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Enterprise company

Setting up IT for success

Leveraging technology to harness the power of the Edge in the new hybrid workplace

Insights from IT leaders across the world

Every decade or so, we've seen the technology market undergo major shifts. Over the past few decades, those shifts have been driven by mobility and the cloud. Now we're entering the next big shift: the era of data—but we're not talking about data that's generated in a cloud or a data center. We're talking about data that is available where business is done—where users, devices, and things all come together.

We call that the Edge.

For most businesses, harnessing the power of the Edge presents some formidable challenges, particularly in the wake of recent changes to economic conditions. **Aruba surveyed 2,400 IT leaders to get insight on what obstacles they are facing and where technology solutions can help empower them to adapt quickly and position their businesses for growth.**

**In this eBook we illuminate the key findings of this survey.**
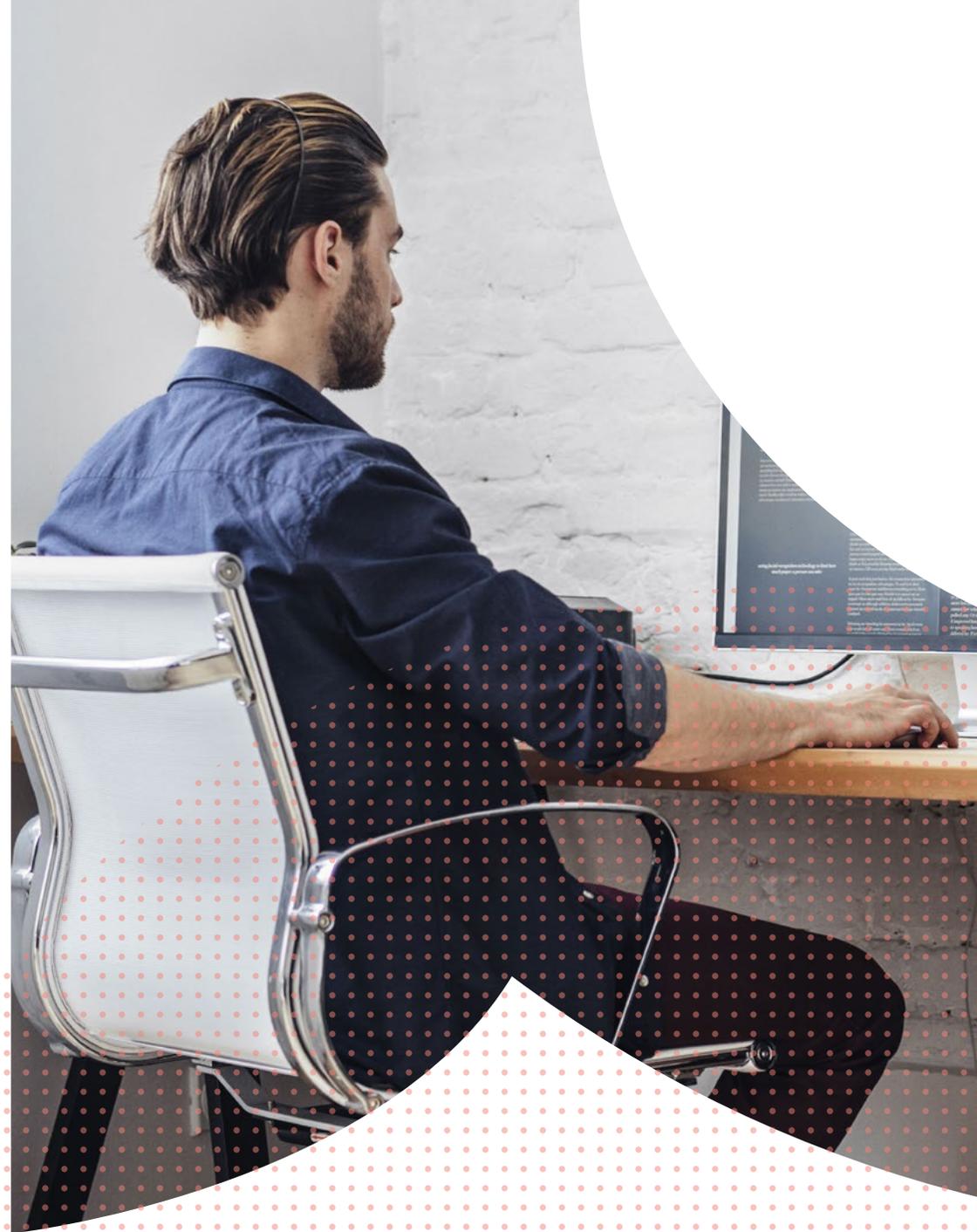
Building for today and tomorrow

