IDC MarketScape

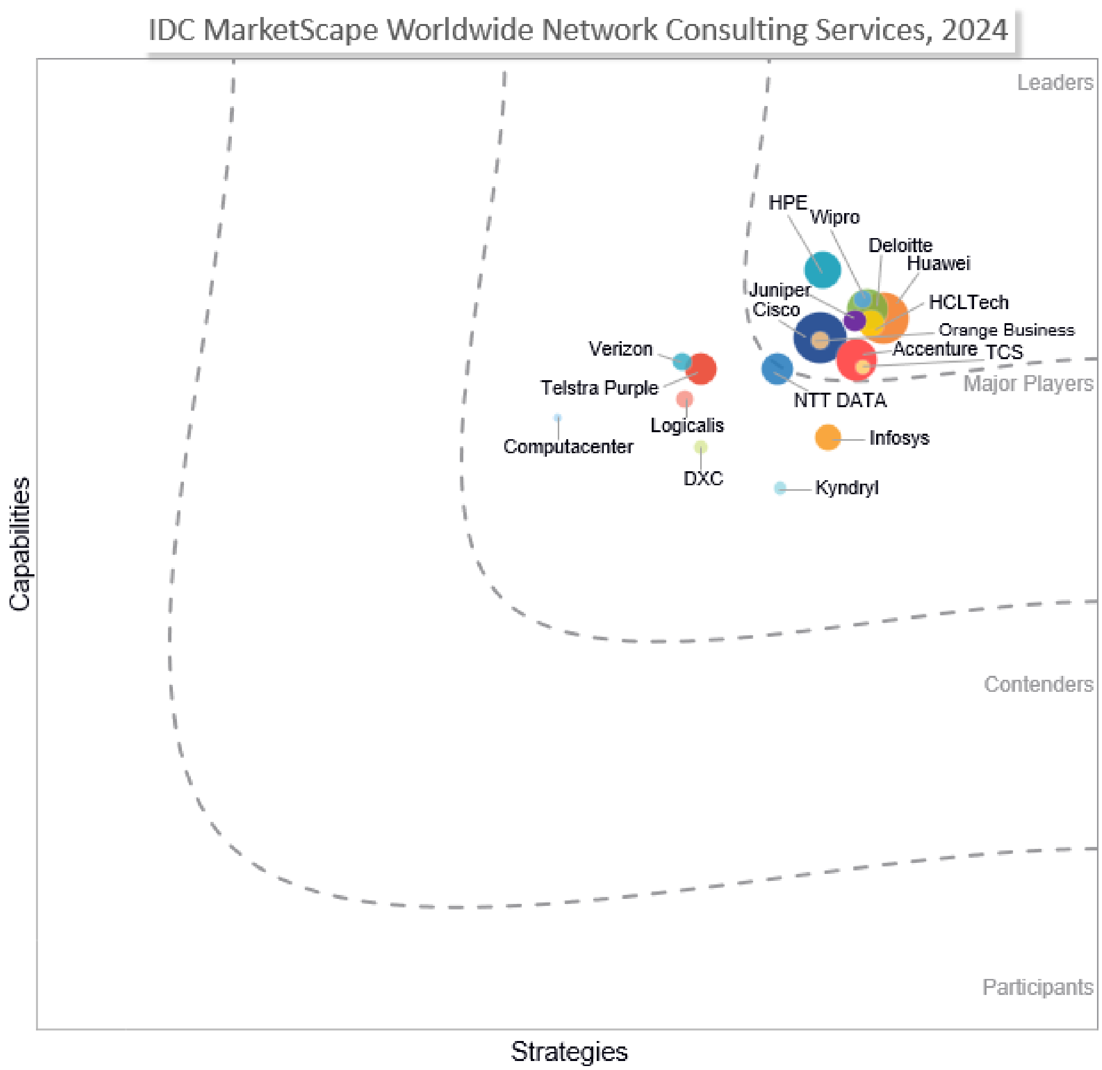
IDC MarketScape: Worldwide Network Consulting Services 2024 Vendor Assessment

Leslie Rosenberg Chris Barnard Len Padilla Bruno Teyton

IDC MARKETSCAPE FIGURE

FIGURE 1

IDC MarketScape Worldwide Network Consulting Services Vendor Assessment



Source: IDC, 2024

May 2024, IDC #US52056924

Please see the Appendix for detailed methodology, market definition, and scoring criteria.

