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Solving Secure Telework Requirements for Super Users

How Secure SD-WAN Enables Critical Access and Preserves User Experience

Behind overall shifts in work culture accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, more companies are realizing that their remote work employees have different requirements. Some workers have basic networking needs, while others require more robust solutions. Beyond basic connectivity and security, many organizations are looking to provide the highest level of security and connectivity for certain employees due to either the sensitive nature of their jobs or the connectivity requirements. To meet the needs of those identified as Super Users, organizations should adopt reliable SD-WAN solutions to deliver necessary networking and security capabilities as a unified offering.

Even before COVID-19, teleworking was on the rise across the globe, with at least 43% of employed Americans logging at least some out-of-office, on-the-clock time.[2] But due to the pandemic, many organizations are now looking at remote working as a more permanent method of work. As a result, most companies are figuring out how to enable remote workers to securely connect back to the information, applications, and assets they need to perform their jobs.

More now than ever before, organizations are under pressure to maintain an uninterrupted user experience, while also keeping employees secure from the constant barrage of cyber threats. But not all remote workers have the same needs. Some require basic connections to the organization, including access to email, internet, teleconferencing, file sharing, and function-specific capabilities when working remotely. Others need much more powerful and secure connectivity, including a higher level of access to corporate resources while working from a remote location. This may include those workers that operate in multiple or parallel IT environments, such as system administrators, IT support technicians, or emergency personnel. With the various access requirements and myriad locations from which team members are working, organizations must be adaptable to the needs of these workers as well. That includes the unique needs of so-called Super Users.
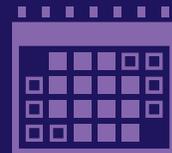
25-30% of the workforce will be working from home multiple days a week by the end of 2021.[1]

Super Users: The Need for Faster, Reliable, and Secure Access to Resources

Many executives, senior managers, key partners, and team leaders come under the category of Super Users. These employees frequently possess and share sensitive and confidential company information as a routine matter of the business day—a fact that doesn't change while working away from the corporate office.

In addition to requiring the same solutions as other employees, the work-from-home solutions for these users must address two key issues. First, due to the sensitive nature of their jobs and the data they access, they need the highest levels of security possible. Second, due to the importance of their communications in and out of the organization, these users need the most consistent and powerful connectivity to the cloud and assets in the office.

With COVID-19 forcing virtually the entire organization to work remotely, the CISO must ensure that all senior managers are able to securely access sensitive information from their home networks. In addition, networking team leads need to make sure top executives have sufficient bandwidth to ensure uninterrupted communications with important partners and customers. Only a more robust security and connectivity solution can give remote Super Users and their organizations the confidence they need to ensure their critical applications, workflows, and transactions are properly secured.

Secure SD-WAN for a Super User Experience

When it comes to providing remote solutions for Super Users as well as basic users, SD-WAN offers the ability to use available WAN services to give users across distributed organizations the freedom to better engage customers, optimize business processes, and innovate. But just as there are differences in the needs of remote users, not all SD-WAN solutions are alike.

Some SD-WAN solutions can also provide fully integrated security to ensure that confidential or sensitive information remains private and secure. This is why forward-thinking companies use a next-generation firewall (NGFW) solution in combination with SD-WAN to address security issues. With secure SD-WAN, management-level users can run resource-intensive applications like streaming video, engage in screen sharing during teleconferences, and even perform data processing without losing user experience.

By combining SD-WAN functionality with comprehensive security, company leaders can ensure that their Super User employees have the reliable connectivity and sufficient bandwidth to do their job anywhere. Only a secure SD-WAN solution can meet all the remote capability demands while protecting against the evolving number of threats on today's work-from-home culture.

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[1] "Work-At-Home After Covid-19—Our Forecast," Global Workplace Analytics, April 2020.

[2] Greg Nichols, "Working from home 101: Every remote worker's guide to the essential tools for telecommuting," ZDNet, April 9, 2020.

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