Like every technology transition that has happened in the past, shifting to a data driven Edge changes the role of your infrastructure and introduces new challenges.

Corporate networks play a pivotal role in moving data and connecting people to their apps and services—just as they always have. However, with the Edge, the network is even more mission-critical and network requirements go far beyond standard connectivity and access technologies of the past.

However, financial headwinds have forced many to slow down investments in technology.

77%
of IT leaders said they had delayed or postponed projects in **2020**

The Edge expanded overnight

IT workloads have increased to meet demands of hybrid working.

Until recently, troubleshooting network issues or planning an update meant huddling in a conference room or helping users in person. Now most IT teams are working remotely, and they're having to solve issues for other remote workers while also planning return-to-office projects that need to deliver everything from improved coverage to contact tracing analysis. There's very little time and limited resources to chase intermittent issues, respond to every user, and bounce between management and operations tools.

More to do

IT workloads are higher due to the sheer volume of manual tasks associated with employees working at multiple locations. This is slowing businesses down at the very time they need to run as efficiently as possible. IT teams have less control, and **employees don't get the application performance they need** on their devices to work efficiently. As a result, it's a challenge for businesses to stay nimble and competitive.

74%

of organizations reported moderate or significant impact to employees due to the pandemic.
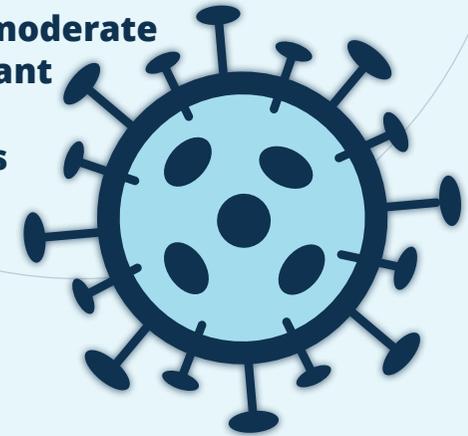
Harnessing the power of the Edge

Shrinking budgets and increasing workloads are constricting your IT team's ability to manage day-to-day activities while continuing to deliver much-needed tools and resources to accelerate business growth. It might be hard to imagine prioritizing investment on leveraging the growing volume of untapped Edge data when your team is struggling to keep your existing network operational.

But while the expansion of the Edge may appear to be increasing network complexity, it is actually paving the way for the simplification of IT management. The key is being able to analyze data being generated at the Edge to expand visibility, react faster, and spend more time on strategic initiatives. Edge insights can also drive longer-term innovation, such as new products, services, and revenue streams.

The right set of complementary technologies at the Edge enables an organization's ability to derive business value from data.

The Edge holds huge promise

Combating skill shortages at the Edge.

Lack of specialist skills represents one of the main barriers to Edge adoption. **In fact, 92% of IT leaders said they are missing skills in their organization needed to unlock the power of data, with artificial intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) skills the most cited missing piece.** A third of businesses also cite security concerns as a barrier. Without skilled people available, how do businesses successfully harness the power of the Edge? Can technology fill the gap?
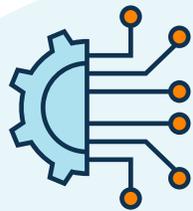
It's not surprising that

82%

of IT leaders describe their need for an integrated system at the Edge as urgent.