IN THIS EXCERPT

The content for this excerpt was taken directly from IDC MarketScape: Worldwide Network Consulting Services 2024 Vendor Assessment (Doc # US52056924). All or parts of the following sections are included in this excerpt: IDC Opinion, IDC MarketScape Vendor Inclusion Criteria, Essential Guidance, Vendor Summary Profile, Appendix and Learn More. Also included is Figure 1.

IDC OPINION

Transformation of connectivity will become table stakes for enterprises as they adopt hybrid and multicloud paradigms, wrestle with the demands of increasing data flows, and struggle to address accelerating velocity demands of mission-critical applications and workloads. As a result, networks must evolve to meet and exceed current and future needs of the business. New networking technologies such as 5G, fixed wireless access, edge and Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence (AI)/GenAI will add increased complexity to network topologies along with the promise of improved security, speed, access, agility, and competitive advantage.

IDC's December 2023 *Future Enterprise Resiliency and Spending Survey, Wave 11,* found that 81% of enterprises plan to increase their overall IT spending or remain at the same levels in 2024 over 2023, with security, risk, and compliance as well as infrastructure and IT operations optimization projects moving forward. Enterprises state that these initiatives will be priorities considering macroeconomic headwinds that may impede technology strategies. Examining networking initiatives specifically, enterprises state their top 3 networking investment priorities are adoption of a cloud networking strategy to connect to, across, and within clouds (36%); developing a zero trust cybersecurity strategy across the enterprise (22%); and investment in tools and applications to improve productivity and collaboration such as unified communications and collaboration (UC&C) and unified communications and collaboration as a service (UCCaaS) (22%), according to IDC's June 2023 *Future of Connectedness Survey.*

At the same time, enterprises state that while they desire to embark on transformational networking initiatives, they are limited by what they can accomplish. Enterprises state that their IT teams are under skilled and under resourced, and they are challenged to align business strategic imperatives to networking initiatives while keeping up with the daily requirements of the business. According to IDC's January 2024 *Worldwide Network Consulting End-User Survey,* respondents highlighted the top reasons why they engage with a professional services firm for their networking initiatives (see Figure 2).

