eBook

Proving the Value of SASE: A Guide for IT Leaders

How to build a clear, defensible business case for security transformation that’s irresistible to business leaders

netskope

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Executive Summary

For many security and IT leaders, the case for secure access service edge (SASE) has become very evident, and for most organizations, it's already underway: remote and hybrid work are the norm, applications have moved to the cloud and AI-driven services are reshaping how people work and how data moves.

Modernizing network and security architecture has been shown to consistently produce measurable improvements in cost, operational efficiency, and risk reduction. And, as this eBook will show, the research and real customer outcomes back this up.

But when there's a skeptical CFO or an executive committee on the other side of the table, simply knowing the value of modernization and being equipped to make the financial case for it are two very different challenges.

The numbers these leaders need to make the case are often scattered across the organization, making them hard to isolate or quantify, and they're rarely in a language the board speaks. Yet, while security outcomes don't map neatly to spreadsheet rows, they're felt when teams have to navigate sprawling vendor contracts, lose hours to legacy maintenance, and in the cost of incidents that could have been prevented.

Budget committees and finance teams want to see risk reduction in financial terms, cost savings they can model, and productivity gains they can measure. Without that, even the strongest security strategy can struggle to get funded.

If this dilemma sounds familiar, this guide has been designed to help you bridge the understanding gap between security and finance teams. It explains how Netskope Business Value Services (BVS) helps organizations translate security and networking transformation into a clear, data-driven business case — one that connects IT strategy to measurable outcomes, addresses executive concerns directly, and gives every stakeholder a reason to say yes.

The architecture has changed. Has your business case?

Why today's operating environment demands a new approach to security, and a new way to communicate its value.

Network security has long been based on a simple assumption: keep users inside the perimeter and threats outside. Applications lived in the data center and employees worked from the office: security was all about controlling the boundary.

That assumption no longer holds.

Remote and hybrid work are the norm, not exceptions. Cloud and SaaS adoption dramatically reduced reliance on centralized data centers. AI-driven services are reshaping how data is created, shared, and accessed at a pace that often outstrips existing controls.

Today, enterprises rely on a vast and constantly evolving ecosystem of cloud applications, with a growing share of activity happening entirely outside the view of traditional security.

Backhauling traffic through a corporate data center to apply security policies made sense when that was where applications lived, but not when 20% of users regularly move data between cloud apps.[1] That's why today it adds latency, drives up cost, and creates complexity, while failing to deliver proportionate gains in security.

1 https://www.netskope.com/resources/cloud-and-threat-reports/cloud-and-threat-report-february-2020-edition

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Tools and architectures that served organizations well for a decade now generate diminishing returns. They take up budget and operational effort while failing to keep pace with business reality.

That puts pressure on security and IT leaders to make the case for modernization. But before committing to large transformational projects, boards want accountability, and they're scrutinizing budgets closely.

Many organizations have already decided modernization is mandatory. Building the internal case to fund it is the next, difficult, step. It needs teams to quantify cost savings against existing investments, address concerns about legacy sunk costs, and align stakeholders across networking, security, and finance who rarely share the same priorities or vocabulary.

That last part matters, because the gap between how security teams talk about risk, and how finance teams talk about money, is where many transformation initiatives stall. Not for lack of merit, but for lack of a shared language to evaluate them.

> "Senior leaders don't want to understand the inner workings of infrastructure. They want confidence that it will work when they need it and clarity when it is at risk."
>
> **Mike Anderson, Chief Digital and Information Officer, Netskope**

The challenge: Proving security value to the business

Why the gap between technical outcomes and business decisions is wider than it looks, and what it costs organizations to leave it open.

Security leaders struggle to make the financial case for modernization. The reason for this runs deeper than most realize, and starts with a paradox. They're expected to demonstrate the value of an investment that, when working correctly, is largely invisible.

A prevented breach doesn't appear on a balance sheet, and yet, with the average breach costing $5.5M, it represents a significant, invisible, and avoidable cost. A reduction in attack surface won't show up in a quarterly report.[1] And while a more efficient network might be felt by every employee, it's rarely attributed to the security team that made it possible.

This invisibility problem is structural. Most security metrics measure technical performance, such as threat detection rates, incident response times, and policy violations. These matter enormously to the teams responsible for them, but they don't naturally translate into the language of a budget meeting, where decisions are made on ROI, payback periods, and net present value.

