IDC MarketScape: Worldwide Network Consulting Services 2019 Vendor Assessment
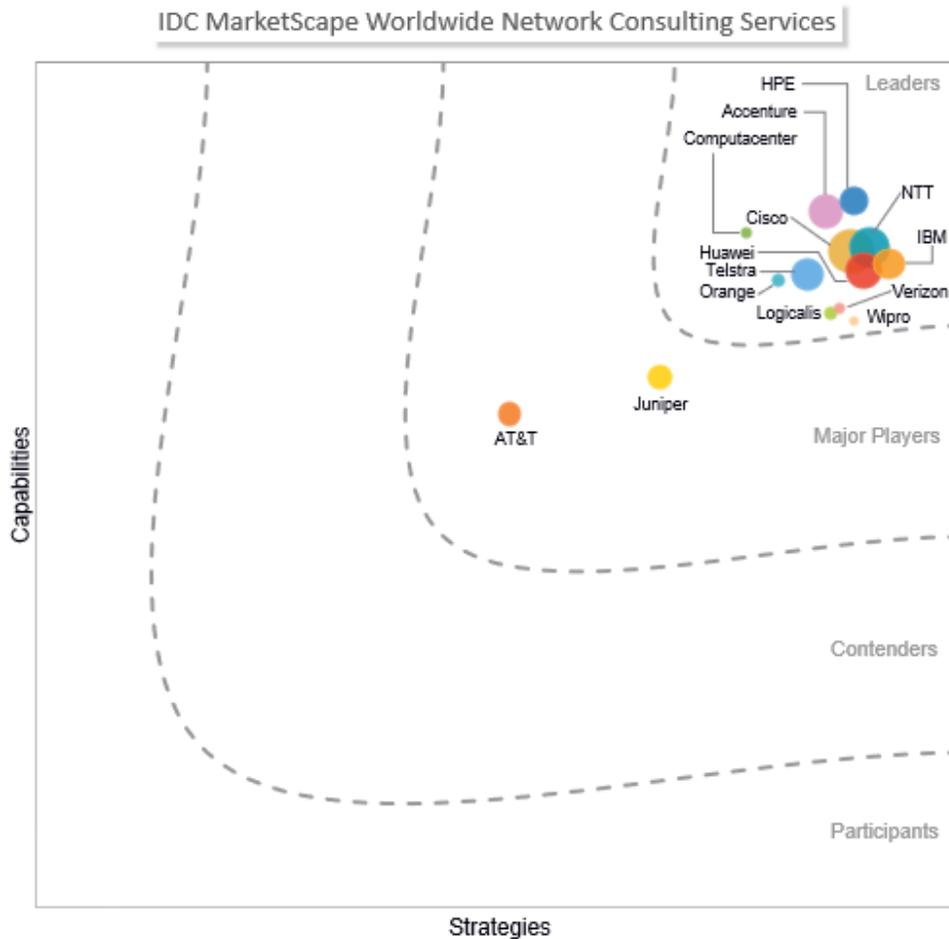
Leslie Rosenberg

THIS IDC MARKETSCAPE EXCERPT FEATURES IBM

IDC MARKETSCAPE FIGURE

FIGURE 1

IDC MarketScape Worldwide Network Consulting Services Vendor Assessment

Source: IDC, 2019

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 2019 Vendor Assessment (Doc #US44532219e). 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

This IDC study represents the vendor assessment model called an IDC MarketScape. This research is a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the characteristics that explain a vendor's current and future success in the marketplace. This IDC study assesses the capabilities and strategies of many prominent network consulting firms. This evaluation is based on a comprehensive framework and a set of parameters expected to be most conducive to success in providing network consulting services in both the short term and the long term. In this study, IDC has given additional weighting for the vendor's future view and strategic direction. Network consulting services are an evolving market, and the reader 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 globally that have met the defined criteria have been selected because they have met the required criteria.