FIGURE 2

Top Reasons Enterprises Utilizing Network Consulting Services

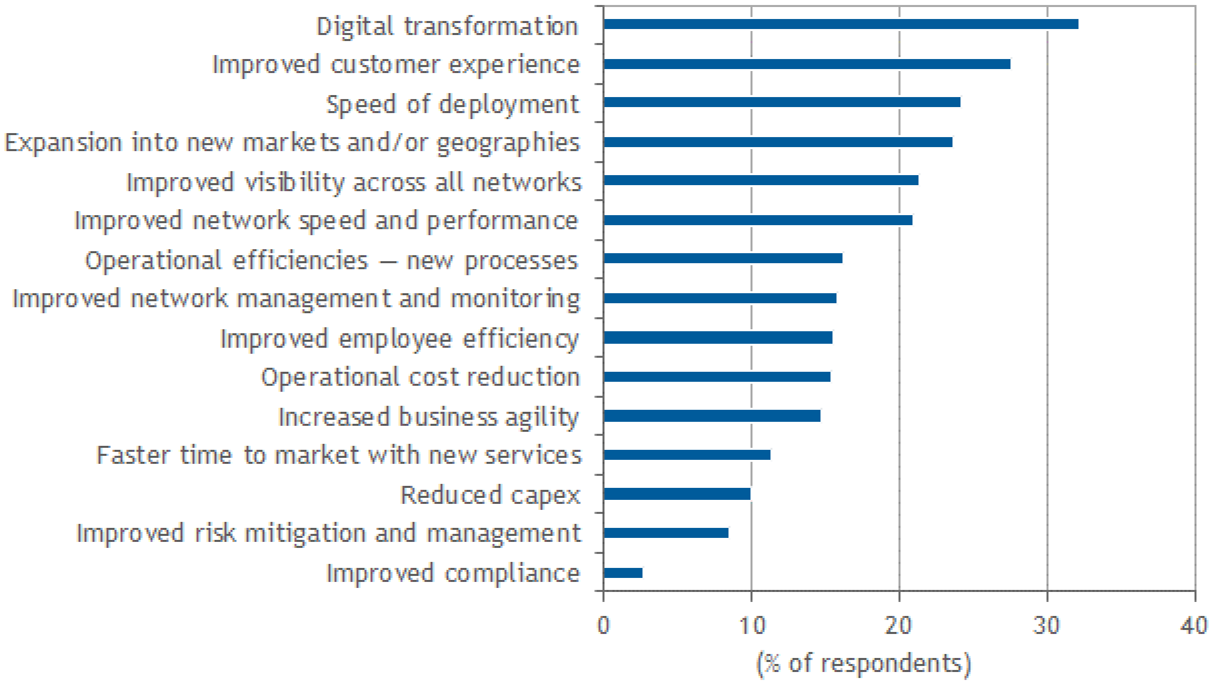
n = 511

Source: IDC's *Worldwide Network Consulting Services End-User Survey,* January 2024

In addition, enterprises also stated they have specific business, technology, and operational outcomes they want to achieve, and working with a services partner would help them achieve those outcomes more effectively (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 3

