NTT DATA

How managed networks accelerate business outcomes

Strategic network management ensures your network is a business asset that supports digital transformation and creates value across the organization.

Contents

The importance of the network

The network is the foundation of the modern connected business: 93% of organizations now recognize that their most pressing business and digital transformation challenges are linked to and directly affected by the network, according to NTT DATA's 2022–23 Global Network Report.

Global Network Report 2022-23

At the same time, 9 in 10 organizations categorized in the report as top performers are increasing their investment in their networks to achieve their digital transformation and business goals. This makes sense, as the efficiency and reliability of your network infrastructure can be the difference between success and failure.

With 89% of IT executives having operational concerns about running complex networks while following shifting security and regulatory requirements, it's not surprising that the report also finds that 90% of organizations would prefer to outsource the management of their networks to a single strategic partner.

The upside of managed network services

Managed network services involve outsourcing the management of network functions and operations to a specialized managed service provider (MSP). These services can include network monitoring, management of firewalls and routers, Internet Protocol telephony, messaging and call centers, virtual network services and overall performance management.

This level of outsourcing provides a strategic advantage by enhancing your operational capabilities and giving you constant access to innovation and a range of expertise in pursuit of your business outcomes.

Importantly, the expertise on offer includes advanced security measures and compliance with regulatory standards – crucial for protecting sensitive data and systems.

Managed network services are also cost-efficient, as they reduce the need for large-scale investment in networking skills and management tools while lowering operational costs. When you're working with an MSP, it becomes easier to scale network operations up or down based on changing business requirements.

Having a service level agreement (SLA) in place is another significant benefit of managed network services, as this introduces a guarantee of constantly tracked service quality, reliability and uptime. SLAs establish clear metrics and benchmarks for service delivery, such as response times, resolution times and system availability, which helps in managing expectations right from the start of the service engagement.

Compensation clauses that apply when agreed-upon service levels are not met provide an additional layer of security, ensuring you are compensated for any service disruptions that affect your operations.

Modernizing legacy systems to keep pace with business demands

Legacy systems often struggle to meet the demands of modern business environments, and lifecycle management of the infrastructure is increasingly important. Usually, digital transformation involves finding a way for legacy and new technology to work together until the older infrastructure reaches its full useful life.

According to our network report, 80% of organizations are embracing new and enabling technologies, of which cloud-based network management, AIOps and private 5G are the top three investment priorities for the next two years. Yet, 7 in 10 struggle to keep up with the pace of change, partly due to a lack of in-house expertise.

This is another area where an MSP can make a difference: they can conduct a comprehensive assessment of your existing network infrastructure to identify limitations and areas for improvement.

Thereafter, the MSP can gradually integrate advanced technologies such as software-defined wide area network (SD-WAN) or cloud network solutions with efficient implementation strategies.

In this guide, we explore the role of managed network services in realizing key business outcomes while addressing challenges in digital transformation.

5 ways managed network services accelerate key business outcomes

1. Advancing digital transformation to create a competitive edge

Digital transformation is the integration of digital technology into all areas of an organization, fundamentally changing how it operates and delivers value to customers.

However, it's not a quick, one-off project. Integrating new digital solutions with existing systems can be complex and resource-intensive, and such a transformation often leads to significantly increased data flow within your organization. The network should accommodate this without affecting system performance and the user experience.

Upgrading network technology can be a major challenge, especially if you lack extensive IT resources. An MSP will provide access to both the technology itself and to network professionals with experience in integrating cloud computing, AI and IoT into organizations

Working with an MSP allows the C-suite to concentrate on core business strategies rather than getting bogged down by the complexities of network management. They don't need to be distracted by operational IT issues, including the adoption of the latest network technologies.

Scalable and secure

As your organization grows and business needs change, your network infrastructure must scale accordingly. Again, this can be hard to manage in-house. An MSP will offer scalable solutions that can be adjusted based on your changing requirements.

