factor.”

“Previously, [to do policy changes we needed] 5-6 people working over 2-week periods. We were only able to have 2-3 changes cycle per quarter. Now [with SD-WAN], this work can be done by one person in a day, a 98%-time savings from switching to Prisma SD-WAN.”

Senior director, hospitality

KEY RESULTS

The results of the investment for the interviewee’s organization include:

Time savings and efficiency gains related to setup and making changes. The combination of centralized management and better integration from Prisma SD-WAN resulted in members of the network operations team realizing time savings from various

activities. This is recaptured time that network operation team members could then reapply into other more productive work.

The senior director noted that compared to their organization's previous solutions, deploying Prisma SD-WAN, making changes, and maintaining the tool were all much faster: "Time savings are primarily realized by our network team who see benefit from ease of deployment, configuration, and maintaining standards."

Improved overall security posture. The interviewee noted that their organization's overall security posture improved as a direct result of better time and resource allocation in managing the tool, better integration between solutions in the security environment, and the centralized management.

- **A direct result of time savings.** The senior director told Forrester that as a direct result from being able to do certain activities faster, they can do those activities more frequently. For activities with direct impact on securing the environment, being able to do them more frequently directly translates to a more secure organization. The senior director shared: "By being able to make policy changes more of a monthly activity, we are better securing our environment. This gets us in a better place from a security perspective. We have better visibility and can see details of our SD-WAN traffic, which means we are able to identify issues much faster."
- **Additional layer of visibility.** The interviewee noted that in addition to allowing their organization to do certain security activities more frequently, Prisma SD-WAN also provided more details into their network than what was previously possible. The senior director said: "Now, we can see bidirectional traffic. We can take screenshots. We can see what traffic is going out and what is being blocked. In the long run, this allows us to be leaner from a support

perspective because these issues can be handled faster and more efficiently."

Better uptime. Understanding that WAN reliability in their previous environment did not meet their expectations, the interviewee noted that the availability that comes with Prisma SD-WAN is another benefit.

The senior director said: "One area that is easier to implement with Prisma SD-WAN is redundancy when it comes to circuit. Previously, we encountered issues where systems in sites that have network redundancy did not work appropriately. Now, we are able to get downtime to almost zero for these sites."

Forrester Perspective: Networking Professionals Must Refocus Their Priorities To Help Their Businesses Be More Competitive

Networking leaders see next-generation networks as being able to tie together different network technologies, architectures, and processes to turn them into revenue growth, better customer experiences, and more productive employees.

This means turning the network into a business-optimized network (BON), which Forrester defines as "The design and operation of a network based on the five tenets of virtual network infrastructure (VNI) customized based on business-centric principles, business goals, and strategy."

Source: "[Let Business Outcomes Drive Network Design](#)," Forrester Research, Inc., April 6, 2023.

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

For more information, download the full study: “The Total Economic Impact™ Of Palo Alto Networks Prisma SASE,” a commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Palo Alto Networks, December 2023.

STUDY FINDINGS

While the value story above is based on one interview, Forrester interviewed four total representatives at organizations with experience using Prisma SASE and combined the results into a three-year financial analysis for a composite organization. Risk-adjusted present value (PV) quantified benefits for the composite organization include:

- 75% efficiency gain in managing SASE and making policy changes.
- Improved end-user productivity from better uptime totaling \$12.2 million in business value.
- Decreased likelihood of a data breach by 50%.
- Consolidation of security tech stack spending, saving \$846,000 over three years.



Return on investment (ROI)
107%



Net present value (NPV)
\$9.49M

Appendix A: Endnotes

¹ Total Economic Impact is a methodology developed by Forrester Research that enhances a company’s technology decision-making processes and assists vendors in communicating the value proposition of their products and services to clients. The TEI methodology helps companies demonstrate, justify, and realize the tangible value of IT initiatives to both senior management and other key business stakeholders.

² Source: “[SD-WAN – More Than Just Cutting WAN Costs](#),” Forrester Research, Inc., September 7, 2021.

³ Source: “[2023 IT Network Benchmarks, Global](#),” Forrester Research, Inc., August 7, 2023.

DISCLOSURES

The reader should be aware of the following:

- The study is commissioned by Palo Alto Networks and delivered by Forrester Consulting. It is not meant to be a competitive analysis.
- Forrester makes no assumptions as to the potential ROI that other organizations will receive. Forrester strongly advises that readers use their own estimates within the framework provided in the report to determine the appropriateness of an investment in Palo Alto Networks Prisma SASE.
- Palo Alto Networks reviewed and provided feedback to Forrester. Forrester maintains editorial control over the study and its findings and does not accept changes to the study that contradict Forrester’s findings or obscure the meaning.
- Palo Alto Networks provided the customer name(s) for the interview(s) but did not participate in the interview(s).

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