Technology and Operational Outcomes for Selecting a Services Firm



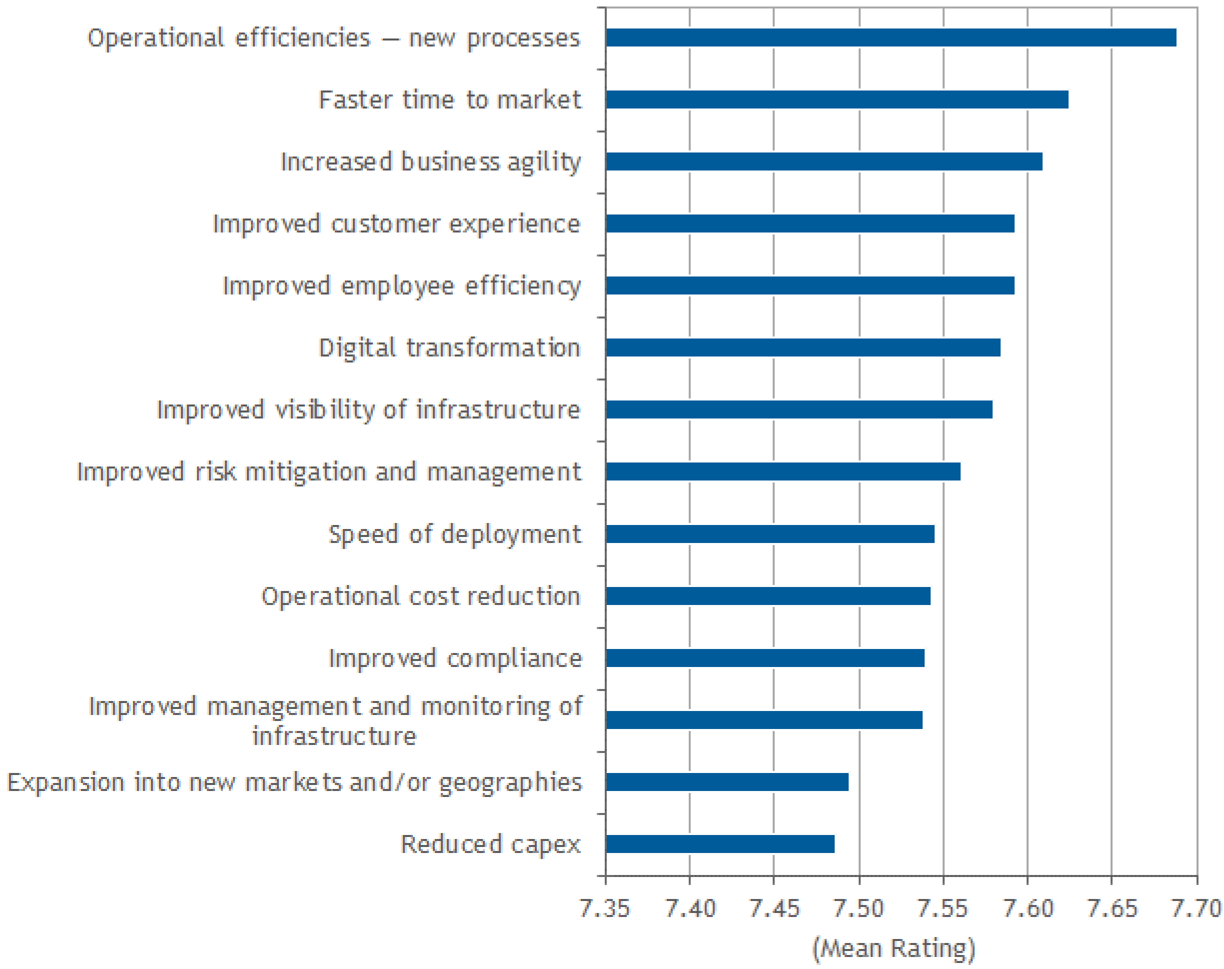
n = 511

Source: IDC's *Worldwide Network Consulting Services End-User Survey,* January 2024

Probing further, we asked these same organizations how satisfied they were in meeting objectives when working with their network consulting partner. The good news is that the respondents were able to successfully achieve their stated business, technology, and operational outcomes with their network consulting service firms and rated them positively (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4

Effectiveness of Achieving Business, Technology, and Operational Outcomes



n = 1,009

Source: IDC's *Worldwide Network Consulting Services End-User Survey,* January 2024

Each network consulting services firm has its own unique point of view, strategic investment priorities, and defined methodologies. This IDC study will help the reader better understand the nuances of their portfolios and help organization make more informed decisions when selecting a network consulting services partner.

IDC MARKETSCAPE VENDOR INCLUSION CRITERIA

Network consulting services are an evolving market, and the tech buyers will find it valuable to understand where the participants are heading directionally. As one would expect of market leaders, overall, the participant firms performed very well on this assessment as the services firms have been selected because they have met the required criteria. It is important to understand that while this a mature market, it is also extremely competitive and the participants continue to invest to provide exceptional technology expertise, tools, and resources for consistency and innovation as well as consultants to offer strategic guidance to help customers move from their "as is" environment to the new "to be" state as securely and efficiently as possible.

IDC collected and analyzed data on 18 network equipment vendors, global systems integrators (GSIs), and global telecommunications providers for this IDC MarketScape for worldwide network consulting services assessment. To determine the group of participants for analysis in the IDC MarketScape, IDC utilized the following set of inclusion criteria:

- **Global scale:** Three of four geographies (North America, Latin America, EMEA, and APAC)
- **Revenue:** $40 million
- **Network consulting services offering:** A full suite of consulting/advisory (strategy, planning, assessment, design, adoption, and optimization) offerings across a comprehensive set of network solutions:
  - Private mobile networks
  - Datacenter networking
  - SDN/NFV/network virtualization
  - SD-WAN/hybrid WAN/multicloud
  - Edge networking and IoT
  - Campus networking
  - Wired/wireless networking

Exclusions

Not included in this study — implementation services, support services, and managed services are not included in this study. IDC believes these services are critical components of the life cycle, but for the purposes of this study, the evaluation will solely focus on network consulting services or the "plan and build" phases of the life cycle.