This means the network can handle rising volumes of data traffic and more sophisticated digital services without compromising performance.

The influx of data – including sensitive customer information – also makes security a top priority. MSPs can provide robust and regularly updated cybersecurity measures that comply with regulatory standards. This comprehensive approach protects organizations against data breaches and cyberthreats, all of which can lead to network downtime and hinder digital transformation efforts.

MSPs also ensure high network reliability and uptime through continuous monitoring and troubleshooting.

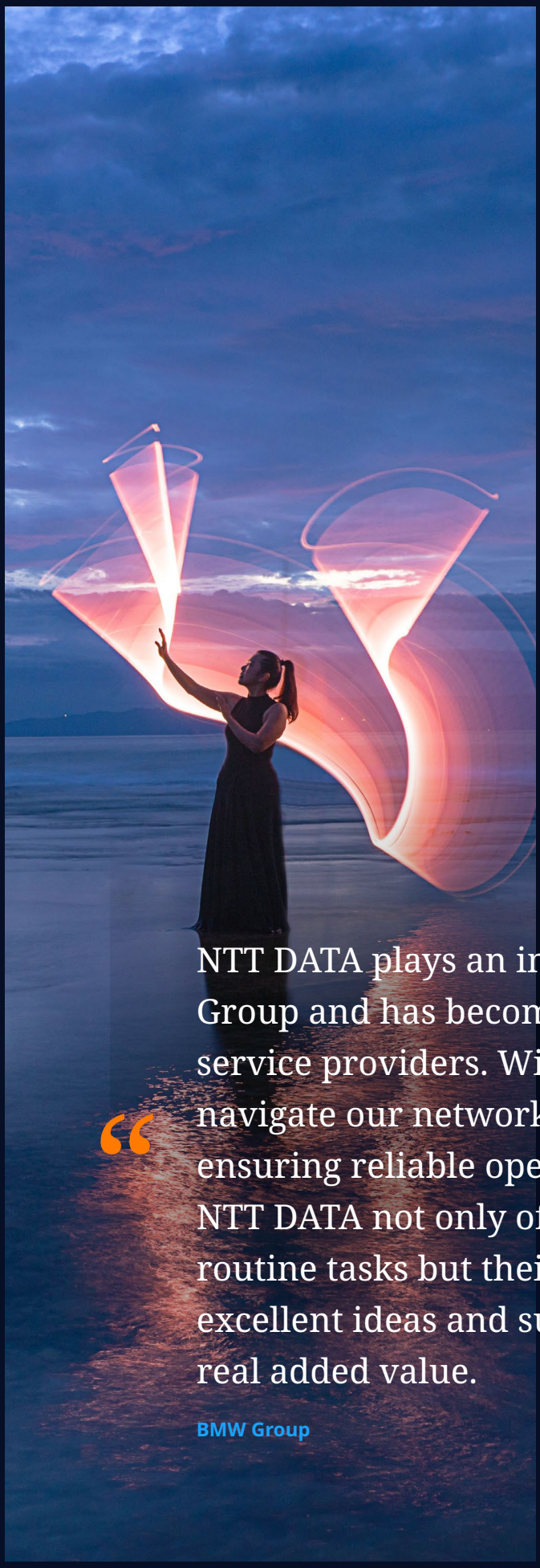
Less cost, more strategy

Transforming digital infrastructure can be financially demanding, but MSPs make it cost-effective by reducing the need for large capital investments in hardware and the expenses associated with maintaining an in-house IT team. Instead, the CIO or CTO deals with predictable costs that often result in lower overall spending on network management.

And it's not just in the finance and IT departments where a partnership with an MSP proves useful. Their strategic support also includes consultation on how to align network strategies with business objectives – a crucial step for CIOs, CTOs and CEOs who want every technological decision to support their broader business goals.

In our network report, nearly 8 in 10 top-performing organizations say they've aligned their network and business strategies, compared with only about 40% of underperformers.

