

Vendor Profile

NTT DATA Reignites Go-To-Market Strategy for Large Accounts

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IDC OPINION

NTT DATA has made important advances in its strategy for networking and life-cycle services, which is critical for former telcos reinventing themselves. NTT DATA's success in integrating Cisco products is noteworthy, and IDC believes it must continue to strengthen its strategic relationship with Cisco to drive revenue and profit growth. Focusing on large, multinational networking life-cycle accounts and enhancing customer experience is a positive step and matches the company's capabilities. IDC urges NTT DATA to continue investing in developing a sales team with strong Cisco skills to support its customers' digital transformation projects. Additionally, adopting a life-cycle approach to optimize software spending and life-cycle management is essential.

IN THIS VENDOR PROFILE

This IDC Vendor Profile reviews NTT DATA, a leading full-stack IT service provider, with a specific focus on its go-to-market strategy for large, multinational networking life-cycle accounts. Based on IDC research, the networking life-cycle services market (including consulting, integration, management, and maintenance services) was worth \$42.2 billion in 2024, with Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) constituting \$11 billion. The market will grow at 7.1% annually to 2028, when it will be worth \$55.4 billion globally (and \$14.2 billion in the EMEA region).

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Company Overview

NTT DATA, part of the \$100 billion Japanese telco giant NTT Group, is a major player in this market. Founded in Japan in 1967 (and recently incorporating NTT Ltd, the international networking and infrastructure division), the company has sales of over \$30 billion, with 60% coming from outside Japan. It has clients in more than 50 countries worldwide. Services include business and technology consulting, data and artificial intelligence, and industry-specific solutions, as well as the development, implementation, and management of applications, infrastructure, and connectivity.

Within the NTT DATA organization, the Technology Solutions unit has a very specific focus on a portfolio of secure digital infrastructure solutions and life-cycle services. As with many Japanese companies, it operates with a broader vision of contributing to the common good and making a positive impact on society.

The Technology Solutions division has four lines of business (LOBs): secure networking, cybersecurity, hybrid datacenter, and digital workplace and customer experience (CX). Software-Defined Infrastructure Service (SDIS) is found across these four LOBs; it is an industry game-changer that leverages AI and automation to empower its over 3,000 clients to go beyond traditional SLAs and focus on utilization and value level agreements for their multivendor hardware and software assets. Together, these areas create the foundation for digital business. Under the “One NTT DATA” banner, the company offers end-to-end IT solutions on a global scale, with a centralized digital transformation portfolio and a single point of customer contact. This broad services portfolio is not unique (other large services players offer wide-ranging solutions), but two areas where NTT DATA is really pushing differentiation are its go-to-market strategy (especially for large accounts) and its close relationship with key vendors. This document will focus on these two aspects.

Company Strategy

IT and Networking Are Core to the Business of Large Global Enterprises

IDC recently had the opportunity to meet with Denzil Samuels, SVP Technology Solutions, Global Multinational Client Sales, in Amsterdam. He emphasized that IT itself has matured and is now core to any organization’s operations. Consequently, more business buyers are getting involved in purchasing. Samuels said, “CIOs and businesses have become investment portfolio managers, balancing multiple (and sometimes conflicting) priorities — bottom-line commitments versus top-line growth, investing for tomorrow versus managing for performance and availability, and optimizing to reduce carbon emissions —while leveraging disruptive technologies like GenAI that would fundamentally impact their business and operations.” This means NTT DATA needs to immerse itself deeply in the context of its clients, particularly large global enterprises. This is especially true of the Global Multinational Client Sales organization, which aims to deliver customer outcomes by focusing on top strategic clients.

Doubling Down on Cisco as a Key Growth Driver

Activities in this area have always been undertaken in very close alignment with the vendors. After all, services companies are not only key go-to-market routes for vendors but are the main providers of these services based on vendor solutions. NTT DATA works with key technology players such as AWS, Microsoft, Cisco, and SAP. From a network life-cycle services perspective, the relationship with Cisco is gaining momentum after a period during which it appeared to be weakening. Key points include:

- NTT DATA can point to a 30-year relationship with Cisco.
- It is a Cisco Gold Integrator certified in 34 countries.
- NTT DATA is the number 1 Cisco Partner for Managed Services & Software Adoption globally.
- The company was the first global partner to achieve the Advanced CX Specialization for all Cisco geographic theaters.
- The company has over 14,000 technical Cisco experts globally.
- It offers coverage in 50+ countries.
- It has 11,000 clients using Cisco technology.
- As part of its premium support services, NTT DATA handles 50,000+ Cisco support tickets annually.