ADVICE FOR TECHNOLOGY BUYERS

Networks are a more critical component of today's IT infrastructure investment than ever before. As such, IDC sees there are six key essential elements that technology buyers must clearly understand about their networking consulting services partner before moving forward with an engagement. This IDC MarketScape study aims to assist technology buyers by providing insights into these core elements of a provider's services portfolio. Further:

- **Offer breadth and depth:** Continuous development and refinement of offers in alignment with new technologies and paradigms as they come to market; development of thought leadership and a differentiated point of view, as well as a relevant ecosystem of partners
- **Global scale:** Ability to provide consistency globally as well as local customization, cultural, and language requirements; tools for project management, knowledge sharing, and collaboration to ensure effective global coordination
- **People:** Continued investment in high levels of technical expertise across all networking technologies; hiring and retention best practices with an eye toward quality and customer satisfaction

- **Repeatable processes and delivery methodologies:** Ability to demonstrate repeatability and in parallel continuously redefining processes to improve efficiencies, insights, and value
- **Investments in tools and platforms:** Demonstrate investments in new tools and technologies, such as artificial intelligence, machine learning (ML), automation, and platforms to accelerate service delivery, increase network insights, remove time-consuming manual tasks, and enhance the user experience
- **Adoption and optimization:** Formalized customer success teams and motions throughout the project life cycle to ensure successful adoption and optimization of new technologies.

Network Market Dynamics

It is important to note that the network market is dynamic with new technologies and operating paradigms impacting service offerings and portfolio developments. IDC highlights a few industry trends that are of importance and will impact either the network consulting services market or solution offers.

Consolidation and M&A

There is a recent trend toward consolidation of the networking industry. The two main trends driving this consolidation are the pressure to bring AI capabilities to market and the expansion of networking portfolios into security and observability. Customers of these companies should pay attention to this trend as it can have a significant effect on the survival, or not, of important products as well as professional and managed services. The reality is that when two or more companies come together, not all the people from both companies stay. Existing commercial and operational relationships may be impacted, and product and service delivery can suffer as a result. To mitigate the possible negative effects of mergers and acquisitions (M&A), networking customers should establish and maintain their relationships with key account owners for all the vendors they work with.

Emergence of Hyperscalers as Provider of Network Consulting Services

The hyperscalers occupy an interesting space in this market. On the one hand, they do not have an explicit focus on network consulting and integration unlike, for example, a systems integrator with a strong networking practice. Yet they provide packaged connectivity solutions to connect to their public clouds. In fact, their very core is about monetizing data in the cloud, and relatively low-margin and people-intensive areas like consulting and integration do not make a lot of sense. It is no surprise, therefore, that the hyperscalers tend to have relatively small professional services organizations, with a focus on scalable architectures and blueprints.

At the same time, our survey indicates that enterprises see the hyperscalers as a key player in providing network consulting and integration services or more accurately connectivity solutions to the cloud with consulting and integrations services that are either self-procured or provided by a partner. To us, it points to the considerable mindshare these companies have today but also to the opportunity for non-hyperscalers to step up their own messaging in this space. In addition, it calls out the potential opportunity for hyperscalers should they decide to shift their monetization focus away from "data in clouds" to "moving data from and between clouds," with the accompanying consulting and integration. If that were the case, they already have enterprises keen to hear their value proposition. Please note that they are not formerly evaluated in this IDC MarketScape study.

Impact of AI on Services Delivery

As AI becomes more prevalent in the market, IDC sees two clear focus areas — services for AI and AI for services. For the latter, it is important to note that increased intelligence is nothing new in the services delivery space, with widespread use of network probes and analytics applications. However, we do see some significant additional dimensions. First, we're already seeing AI for services delivery entering the provider marketing narrative: historically, intelligence and analytics tools were viewed as background attributes, but now AI for services delivery is in the foreground in demos and presentations. Second, it has the potential to change the game in terms of the extremely tight services labor market, by moving people-centric actions to AI-enabled, human-governed actions. This could either augment skills issues and/or ease some of the resource issues, but we see this as having a longer runway.