[1] https://www.ibm.com/security/digital-assets/cost-data-breach-report/1Cost%20of%20a%20Data%20Breach%20Report%202020.pdf

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The result is a persistent gap between security teams who understand the value they're delivering, and finance and executive stakeholders who struggle to see it in terms they can act on. Without a shared framework for evaluating investment, even well-reasoned proposals can lose out to initiatives that tell a cleaner financial story.

The challenge is compounded by the complexity of modern security environments. When costs are spread across multiple vendors, contracts, and teams, isolating the true cost of the current state, let alone modeling the financial impact of changing it, becomes a significant undertaking in itself.

Organizations that navigate this successfully stop trying to translate technical metrics into business language after the fact. They build the business case from the ground up, with financial outcomes as the starting point, not an afterthought.

Consistent success in tackling this issue requires a structured approach, one purpose-built for exactly this problem.

> "CIOs should share their IT agenda with the CEO based on two key IT mandates: the efficiency mandate (operating as efficiently as possible) and the value mandate (creating competitive advantage and innovation). This provides good orientation as to what you're talking about, and allows you to structure the conversation into cost aspects and business value aspects."
>
> **Daniel Hartert,**
> **former CIO, Bayer AG**

Introducing Netskope Business Value Services

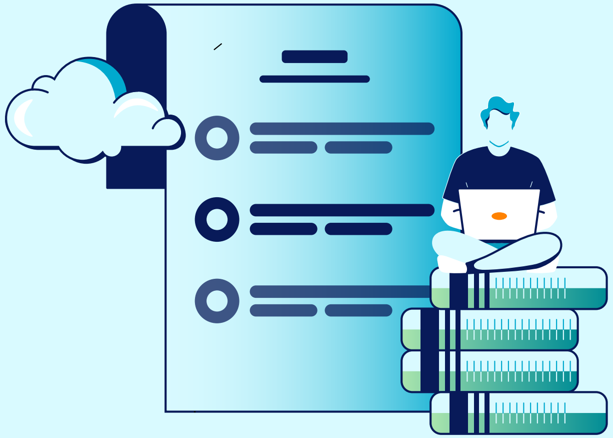
How a structured approach to value analysis removes the gap between security strategy and business investment.

The challenge of building a clear, data-driven business case for SASE that speaks the language of finance, not just security, is the task Netskope Business Value Services (BVS) was created for.

BVS is a no-fee strategic consulting service designed to help security and IT leaders translate the technical realities of network and security transformation into measurable business outcomes. This means turning cost savings, risk reduction, and productivity gains into clear, quantifiable outcomes that resonate with finance teams and hold up in a boardroom.

Rather than relying on estimates or assumptions, BVS helps organizations build structured, defensible analyses grounded in their own data, addressing the concerns that most commonly stall these decisions:

- Unclear ROI against existing investments
- Uncertainty around legacy sunk costs
- Organizational silos between network and security teams
- Difficulty building consensus across stakeholders who don't share the same priorities or vocabulary



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At the center of this capability is Netskope's value management platform: ValueSkope. Instead of a one-time report, ValueSkope tracks the full value journey from initial investment justification through to benefit realization. This gives teams a reliable, repeatable framework rather than them having to start from scratch every time.

BVS engagements are tailored to each organization's specific context. So, whether you're in the early stages of evaluating SASE, building a proposal for executive approval, or looking to validate an existing investment, you'll have the structured analysis and executive-ready outputs needed to move the conversation forward.

> "The Netskope Business Value Services process gave us a simplified and standardized language of strategic value that helped us sell the move to a common SASE architecture to all of our autonomous divisions."

Why value qualification matters

The discipline of structured value analysis is as important as the investment decision itself.

Walk into a room to pitch network and security modernization, and you quickly realize how much ground you need to cover.

The CFO wants a defensible number on what the current state is actually costing, and exactly when the investment pays back. The CIO wants to know what'll break during the transition, and the board will likely want to understand the risk of inaction.

Somewhere in the room, there might even be the person who built the architecture you're proposing to replace.

Value qualification is the process of building the case that'll answer all these questions before you walk into the room. It's the process of moving beyond feature comparisons and vendor claims to present a clear, evidence-based picture of what an investment will actually deliver. Not in general terms, but for your organization, against your current costs, with your specific risk profile.

"When we cut costs, we are often increasing our risk profile. Conversely, when we invest, we are buying down risk and building new capabilities that drive revenue and competitive advantage. That's how to frame this conversation."

Ilona Simpson, Chief Digital and Information Officer, ZF Foxconn

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Done well, value qualification fundamentally changes the conversation, shifting it from “should we do this?” to “here’s what we stand to gain, here’s what it will cost, and here’s how quickly we’ll see the return.”