Moving forward with confidence

Given the importance of capitalizing on the opportunities at the Edge, it's critical for businesses to ensure that they have the right network foundation. They need to prepare their IT infrastructure for the next big technology transition while ensuring they can quickly respond to the need for business continuity and resiliency in the face of unplanned events.

In order to do so, they need networking technology that is unified, automated, and secure.

The power of a unified platform

Many businesses feel they are pulled in two directions with today's needs channelling funds away from projects that will drive the business forward in the future. But these two things needn't be in competition. The right technology can satisfy the needs of both. It's a powerful shift, and it starts with a unified cloud-native platform. **This is backed up by our survey which found 83% of businesses globally will increase or maintain investment in cloud-based networking.**

That's where **Aruba ESP (Edge Services Platform)** comes in. It's the industry's first AI-powered platform designed to unify, automate, and secure the Edge. Aruba ESP combines AIOps, Zero Trust Security, and a Unified Infrastructure, with financial and consumption flexibility to help IT:

☑ **Identify and resolve issues quickly, pre-empting problems before they impact the business.**

☑ **Protect against advanced threats from a vanishing security perimeter.**

☑ **Monitor and manage thousands of wired, wireless and WAN devices across campus, branch, data center, or remote worker locations.**

☑ **Quickly deploy network services at scale to support changing business needs.**

☑ **Acquire the infrastructure technology they need today, even in the face of challenging financial conditions.**

Automation accelerates business innovation

For IT teams feeling the burden of supporting the hybrid workplace, automation can bring welcome relief from repetitive tasks. With less time needed on manual processes, IT teams can turn their talents to new priorities and future plans. **35% of IT leaders globally are planning to increase their investment in AI-based networking technologies.** But what about that AI skills shortage? With Aruba's unified platform, you have a bridge - **AIOps**.

AIOps automatically monitors your Wi-Fi, wired, and SD-WAN environments. It uses AI and ML, combined with 360° network and user-centric telemetry data capabilities to reveal network issues and recommended solutions before users notice them. This helps IT to move faster and ensures that service level expectations of users and devices on the network are met. AIOps:

- ☑ **Correlates and displays multiple dimensions of information in context.**

- ☑ **Unlocks powerful capabilities around automated root cause analysis.**

- ☑ **Predicts issues before they impact the business.**

- ☑ **Provides prescriptive recommendations for issue resolution.**

Learn from your peers

Having well-designed AI algorithms is only half the battle. Machine learning must be applied to massive amounts of data in order to deliver accurate insights.