VENDOR SUMMARY PROFILES

This section briefly explains IDC's key observations resulting in a vendor's position in the IDC MarketScape. While every vendor is evaluated against each of the criteria outlined in the Appendix, the description here provides a summary of each vendor's strengths and challenges.

Huawei

According to IDC analysis and buyer perception, Huawei is positioned in the Leaders category in this 2024 IDC MarketScape for worldwide network consulting services.

Headquartered in Shenzhen, China, Huawei is a global ICT provider and is present in over 170 countries. It provides products and services to enterprises, carriers, and consumers. It offers a large set of networking and cloud systems to the enterprise providing LAN, WAN, datacenter, and security solutions. Huawei has enriched its portfolio with vertical solutions, green networking, and enhanced network operations solutions.

The network consulting and integration business unit sits within the Global Technical Service organization. It operates globally except in North America and has a strong presence in Asia/Pacific, Latin America, Africa, and Middle East. Huawei has progressively merged its enterprise and carriers network consulting and integration businesses sharing people, platforms and tools, processes, and knowledge databases.

Huawei has continued to invest in the development of its own tools and platforms such as NetLive for network design, capacity planning, and network optimization; AUTIN for operations and management (O&M) transformation with AI-driven operations; and ServiceTurbo Cloud, a cloud-based tools platform for assessment, plan, design, and management available for Huawei and partner engineers. These tools combined with Huawei Centers of Excellence and experience in ICT, along with partnerships with leading business consulting companies, provides its customers the vertical and technical expertise to help them in their digital transformation journey.

Strengths

Among network consulting services firms worldwide, based on IDC's *Worldwide Network Consulting End-User Survey,* Huawei has several comparative strengths: it can bring together the appropriate stakeholders to move the project forward and Huawei understands an organization's unique requirements. In addition, it is organized and thorough in all aspects of the engagement and delivers on budget.

"Their technical services have improved my company's network technology to a higher level, which is worthy of praise," said one Huawei customer. Additional comments of customers are as follows: "It is one of the companies which are at the forefront of industry innovation" and "I have never taken any issue with them that they were not able to resolve."

Challenges

Aside from geopolitical headwinds, Huawei will need to provide more vertical solutions and sustainability consulting services with improved network agility. The development of mobile private network use cases will be an opportunity for Huawei to articulate its value proposition with business consulting, sustainability, business outcomes, and flexible financial models.

Consider Huawei When

Consider Huawei when you require a global provider that has deep technical knowledge across networking and cloud with advanced automation tools and processes.

APPENDIX

Reading an IDC MarketScape Graph

For the purposes of this analysis, IDC divided potential key measures for success into two primary categories: capabilities and strategies.

Positioning on the y-axis reflects the vendor's current capabilities and menu of services and how well aligned the vendor is to customer needs. The capabilities category focuses on the capabilities of the company and services today, here, and now. Under this category, IDC analysts will look at how well a vendor is building/delivering capabilities that enable it to execute its chosen strategy in the market.

Positioning on the x-axis, or strategies axis, indicates how well the vendor's future strategy aligns with what customers will require in three to five years. The strategies category focuses on high-level decisions and underlying assumptions about offerings, customer segments, and business and go-to-market plans for the next three to five years.

The size of the individual vendor markers in the IDC MarketScape represents the market share of each individual vendor within the specific market segment being assessed.