Once again, IDC examined the participants' capabilities and strategies for helping their customers transform their networks as well as their businesses, technology, and operational processes, which are underpinned by the strength of their network and being transformed by their network. Key themes demonstrated by leaders in this study are as follows:

- Offer breadth and depth
- Ability to deliver on a global scale
- Defined and repeatable methodology
- Strategically hiring, reskilling, and training talent
- Investment in automation and tools for efficient service delivery
- Helping customers succeed with technology, operational, and business outcomes

Key findings include:

- There is a significant investment in tools, automation, platforms, and technologies for efficient, intelligent, and value-added service delivery globally coupled with local touch
- Participants continue to be challenged to find, enable, and retain the right talent for consulting-led engagements, but have built mechanisms and programs to address this issue.
- Study participants continue to invest in technology expertise, along with partner ecosystem expansion for network innovation and certifications.
- Development of new offers is based on customer requirements for solving current and future business, technology, and operational challenges.

- End users in this study state they want to see a tighter link or more closed loop accountability between up-front consulting and project delivery for greater customer satisfaction.
- End users state that overall capabilities still matter. They view their partners holistically across business, technology, and operational expertise.

IDC MARKETSCAPE VENDOR INCLUSION CRITERIA

This IDC MarketScape includes analysis of worldwide network consulting firms, those with broad portfolios spanning IDC's network consulting services research coverage with global or regional importance. This assessment is designed to evaluate the characteristics of each firm — not solely the size or the breadth of services. It is conceivable, and in fact the case, that small focused firms can compete with larger firms on an equal footing. As such, this evaluation should not be considered a "final judgment" on the firms to consider for a project. An enterprise's specific objectives and requirements will play a significant role in determining which firms should be considered as potential candidates for an engagement.

Vendors were included in this research if they met the following criteria:

- Network consulting revenue of $25 million or more
- Global delivery capabilities across North America (NA); Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA); Asia/Pacific (APAC); and Latin America (LATAM) regions
- Network consulting services surrounding the following solution areas:
  - Mobility
  - Video/collaboration/conferencing (UCC)
  - Customer experience solutions including service desk and contact center
  - Datacenter networking
  - SDN/NFV/network virtualization
  - SD-WAN/hybrid WAN/multicloud
- Network consulting services portfolio that spans assessment, design, and continuous improvement

ADVICE FOR TECHNOLOGY BUYERS

Networking, IT, and business requirements demand solutions that work holistically within an enterprise. These solutions are often complex and will require input from a broad spectrum of domains and stakeholders throughout the enterprise. Thus network consulting projects are often complex, transformative, and differentiated. To maximize value and minimize disruption as an enterprise moves through a network transformation project, enterprise decision makers must:

- Ensure a services firm can strategically prioritize and interlink networking, operational, and business requirements.
- Bring together disparate stakeholders and influencers to ensure linkage between the business and the technology.
- Select a partner that can deliver the project in a globally consistent manner that may involve a variety of commercial arrangements and consumption models that are appropriate for each business case and organizational structure.

- The services partner can define and deliver repeatable methodologies for technology, operational, and business outcomes.
- A services firms can illustrate a closed loop feedback cycle between network consulting and project delivery. This study only focuses on network consulting.
- A services firm can articulate investments in new technologies, processes, and tools for efficient, secure, and intelligent service delivery.

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.

IBM

Per IDC analysis and customer feedback, IBM Network Services is positioned as a Leader in this 2019 worldwide IDC MarketScape on network consulting services.

IBM, a New York-based multinational technology and consulting business, delivers network consulting services through its Global Technology Services organization. IBM Network Services has built a networking services portfolio around campus LAN, WAN, and datacenter and cloud solutions. As services integrator, IBM takes a vendor-agnostic approach and collaborates with a broad ecosystem of technology partners including telcos, network equipment providers, and new emerging networking vendors to supply network solutions.

IBM Network Services has evolved the way in which it sees and architects tomorrow's competitive networks. IBM believes that the move to a software-defined architecture will have significant impacts on customers and their networks as they strive to gain more intelligence, insight, agility, and value from their investments. IBM believes customers will want to move away from just outsourcing the network to taking on a more proactive role with their investments as the network becomes more critical to the business. As such, IBM believes its customers will need to have a deeper understanding of key control points and operational processes and will turn to IBM Network Services for developing networking best practices and new operational models. It moves from "practitioner run, technology assisted" networks with manual processes for solving issues to "technology run, practitioner assisted" where standard processes are executed by technology, thus allowing practitioners to solve more high-value strategic problems. IBM Network Services believes orchestration will be the key differentiator in the network and designs its consulting services around that construct.