With an install base of over 65,000 sites, Aruba ESP analyzes anonymized network performance data from over 1 million network devices and 50 million clients daily and applies machine learning to refine best practices for maximizing performance. Aruba ESP then presents a baseline that allows IT teams to compare performance to other sites within their own network as well as to like-networks of similar businesses.
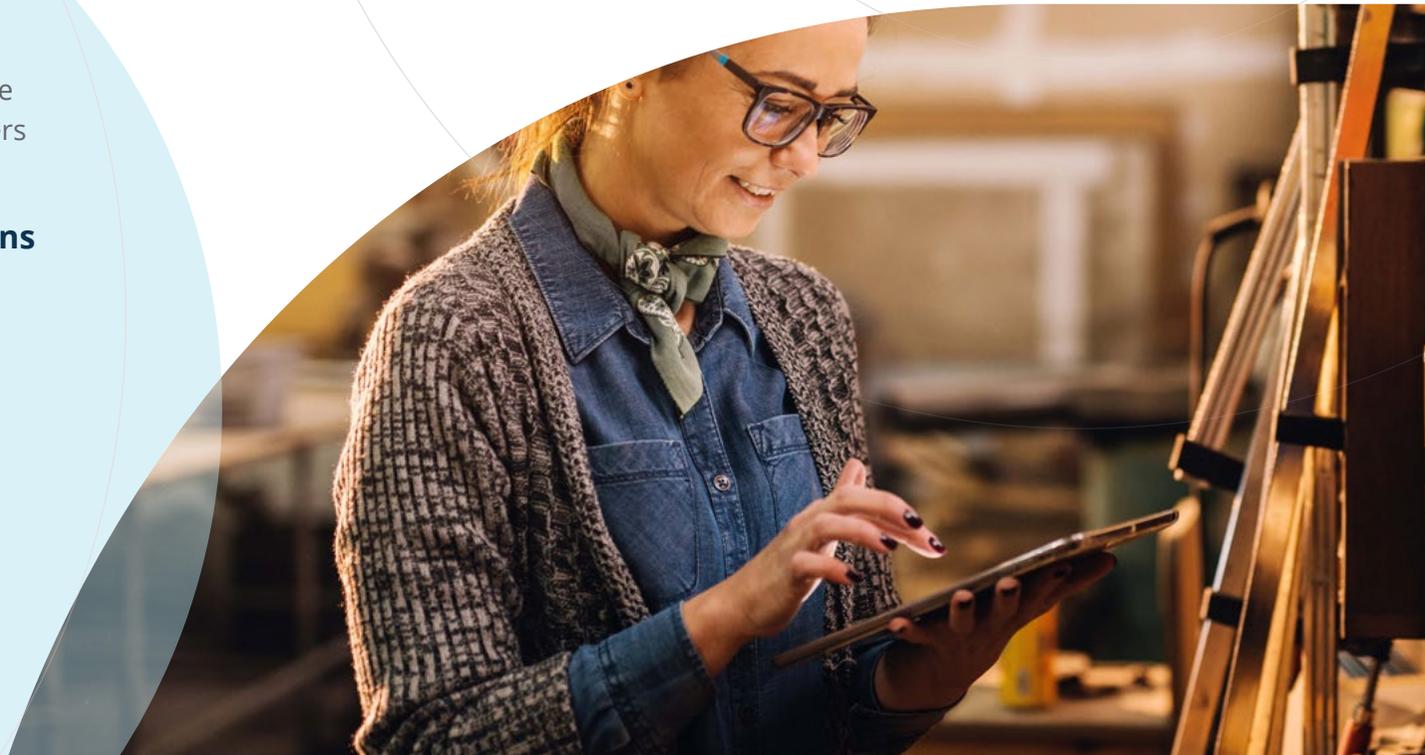
Reduce risk with Zero Trust Security

The survey also revealed security concerns are top of mind for most businesses. Visibility and control of devices connected to the network is a common challenge for IT teams, and traditional security methods of assigning VLANs and port assignments aren't efficient or manageable at scale.

Complete visibility and control

Aruba ESP's Zero Trust Security employs a built-in layer-7 policy enforcement firewall and ClearPass device identification and policy enforcement to provide the industry's best-in-class network protection. The system uses known device profiles and crowdsourcing to identify and classify all devices on the network, and applies automated network segmentation and policy enforcement to all devices and users regardless of where they connect.

Zero Trust Security reduces risk and provides secure access to all devices on the network, ensuring devices and business systems are not compromised.