Organizational leaders can also leverage the insights and analytics provided by MSPs to reveal new opportunities for improving efficiency, enhancing customer experience and creating new products or services.



BMW GROUP

In practice: NTT DATA and BMW Group

NTT DATA took over the operation of luxury carmaker BMW Group's global network, including nearly 1,000 wide area network (WAN) connections and about 30,000 server systems across various data centers.

We support BMW's cloud-first strategy while maintaining their existing on-premises infrastructure. This includes automating up to 85% of new server deployments and delivering nearly 99% accuracy in network diagnostics, significantly reducing the need for manual labor and supporting informed decision-making.

We also work closely with BMW Group's internal IT teams, providing operational support along with strategic insights and innovations that add value to their operations.

BMW Group case study

> NTT DATA plays an important role within the BMW Group and has become one of our largest infrastructure service providers. Witnessing the company expertly navigate our network and server infrastructure, ensuring reliable operations, is truly impressive. NTT DATA not only offers us opportunities to optimize routine tasks but their experts also regularly give us excellent ideas and suggest improvements, providing real added value.
>
> **BMW Group**

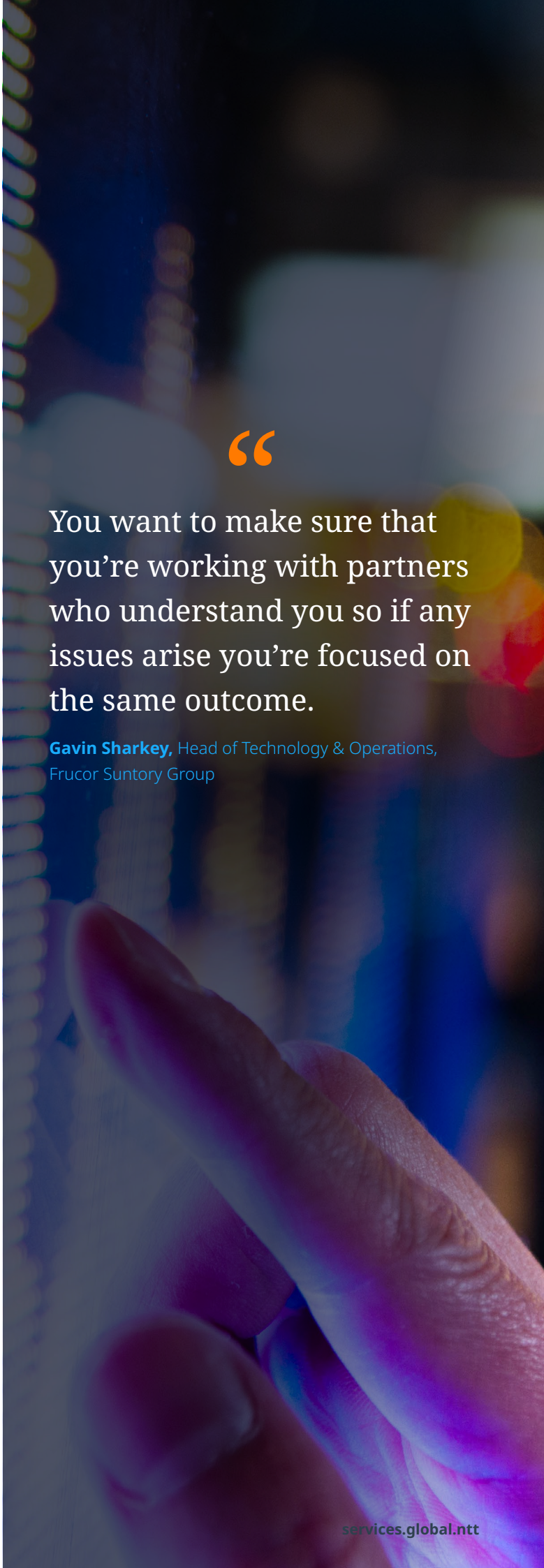
In practice: NTT DATA and Frucor Suntory

Frucor Suntory has, for almost six decades, provided great-tasting drinks across New Zealand and Australia, where they employ 1,000 people in their offices and manufacturing facilities in three cities.