The IBM Network Services portfolio is designed to help clients align their network to their digital and multicloud goals through the use of a tools-driven consulting practice that include AI/ML and cognitive solutions from Watson, financial (ROI/TCO), and technical tools for enhancing the consulting methodology and process. IBM will continue to invest further in the development of its own tools as well as partner with others.

IBM Network Services expects to grow organically as well as by focusing on geographic expansion; key vertical industries; technology skills in areas such as SDN, NFV, IoT and 5G; acquisitions; and new as-a-service delivery models.

Strengths

Worldwide, buyers of network consulting services regard IBM Network Services as particularly strong in improved network security, operational efficiencies, and digital transformation. As an IBM Network Services customer states, "IBM understands our business, history, and context …. They act like a colleague."

In addition, end users from the IDC study state that IBM Network Services is a "best-in-class solution provider and consultant, customizing for the individual industry," "trustworthy in all dimensions," and "performed the service the way I expected."

Challenges

IBM Network Services can sometimes be perceived as expensive and difficult to navigate. Survey respondents indicated that while the cost for services is at a premium, they are generally very satisfied with the quality and value of the services they have received for the price paid.

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 product 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 to provide an accurate and consistent assessment of each vendor's characteristics, behavior, and capability.

Importance of Technology, Operational, and Business Outcomes for End Users

A significant and unique component of this evaluation is the inclusion of the perception of network consulting buyers to highlight key characteristics of network consulting capabilities of the evaluated

providers. This insight is captured in a broad-based random global end-user survey of network consulting firm clients and reveals key insights regarding the capabilities of the individual firms. The broad survey also provides key insights into the kinds of issues that enterprises are engaging consultants to help address. Coupled with this web-based end-user survey is a significant effort to speak live with as many actual customers of the participants as possible.

Worldwide network consulting buyers consider improving network security, increasing operational efficiency, and accelerating digital transformation as among the top network transformation priorities. Regionally, North America and EMEA buyers turn to third-party services firms most often for digital transformation, while in LATAM and APAC, buyers leverage operational efficiency and business agility capabilities, respectively.

Based on these priorities, enterprise customers worldwide see improving network security and operational efficiency are still core requirements for selecting a network consulting services partner.

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.

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 assessments
- Process improvement

- ▪ Benchmarking

LEARN MORE

Related Research

- ▪ *Worldwide and U.S. Enterprise Network Consulting and Integration Services Forecast, 2019-2023* (IDC #US45046619, May 2019)
- ▪ *IDC at Interop 2019: Leveraging AI-Enabled Network Automation from the Datacenter to the IoT Edge* (IDC #US45105119, May 2019)
- ▪ *IDC's Worldwide Services Taxonomy, 2019* (IDC #US44916019, March 2019)
- ▪ *Better Alignment of Network and Business as well as Acquiring Best Practices Drives Need for Network Consulting Services* (IDC #US44881519, February 2019)
- ▪ *Design Thinking Principles Enhance Enterprise Network Life-Cycle Services* (IDC #US44515818, December 2018)
- ▪ *Reimagining CX Opportunities for Network Life-Cycle Services Firms: A New Paradigm to Grow Sales, Services, and Customer Relationships* (IDC #US44433818, November 2018)
- ▪ *Worldwide and U.S. Enterprise Datacenter Network Consulting and Integration Services Forecast, 2018-2022* (IDC #US44237118, September 2018)

Synopsis

This IDC study 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.

"While the participants in this study are highly capable of delivering network consulting services, the study aims to differentiate those consulting firms that are investing to be ahead of the market and meeting customers' needs. This requires a strategic road map for helping enterprise customers innovate, differentiate, and compete on technology, operational, and business playing fields. To do this successfully, network consulting firms must have the right mix of people, process, and technology to meet the demand," said Leslie Rosenberg, research vice president, Network Life-Cycle Services.

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. IDC helps IT professionals, business executives, and the investment community make fact-based decisions on technology purchases and business strategy. More than 1,100 IDC analysts provide global, regional, and local expertise on technology and industry opportunities and trends in over 110 countries worldwide. For 50 years, IDC has provided strategic insights to help our clients achieve their key business objectives. IDC is a subsidiary of IDG, the world's leading technology media, research, and events company.

Global Headquarters

5 Speen Street
Framingham, MA 01701
USA
508.872.8200
Twitter: @IDC
idc-community.com
www.idc.com