Aruba ESP's Zero Trust Security increases protection and scalability without increasing complexity.
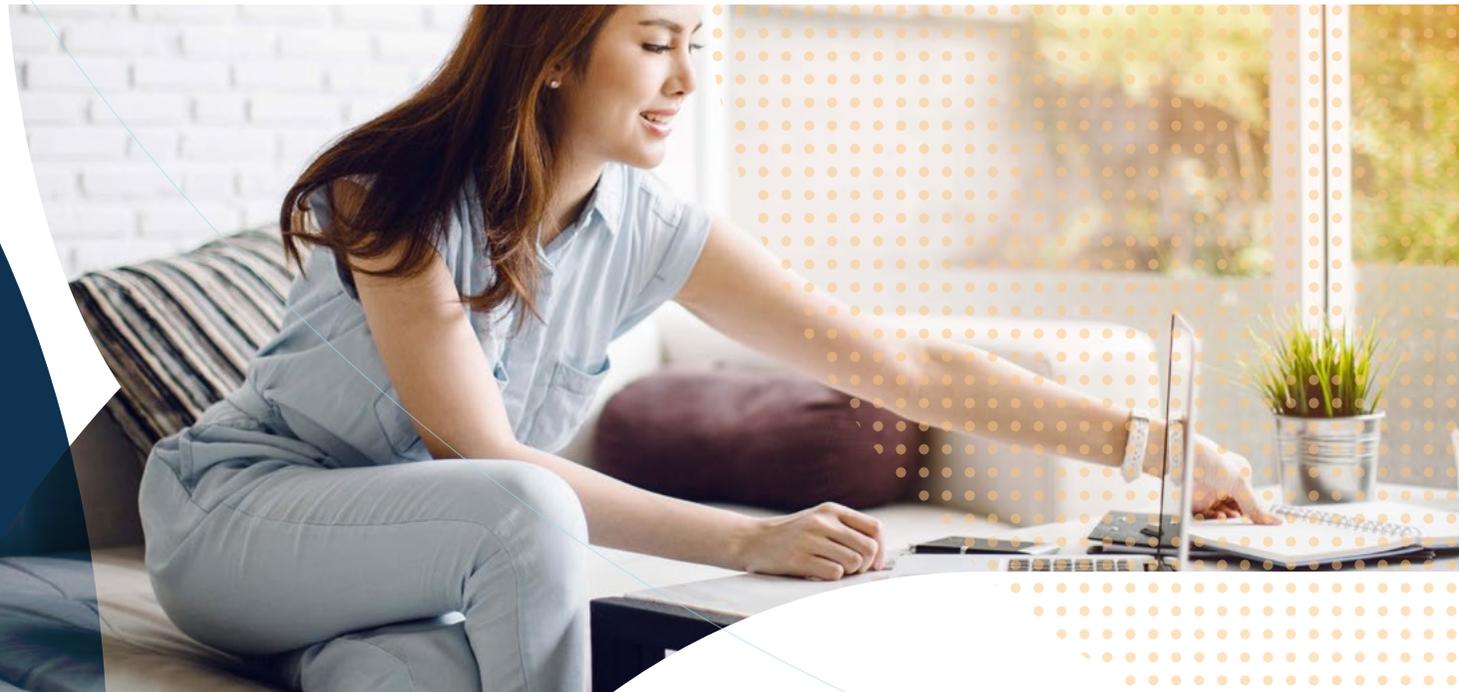
Flexible financing turns plans into action

As businesses increasingly shift to mobile and cloud solutions, many are also looking for more efficient ways to acquire, manage and maintain their growing environments. IT leaders want to ensure predictability in spending and reduce up-front capital costs. **We found that 41% of IT leaders estimate that at least half of their IT solutions will be consumed 'as a service' in the next 12-24 months.**

Eliminate the financial barriers to success

Aruba offers multiple financial and consumption options to help organizations accelerate their digital transformation and capitalize on opportunities at the Edge–even during these uncertain times. HPE Financial Services offers flexible financing programs that assist with equipment acquisition, including payment deferral, equipment recycling, and other forms of financial support.

Aruba also allows customers to consume Aruba ESP as a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) or as a Network-as-a-Service (NaaS). Whether it be through one of Aruba's managed service partners or through GreenLake services from Aruba, IT can get a "hands-free" NaaS experience that is billed monthly, freeing up funds and resources for other business priorities.