NTT DATA helped Frucor Suntory to create software-defined infrastructure to boost their digital business capabilities. We deployed a secure, software-defined network that allows seamless access to data and applications, so staff can collaborate effectively from anywhere.

The transformation included comprehensive Wi-Fi coverage across all sites to support a mobile workforce. The overhaul of Frucor Suntory's network improved their operational efficiency by fostering a collaborative work environment and reduced their time to market for new products.

Frucor Suntory case study



> You want to make sure that you're working with partners who understand you so if any issues arise you're focused on the same outcome.

Gavin Sharkey, Head of Technology & Operations, Frucor Suntory Group

Pick n Pay

In practice: NTT DATA and Pick n Pay

NTT DATA significantly improved South African retailer Pick n Pay's network resilience and operational efficiency by implementing a managed SD-WAN solution.

Amid ongoing electricity-supply issues in South Africa, this solution ensures continuous store connectivity and transaction capabilities for uninterrupted trading and payment processing.

As a result, Pick n Pay experienced an increase in turnover within the first six months of implementation, along with an improved level of network stability despite high traffic volumes.

Pick n Pay case study

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We've been working with NTT DATA to get the network where it needs to be. That work has now borne fruit. The network has stabilized, we have insight into how it works and that's supremely good news for us. In the past six months, we've already added 1% to our turnover.

Stian Joubert, General Manager, Infrastructure and Operations, Pick n Pay

absa CAPE EPIC

In practice: NTT DATA and Absa Cape Epic

NTT DATA provides robust technological support and connectivity solutions for the Absa Cape Epic, a premier mountain-bike race.

As the Official Technology Partner, we are responsible for stable and secure network connectivity, which is crucial for live-streaming and maintaining communication among riders, officials, organizers and the media, regardless of challenging terrains and weather conditions.

This support extends to on-the-ground technical assistance to resolve any issues swiftly and keep the race connected and running smoothly.

Absa Cape Epic case study

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It's not the physical challenges that set a mountain-biking stage race apart. They're the basic reason for riders participating. What separates the ordinary from the exceptional is the ability to connect the world to every second of the race.