IDC MarketScape Methodology

IDC MarketScape criteria selection, weightings, and vendor scores represent well-researched IDC judgment about the market and specific vendors. IDC analysts tailor the range of standard characteristics by which vendors are measured through structured discussions, surveys, and interviews with market leaders, participants, and end users. Market weightings are based on user interviews, buyer surveys, and the input of IDC experts in each market. IDC analysts base individual vendor scores, and ultimately vendor positions on the IDC MarketScape, on detailed surveys and interviews with the vendors, publicly available information, and end-user experiences (via customer interview and a worldwide web-based survey; n = 500) to provide an accurate and consistent assessment of each vendor's characteristics, behavior, and capability.

Market Definition

Network consulting and integration services (NCIS) are defined as those activities associated with planning, designing, and building local and wide area data networks (commonly known as LANs and WANs), including multiservice, converged wireless, and wireline networks that allow voice, video, and data applications (such as VoIP and unified messaging) to be propagated across a single, common infrastructure. This study specifically focuses on these services for the enterprise, as defined in the sections that follow.

Enterprise Network Consulting and Integration Services

The enterprise market consists of public and private organizations that typically procure project-based network consulting and integration services (NCIS), including design, integration, and optimization services around their corporate voice, data, video, and datacenter infrastructures to serve the needs of their employees. Enterprise IT organizations have historically procured networking solutions (products and services) from one of three sources: network equipment suppliers and their channel partners, systems integrators, and telecom service providers.

And more specifically, this study focuses only on network consulting services and includes the following services activities:

- Strategy workshops
- Network assessment
- Network inventory
- Network design
- Network configuration
- Network security consulting
- Capacity planning
- Network performance analytics
- Network tuning
- Network testing
- Operations assessment
- Needs assessment
- Process improvement
- Benchmarking

LEARN MORE

Related Research

- *Worldwide Unified Communications and Collaboration Forecast, 2023–2027* (IDC #US50604523, May 2023)
- *Worldwide and U.S. Enterprise Network Consulting and Integration Services Forecast, 2023-2027* (IDC #US50604323, May 2023)
- *Worldwide Enterprise Network Consulting and Integration Services for Private 5G Networks 2023–2026* (IDC #US50204523, February 2023)
- *Worldwide Enterprise Datacenter Network Consulting and Integration Services Forecast, 2022–2026* (IDC #US49794222, November 2022)
- *IDC MarketScape: Worldwide Network Consulting Services 2021 Vendor Assessment* (IDC #US48076121, August 2021)

Synopsis

The IDC study is an IDC MarketScape document on worldwide network consulting services for 2024. This document uses the IDC MarketScape model to provide an assessment of several providers participating in the worldwide network consulting services market. IDC MarketScape is an evaluation based on a comprehensive framework and a set of parameters that assesses providers relative to one another and to those factors expected to be most conducive to success in each market in both the short term and the long term. The document highlights the importance of new defining thought leadership and delivery best practices for mature as well as emerging networking technologies alike. It also provides an assessment of various network consulting services firms, their strengths, challenges, and when to consider them.

"Transformation of connectivity will become table stakes for enterprises as they adopt hybrid and multicloud paradigms, wrestle with increasing data flows, and struggle to address accelerating velocity and volume demands of mission-critical applications and workloads," states Leslie Rosenberg, research vice president, Network Life-Cycle and Infrastructure Services, IDC. "Leveraging network consulting services from partners with thoughtful and robust consulting offers will help organizations navigate through the complexities of transforming their networks to respond to today's and future business demands."

About IDC

International Data Corporation (IDC) is the premier global provider of market intelligence, advisory services, and events for the information technology, telecommunications, and consumer technology markets. With more than 1,300 analysts worldwide, IDC offers global, regional, and local expertise on technology, IT benchmarking and sourcing, and industry opportunities and trends in over 110 countries. IDC's analysis and insight helps IT professionals, business executives, and the investment community to make fact-based technology decisions and to achieve their key business objectives. Founded in 1964, IDC is a wholly owned subsidiary of International Data Group (IDG, Inc.).

Global Headquarters

140 Kendrick Street
Building B
Needham, MA 02494
USA
508.872.8200
Twitter: @IDC
blogs.idc.com
www.idc.com