That’s a much easier conversation to have, and one that’s harder to dismiss.

It also does something that’s often underestimated: it builds internal alignment. Security, networking, finance, and executive stakeholders rarely approach these types of decisions from the same starting point. A structured value analysis provides each group with a common reference point, a shared set of numbers, and outcomes they can evaluate on their own terms.

When organizations skip this step, the consequences are often predictable. Proposals stall, budgets don’t get approved, and transformation initiatives that are technically sound lose out to initiatives with a cleaner financial story.

Value qualification isn’t a barrier to moving forward. It’s what makes moving forward possible.

> “Effective innovation always starts with a use case, rather than a technology. Avoid ‘shiny things syndrome’ by working within small, agile, cross-functional teams that prioritize actual business challenges.”
>
> **Ian Golding, Chief Digital and AI Officer, TC Group**

How a Netskope Value Engagement works

A practical guide to the BVS process. And what to expect at each stage.

A business case is only as strong as the process behind it, and BVS engagement is designed to be practical, collaborative, and outcome-focused. Structured enough to produce a defensible result, yet flexible enough to reflect the realities of each organization.

The engagement runs across three stages, typically spanning three to four sessions, and is available at no cost.

Value discovery

It all starts with a conversation. A Netskope Business Value Specialist works with your team to understand your business priorities, current challenges, and desired outcomes. This is a working session designed to surface the specific cost, risk, and operational factors that'll shape your analysis. The goal is a clear value hypothesis: a shared understanding of where the opportunity lies and what success looks like.

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"With Netskope, we saw the opportunity to consolidate technologies across our business groups."

Andrea Foppiani, Senior Manager, Global IT Infrastructure and Cloud Security, Orbia

Value creation

Once this foundation is in place, the focus shifts to analysis. Netskope models the potential impact of a SASE deployment against your organization's specific inputs, quantifying cost savings, risk reduction, and productivity gains aligned to your objectives. All assumptions are validated with your team throughout, so the outputs reflect your reality, instead of a generic benchmark.

Value delivery

The engagement closes with a business value report, a customized presentation of quantified outcomes, and strategic recommendations designed to give executive stakeholders everything they need to make an informed decision. By mapping technical improvements to business outcomes, it presents a clear ROI narrative while serving as the documentation needed for internal alignment and budget approval.

In their 2024 Total Economic Impact study, Forrester found that the quality of Netskope's business value assessments through ValueSkope and the BVS team was a deciding factor for the organizations they interviewed. The process, it turns out, is part of the value.[1]

[1] https://www.netskope.com/resources/reports-guides/the-total-economic-impact-of-netskope-sse-full-report

The measurable outcomes of a modern SASE architecture

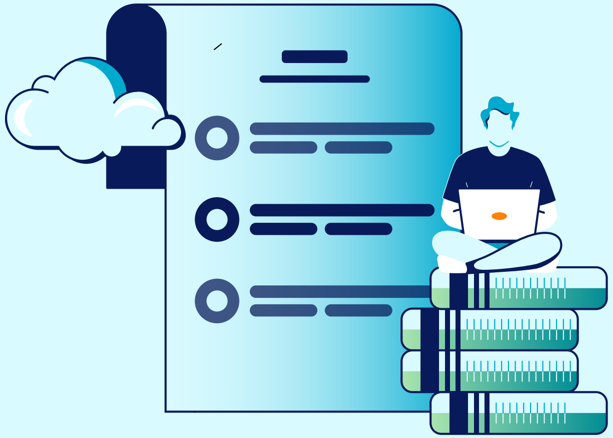
The real-world outcomes of network and security transformation, and how to quantify them.

The business case for SASE has been settled. Organizations that have modernized consistently see measurable improvements across the three areas IT and security leaders are held accountable for: cost, operational efficiency, and risk reduction. The numbers that back this up are significant.

Cost optimization

Infrastructure consolidation is where organizations tend to see the most immediate gains. Replacing a sprawling collection of point solutions, appliances, and vendor contracts with a single, cloud-delivered platform reduces licensing costs, eliminates maintenance overhead, and simplifies procurement.

Legacy WAN costs, particularly expensive MPLS links and VPN infrastructure, are significant targets for reduction. Composite organizations deploying Netskope SSE saved $5.4 million over three years through infrastructure consolidation alone, cutting networking costs by 10% and eliminating thousands of hours spent managing legacy vendors, according to Forrester's 2024 Total Economic Impact study.[1]



[1] https://www.netskope.com/resources/reports-guides/the-total-economic-impact-of-netskope-sse-full-report

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Operational efficiency

One of the less-discussed benefits of modern security architecture is what it gives teams back. When security and networking operations are consolidated onto a single platform, the hours previously lost to manual processes, appliance maintenance, and reactive troubleshooting don't just reduce: they get redirected.