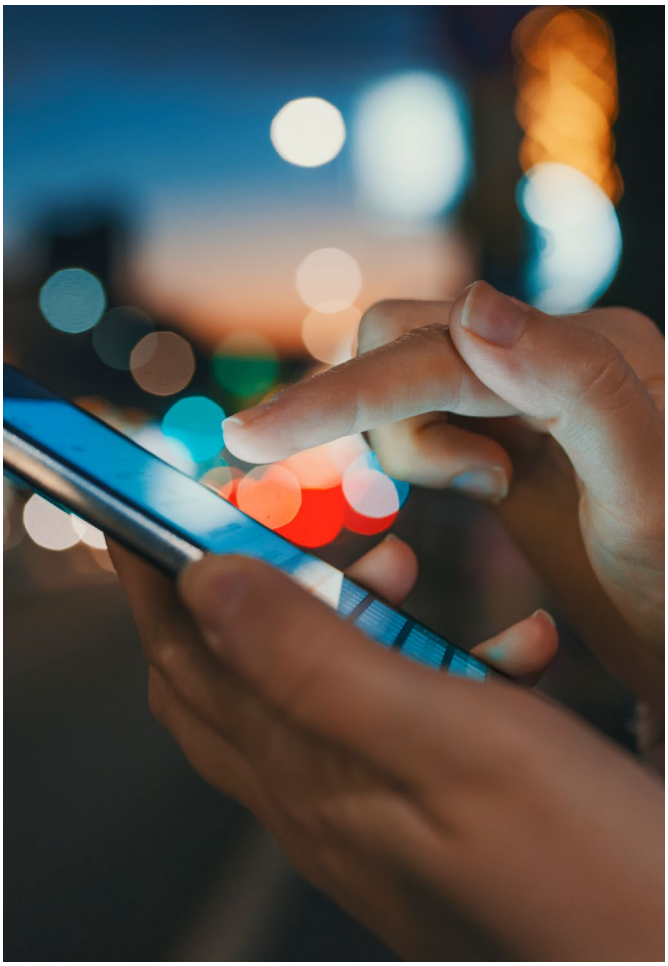
Kevin Vermaak, Absa Cape Epic Founder

2. Making networking secure by design to reduce risk

As technology advances, so do the techniques used by cybercriminals – and the severity of cyberthreats increases globally.

Widespread hybrid and remote working has led to a pressing need to secure remote devices and mobile access points in distributed networks. Most organizations may also find it daunting to keep up with industry regulations and standards.

Here, MSPs are instrumental in helping CEOs, CIOs and CTOs to improve the security posture of their organizations. By implementing proactive security measures such as continuous monitoring and real-time threat detection, they can identify and mitigate potential security threats before they cause harm – significantly reducing the risk of data breaches and cyberattacks.



This is made possible by an MSP's dedicated cybersecurity experts who keep up with the latest trends, technologies (such as firewalls, intrusion detection and prevention systems and virtual private networks) and regulatory requirements.

But their work isn't centered on proactive defense only. Keeping software and systems up to date is another vital, yet cumbersome, task. MSPs handle regular updates and patch management to address vulnerabilities promptly, according to best practices and regulatory standards.

How MSPs support cybersecurity

- **Customized security policies and compliance:** Different organizations have unique security needs based on their industry, size, and the type of data they handle. MSPs tailor security policies to fit the requirements of each business. They also ensure that these policies comply with industry regulations such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation.
- **Disaster recovery and business continuity:** In the event of a security breach or data loss, having a robust disaster-recovery plan in place is essential. MSPs can develop and implement these plans to maintain business continuity and minimize downtime during and after a security incident.
- **End-to-end encryption:** Encrypting data across all transactions within a network protects data integrity and confidentiality.
- **Security training:** Human error plays a significant role in many security breaches. MSPs can provide security training for employees to raise awareness about phishing, social engineering and other cyberthreats.

In practice: NTT DATA and URC Group

NTT DATA helped Universal Robina Corporation (URC) Vietnam, a pioneer in the food and beverage industry, improve their cybersecurity framework through a cloud-based managed service using Cisco secure access service edge (SASE) and Microsoft Azure.

This solution was designed to secure URC Vietnam's cloud-first strategy and protect devices and applications across their distributed workforce.

A managed Cisco SD-WAN connects all locations securely, allowing seamless access to critical resources from anywhere. And the implementation of Cisco SASE, including full endpoint security via Cisco Umbrella, enables centralized management of the entire environment. All devices, whether company-owned or personal, adhere to uniform security policies. Additionally, a zero trust security model allows for secure management of all applications through a single interface, whether the applications are software as a service (SaaS) or cloud-delivered.

URC Vietnam case study

> "All our components needed to talk to each other and share data. A fundamental building block of digital transformation is ensuring that all transactions are secure. Our customers need to be able to navigate in a safe and secure environment

Karen Salgado, CIO, URC Group

NTT DATA and a multinational retailer

A large, Australia-based multinational retailer faced the challenges of managing their sizable Cisco estate through semiautomated processes, transforming their network to SD-WAN technology and finding more efficient ways of maintaining and upgrading their network.

NTT DATA stepped in with our SPEKTRA network platform to provide network services, including automation, AI tools and software-defined infrastructure. We also helped the retailer adopt a product lifecycle approach to realize more business value.

Now, the retailer's product release cycles are shorter and they follow best practices for infrastructure as code while reaping the benefits of AI-driven automated operations, high network responsiveness and fast incident resolution.