In IDC's discussion with Samuels, he emphasized the importance of NTT DATA aligning with Cisco. He expects this part of his overall business to show strong double-digit growth and is investing to this end. It was already apparent at Cisco Partner Summit 2024 that Cisco and NTT DATA were moving closer (the organization won 40 awards at this event), reminiscent of Dimension Data's relationship with Cisco before it was acquired by NTT. With a very targeted hiring process, NTT DATA brought significant Cisco sales skills into the organization. In the Global Multinational Client Sales organization, many former Cisco veterans were hired toward the end of 2024, with 30 in place by the end of January 2025. These include sales executives, solution architects, and client life-cycle specialists driving multi-tower solutions and life-cycle services. It is also interesting to note that 33% of these new hires are female.

NTT DATA's Technology Solutions division follows a life-cycle approach which emphasizes the following elements: maximizing software, including enterprise agreements to enable software adoption and services in a single procurement piece; life-cycle optimization through analytics, license management, and NTT DATA's integration of 182 Cisco APIs; and AI-powered, insights-driven recommendations based on specific use cases to assist with the adoption of technology features and capabilities. Interestingly, this sales team is going to market with NTT DATA's value-added SDI services that use the entire Cisco portfolio, not focusing on specific sub-elements, to promote the following 11 Cisco-powered solutions:

- Business Communications
- Campus Access
- Catalyst SD-WAN
- Cloud Calling
- Full-Stack Observability
- Hybrid Cloud
- Infrastructure as a Service

- Managed Security
- Meraki Access
- Unified Communications as a Service
- Webex Contact Center

FUTURE OUTLOOK

The approach outlined above is fundamental to NTT DATA's ambition to be transformative and not transactional. It comes at the right time, as deepening the relationship with Cisco requires a more strategic approach, as well as a commitment to the power of networking in particular and infrastructure in general.

Some of the success of this strategy will depend on Cisco's execution in key areas, most notably the convergence of networking and security, as well as the successful integration of the Splunk acquisition. Given Cisco's recent financial results, it seems to be on the right track as the company narrative around the importance of networking in an AI world gains traction.

ESSENTIAL GUIDANCE

Advice for NTT DATA

For IDC, it is very gratifying to see the strides taken by the life-cycle services arm of a large global telecoms player. We have long advocated the importance of telcos reinventing themselves along multiple dimensions; building out a strong enterprise life-cycle services play is one such strategy.

IDC's opinion is that NTT DATA's continued success in incorporating Cisco products and services into its go-to-market strategy will require continued vigilance and execution in terms of the following steps:

- Strengthen and deepen the strategic relationship with Cisco, leveraging the long-term partnership and Cisco Gold Integrator status in multiple countries to drive growth.
- Focus on large, multinational networking life-cycle accounts by deeply understanding the context of top strategic clients to deliver positive customer outcomes. It is important to double down on customer experience and a single point of contact; something that has not always been evident in the past.
- Invest in hiring and developing a sales team with significant Cisco sales skills to drive cross-silo solutions that serve customers' digital transformation agendas. We are already seeing significant progress here, but it will be essential to retain this focus as clients embrace (Gen)AI and agentic AI in the enterprise, with their significant impact on infrastructure and networking.

- Emphasize a life-cycle approach that gets the most from software spending, optimizes life-cycle management with analytics and license management, and provides insight-driven recommendations.

LEARN MORE

Related Research

- *NTT DATA Inc. Combines Organizations and Portfolios to Create a Single, Global Company* (IDC #EUR152108324, May 2024)
- *The Strategic Unveiling of NTT DATA, 2024* (IDC #US51973124, April 2024)
- *NTT Aims to Offer a One-Stop Shop from Edge to Cloud* (IDC #EUR149433522, July 2022)
- *Datacenter Vendor Profile: NTT Global Data Centers* (IDC #US47934522, June 2022)
- *NTT DATA and NTT Ltd. Combine Resources to Serve Customers More Effectively Outside of Japan* (IDC #lcUS49099922, May 2022)

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