The Forrester study found that its sample composite organization regained more than 35,000 hours of networking and security operations effort over three years. Help desk ticket volumes dropped by 80% and mean time to resolution fell by 60%. For organizations managing mergers and acquisitions, Netskope cut company onboarding time by 50%, compressing timelines that directly affect integration profitability.[1]

Risk reduction

Risk is where the financial case often stalls, because translating probability into figures is genuinely hard. With an 86% annual likelihood of experiencing a severe breach and mean cumulative breach costs of $6.6 million (footnote1), the financial exposure for most organizations is not a matter of if; it's a matter of when.

Organizations deploying Netskope SSE reduced the likelihood of a severe breach caused by an external attack by 80%, avoiding $2 million in annualized material breach costs over the investment period (footnote1). Beyond breach risk, SASE strengthens data loss prevention, improves visibility across cloud and SaaS environments, and reduces compliance risk — benefits that are harder to quantify yet increasingly important to boards and regulators.

> "The thing that really amazes me is I'm finding cost savings where I would never have expected to find them."
>
> **VP of infrastructure, technology industry**

[1] https://www.netskope.com/resources/reports-guides/the-total-economic-impact-of-netskope-sse-full-report

How ValueSkope helps teams communicate and scale value

From one-time justification to ongoing value realization: how ValueSkope keeps the business case alive.

While getting approval for a security investment is one milestone, proving it was the right decision six months, a year, or three years down the line is another challenge entirely.

ValueSkope is designed to give teams a consistent and repeatable way to quantify and communicate the value of their Netskope investment. Most value assessments are built once, presented once, and filed away. ValueSkope works differently. Its interactive, cloud-based platform tracks the full value journey from initial investment justification through to benefit realization, giving organizations a living record of the outcomes they committed to and the progress they're making against them.

This changes the nature of budget conversations for security and IT leaders. Rather than returning to the budget table each year with a new proposal, teams can demonstrate what the previous investment delivered and build the next case on a foundation of proven outcomes. Value stops being something you pitch and becomes something you prove.

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ValueSkope enables teams to:

- Build tailored value assessments quickly and consistently
- Quantify cost, risk, and productivity impact against their own data
- Communicate ROI clearly to leadership at any point in the investment cycle
- Align security investments with strategic business outcomes
- Track value realization over time and adjust as the business evolves

For organizations that have gone through a BVS engagement, ValueSkope is the thread that connects the initial business case to the ongoing story of what that investment is delivering, turning an initial rationale into a continuous, evidence-based conversation.

> "CIOs need to find their voice in pushing the exec team and CEO, even developing their own thoughts on priorities and areas of focus in their own plans and communicating those rather than wait for the rest of the organization to do a better job of this. Be the change you seek and provide a rationale for others to follow!"
>
> **Peter High, President, Metis Strategy**

Turning security strategy into business value

Why the ability to quantify and communicate impact is as important as the strategy itself.

At some point, every security leader has to stop building the case in their head and put it down on paper. The moment when strategy must become a spreadsheet and vision has to become a financial model is where most transformation initiatives are won or lost.

The proposals that succeed aren't always those with the strongest technical argument. Instead, they translate that argument into risk in dollars, efficiency in hours, and cost savings in a model that holds up to scrutiny by the business.

By providing a structured, data-driven framework for value analysis, Netskope Business Value Services enables that translation. BVS helps security and IT leaders build the kind of business case that doesn't just get heard: it gets approved.

That value doesn't stop at approval. Teams gain the tools to track, communicate, and build on the outcomes they deliver, turning a one-time business case into an ongoing measure of impact.

If this guide has achieved one thing, it's to demonstrate that the tools, framework, and expertise you need to build a defensible, compelling business case already exist.

You simply have to use them.

Ready to build your business case?

Discover how Netskope Business Value Services helps organizations quantify the cost savings, risk reduction, and operational gains of modern security architecture.

Request a Business Value Consultation

About Netskope

Netskope is a leader in modern security and networking for the cloud and AI era. Built on the Netskope One platform, Netskope unifies secure access, data security, and AI security to give organizations real-time visibility and control across cloud, AI, SaaS, web, and private applications. Powered by NewEdge, Netskope helps customers reduce risk, simplify infrastructure, and eliminate trade-offs between security and performance. Learn more at netskope.com.

Interested in learning more?

Request a demo

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