SPEKTRA network platform

3. Optimizing the use of resources for efficiency and sustainability

CEOs, CIOs and CTOs are increasingly prioritizing environmental responsibility alongside economic performance. Sustainable network management includes not only reducing the power consumption of network infrastructure, for example, but also looking more broadly at working with suppliers and partners who prioritize sustainability in their operations.

MSPs' expertise is key in optimizing the performance of network infrastructure. Using new technologies and applying efficient network design, they can decrease the power required to operate both data centers and networks. This not only cuts costs but also reduces your carbon footprint.

Another way to make networks greener is through virtualization and the use of cloud services. By consolidating servers and resources, virtualization reduces the amount of physical hardware that is required, which in turn decreases energy usage and the need for physical space.

Similarly, cloud services enable you to use shared resources efficiently, which minimizes the overall environmental impact.

Asset lifecycle management and remote monitoring

MSPs offer comprehensive lifecycle management of network hardware and software. This means, for instance, that hardware is responsibly disposed of at the end of its life, leading to less electronic waste and promoting recycling within the ambit of environmental regulations regarding ewaste management.

But lifecycle management isn't possible without continuous visibility of your organization's network assets. The ability to monitor and manage networks remotely is another significant advantage of managed network services. It reduces the need for physical travel for maintenance and troubleshooting, thereby lowering the carbon emissions associated with transportation.

Remote operations also support a decentralized workforce, which can further reduce the environmental impact of commuting.

Support for green technologies

Many MSPs are exploring green technology initiatives and incorporating environmentally friendly practices into their service offerings, like designing data centers that take into account natural environmental conditions to reduce cooling costs.

And, because they have insight into the latest green-technology practices, they can help you select vendors and partners who prioritize sustainability. In this way, the supply chain contributes positively to your organization's environmental goals and to broader industry shifts toward sustainable practices.

An MSP can also provide valuable data on energy-usage patterns, inefficient processes and related metrics that can be used to enhance sustainability.

Remote operations also support a decentralized workforce, which can further reduce the environmental impact of commuting.

In practice: NTT DATA and Mondi

NTT DATA has contributed to sustainability efforts at Mondi, a global leader in sustainable packaging and paper, by providing a fully managed WAN to connect their global operations securely and efficiently. The network is crucial for linking their manufacturing, logistics, sales and administrative sectors across continents, ensuring minimal downtime and supporting their sustainability goals.

Our managed security services also protect Mondi against cyberthreats, which is vital for maintaining the integrity of their sustainable operations.

This technological foundation allows Mondi to focus more on their business and sustainability objectives without being hindered by connectivity issues.

Mondi case study

> The partnership with NTT DATA and Cisco has turned our network into an engine for sustainability and innovation. The managed service means that we know there's a global team of experts ensuring that it remains secure and available at all times.

Rainer Steffl, CIO, Mondi

4. Boosting employee performance

As organizations embrace hybrid and remote working alongside on-site working, reliable access to network resources from multiple locations has become essential. Employees must be able to use collaboration tools securely from anywhere.

MSPs provide reliable and high-speed connectivity that supports videoconferencing, cloud applications and other critical business tools. They implement robust security measures such as virtual private networks, multifactor authentication and continuous monitoring of network traffic to prevent unauthorized access to sensitive data.

And, because the hybrid model can lead to fluctuating demands on network resources as employees move between home and office environments, MSPs provide scalable solutions that can adjust dynamically to changing bandwidth needs and user counts.

A proactive approach

Proactive monitoring and management of the network infrastructure makes it easier to identify and fix potential problems early on while prioritizing traffic for critical applications and ensuring compliance with corporate policies across locations.

Hybrid workplaces rely heavily on cloud services for easy access to applications and data. MSPs' expertise extends to cloud integration and management to support the deployment of SaaS applications and the use of public, private or hybrid cloud environments, which are integral to the hybrid work model.