Aruba enables businesses to reduce costs, acquire cutting edge technology and bridge IT shortfalls.
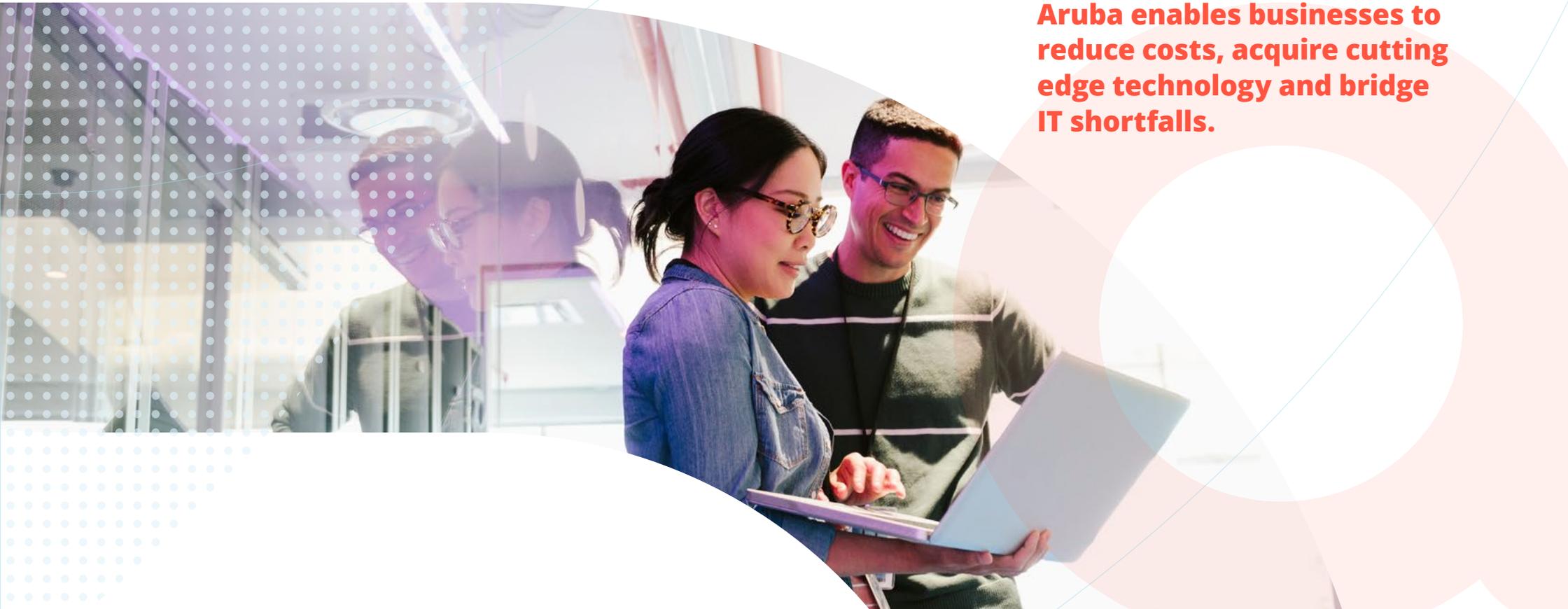
Accelerate your path forward with Aruba

Aruba's technology lays the foundation for progress on many fronts – solving the more immediate challenges and setting you up for a future at the Edge.

Set up your IT team for success today and tomorrow.

Tackle today's challenges and position your business for future growth quickly with Aruba ESP.

- ☑ **Make hybrid working effortless** – Extend your network into employees' homes to provide enterprise-class Wi-Fi to enable productivity.

- ☑ **Reduce time spent on administrative tasks** – Bring automation to your business, free up IT resources and reduce errors.

- ☑ **Overcome skills shortages** – The simplicity of the Aruba AIOps simplifies network management for IT professionals – no special skills required.

- ☑ **Strengthen and simplify security** – Combat sophisticated threats and protect data across your network.

- ☑ **Let financing get you moving** – Aruba's wide variety of financial options enable you to get the network you need today with minimal upfront cost.

- ☑ **Start winning at the Edge** – The shift to the Edge is already starting to unfold, driven by the relentless growth in data from connected devices. Be at the forefront and harness the potential of the Edge with confidence with Aruba ESP.

Ready to let Aruba ESP propel your business forward?
To learn more, visit arubanetworks.com/ArubaESP

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