

Nominee: Silver Peak

Nomination title: Silver Peak Unity EdgeConnect

As businesses migrate applications and infrastructure to the cloud, legacy wide area network (WAN) architectures are proving inefficient and ineffective in connecting users to applications. While reliable when applications were hosted in the data centre, legacy architectures are costly and complex to manage, and impair application performance due to the inefficiencies of consuming WAN bandwidth to backhaul all cloud destined traffic through the data centre. WAN reliability is crucial when embracing business-driving cloud or web-based applications, which is why software-defined WAN (SD-WAN) technologies are increasingly being labelled as the future of enterprise networking. An SD-WAN connects users to applications with the flexibility to leverage any combination of underlying transport – including MPLS, LTE or broadband – enabling businesses to dramatically simplify their branch WAN architecture, without compromising network or application performance, and reducing costs.

Silver Peak Unity EdgeConnect

Delivered in both virtual and physical appliances, the Silver Peak SD-WAN solution, Unity EdgeConnect, dramatically reduces the cost and complexity of building a WAN by leveraging broadband to connect users to applications. In March 2017, Silver Peak announced new advancements to EdgeConnect that enable enterprises to realise the advantages of a thin branch office. With its latest software release, EdgeConnect becomes the industry's first fully integrated SD-WAN solution to combine high-performance SD-WAN, WAN optimisation, routing and a stateful firewall, displacing the need for legacy branch routers. This simplifies and consolidates branch office infrastructure, shifts the WAN edge towards being application-driven and enables secure, direct internet connectivity to SaaS and trusted web-based applications from the branch office.

EdgeConnect features include:

- **Zero-touch provisioning** – EdgeConnect can be deployed at a branch office in seconds, automatically connecting to the data centre, other branches, or in cloud IaaS
- **First-packet iQ** – This new feature automatically identifies more than 10,000 applications and 300 million web domains based on the first packet received. It securely connects branch office users directly to cloud applications from the branch office, providing the highest levels of application awareness and intelligence available today

- **Integrated stateful firewall for secure internet breakout – EdgeConnect now integrates a stateful firewall, supporting foundational firewall and security capabilities for branch office locations that don't host applications**
- **Seamless routing interoperability – EdgeConnect now supports industry-standard BGP routing protocols for seamless interoperability between the SD-WAN and legacy WAN architectures, enabling customers to transition to a thin branch without sacrificing WAN performance, security and reliability**
- **Tunnel bonding – Configured from two or more physical WAN transport services, bonded tunnels form a single logical overlay connection, aggregating the performance of all underlying links. If an underlying link fails, the remaining transport links will carry all traffic to maintain application availability**
- **Path conditioning – EdgeConnect provides private-line performance over public internet and overcomes the effects of dropped or out-of-order data packets that are common with broadband and MPLS links**
- **Dynamic Path Control (DPC) – Real-time traffic steering over any broadband/MPLS link based on company-defined business intent policies. With outages/brownouts, DPC automatically fails-over to a secondary connection in less than a second, maintaining application availability and performance**
- **WAN hardening – Data is secured edge-to-edge via 256-bit AES encrypted tunnels. This secures branch offices without the appliance sprawl and operating costs of deploying and managing dedicated firewalls**
- **Cloud intelligence – Real-time updates on the best performing path to reach hundreds of SaaS applications, connecting users to applications in the fastest, most direct path available**
- **Routing – EdgeConnect supports standard Layer 2 and Layer 3 open networking protocols**
- **Bandwidth cost savings reports – Documents the cost savings for moving to broadband connectivity**

Included with EdgeConnect is Unity Orchestrator, which provides unprecedented levels of visibility into legacy and cloud applications, and the ability to centrally assign policies based on business intent to secure and control all WAN traffic. Unity Boost is an optional WAN optimisation performance pack that enables companies to accelerate the performance of latency-sensitive applications and minimise transmission of repetitive data across the WAN.

Tangible impact

In May 2017, Silver Peak surpassed 400 Unity EdgeConnect production customer deployments worldwide, less than two years from its first customer deployment. Achieving 300 percent annual growth in SD-WAN solution customer acquisition, approximately 75 percent of these customers were net new to Silver Peak, while the remaining 25 percent represent installed-based customer migrations from traditional WAN optimisation to SD-WAN, and SD-WAN with integrated WAN optimisation, Unity Boost. New EdgeConnect SD-WAN solution customers include Fruit of the Loom and Nuffield Health. In addition, the company has critical partnerships with Ampito and Solar Communications, which are helping enterprises achieve greater agility by connecting remote and branch office users to applications, whether they reside in the data centre or the cloud, while leveraging secure, cost-effective broadband connectivity.

Ongoing support

Silver Peak provides 24/7/365 global support and logistics for its products, as well as offers complimentary training and certification to educate IT professionals on Silver Peak technology and the key fundamentals of SD-WAN. It offers technical certifications at 'professional' and 'expert' level, and instructor-led training courses to help individuals obtain them. All of the training classes are free of charge and most courses are self-paced and offered online. Instructor-led courses are generally offered on a monthly basis and can be attended in person or remotely. Silver Peak also offers additional certifications for its partners and resellers. All Silver Peak instructors have extensive networking backgrounds and field experience working hands-on with real customers and real deployments. Silver Peak instructors have also completed instructional training and are current certificate holders themselves.

Why nominee should win

1. **Flexibility** – With EdgeConnect, enterprises can non-disruptively augment or replace MPLS circuits with any combination of transport including broadband internet and wireless
2. **Visibility** – Companies have visibility into all applications traffic, allowing them to maintain compliance with IT policies and business intent
3. **Control** – Unity Orchestrator visibility feature eliminates the need to manually configure and manage individual devices at each branch and gives powerful insight into the network
4. **Performance** – EdgeConnect includes features such as path conditioning and path selection that ensure private line-like performance over the internet

5. Savings – Companies can easily and securely leverage broadband for the WAN