HEINEKEN Kraków

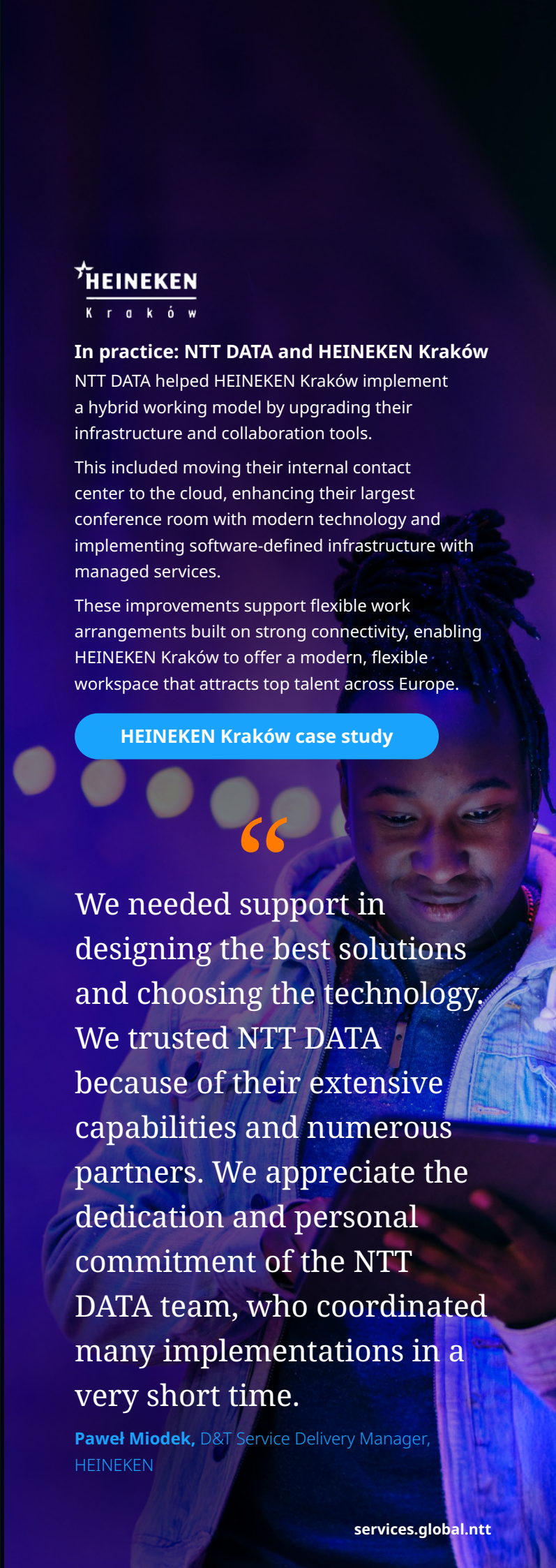
In practice: NTT DATA and HEINEKEN Kraków

NTT DATA helped HEINEKEN Kraków implement a hybrid working model by upgrading their infrastructure and collaboration tools.

This included moving their internal contact center to the cloud, enhancing their largest conference room with modern technology and implementing software-defined infrastructure with managed services.

These improvements support flexible work arrangements built on strong connectivity, enabling HEINEKEN Kraków to offer a modern, flexible workspace that attracts top talent across Europe.

HEINEKEN Kraków case study



> We needed support in designing the best solutions and choosing the technology. We trusted NTT DATA because of their extensive capabilities and numerous partners. We appreciate the dedication and personal commitment of the NTT DATA team, who coordinated many implementations in a very short time.

Paweł Miodek, D&T Service Delivery Manager, HEINEKEN

KNORR-BREMSE

In practice: NTT DATA and Knorr-Bremse

NTT DATA advanced digitalization efforts at Knorr-Bremse, the world's leading manufacturer of braking and other systems for rail and commercial vehicles, by implementing a managed SD-WAN solution as a key component of their business-driven network strategy.

Implementing managed SD-WAN across 114 sites globally created a modern network capable of delivering high availability and bandwidth. This was crucial for supporting the widespread adoption of cloud-based services, such as Microsoft 365 and Teams, and for migrating key applications to the Azure cloud.

Our SD-WAN solution allows Knorr-Bremse to prioritize business-critical traffic and use direct cloud access, which reduces the load on the core network. This enhances the performance and reliability of the network, ensuring that data-driven services and cloud applications run smoothly and efficiently.

Also, built-in encryption within SD-WAN keeps Knorr-Bremse's sensitive data secure during transit without sacrificing performance.

Knorr-Bremse case study

"As an international company, we rely on seamless communication and collaboration between our global teams. These services, as well as application modernization, digital production and the development of new business models, require flexible and stable network connections. The move to a managed SD-WAN was an obvious decision for us.

Tino Gieslor, Global Network Manager, Knorr-Bremse

5. Making your business AI-ready

As more organizations adopt AI-enabled tools, including generative AI, the underlying workloads are increasing. To manage these workloads, they need to modernize their networks.

AI and GenAI applications process vast amounts of data. This requires robust network infrastructure, and real-time data processing can be hindered by network delays. So, networks must be scalable to handle the growing data and processing needs of AI applications.

This is where MSPs play a crucial role. They put in place underlying network infrastructure that is robust enough to handle the demands of AI – including upgrading and managing bandwidth, latency and processing capabilities to support AI algorithms that need real-time data processing and immense computational resources.

In addition, MSPs are at the forefront of using AIOps techniques to improve network operations and provide a route to leapfrog directly to using the most advanced operational capabilities. Network data available at scale on MSP service platforms, and specific AIOps applications designed for networks, deliver exceptional anomaly detection, event correlation and ticket enrichment – all leading to a network that is more reliably available to deliver for your business.

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Managing data securely

An MSP can help to organize, manage and secure the large volumes of data used and created by AI applications. Data management goes hand in hand with implementing comprehensive cybersecurity measures, including advanced threat detection, data encryption and security audits, to avoid exposing your organization to cyberthreats.

It can be challenging to both implement AI and GenAI solutions and integrate them with existing IT ecosystems. MSPs can perform compatibility checks and system updates and deploy middleware that lets different technologies communicate effectively.

Even keeping AI systems performing as expected requires expertise that's not readily available in most organizations. MSPs use tools for performance monitoring and management to keep AI-enabled applications running efficiently.

AI and GenAI implementations must also comply with regulatory requirements, especially those related to data privacy and usage. MSPs' experience in this area can help you reduce the risk of noncompliance and associated penalties.

In practice: NTT DATA and a multinational soft-drink manufacturer

NTT DATA stepped in to help a multinational soft-drink manufacturer that was struggling with poor support from their network-as-a-service provider, including high incremental costs for project work that made it hard to compile predictable budgets. Network updates were also slow and costly to deploy, and the client needed access to modern security features.

We developed a pricing model with built-in incremental growth for additional project work and implemented SASE and SD-WAN services to bring the client's cybersecurity up to date. We also rolled out monitoring tools to help us quickly isolate application issues, resolve incidents faster, forecast network capacity and automate common provisioning tasks.

The client now benefits from consistent budgets, fewer network-capacity issues, encrypted network traffic and cost savings related to moving away from costly, premises-based hardware solutions and software subscription licensing.

Take the next step

Managed network services are crucial for organizations that want to thrive in a digital world. An experienced MSP will modernize your legacy systems and address the challenges associated with digital transformation, security, sustainability, hybrid workplaces and AI.

As these technologies evolve, the strategic importance of managed networks will keep growing, making them a critical component of any forward-thinking business strategy.

Sign up for a live demo to experience the power of our network services platform, which offers cloud-native, AI-powered multitenant functionality and extensive vendor support.

Sign up for a live demo


NTT DATA