



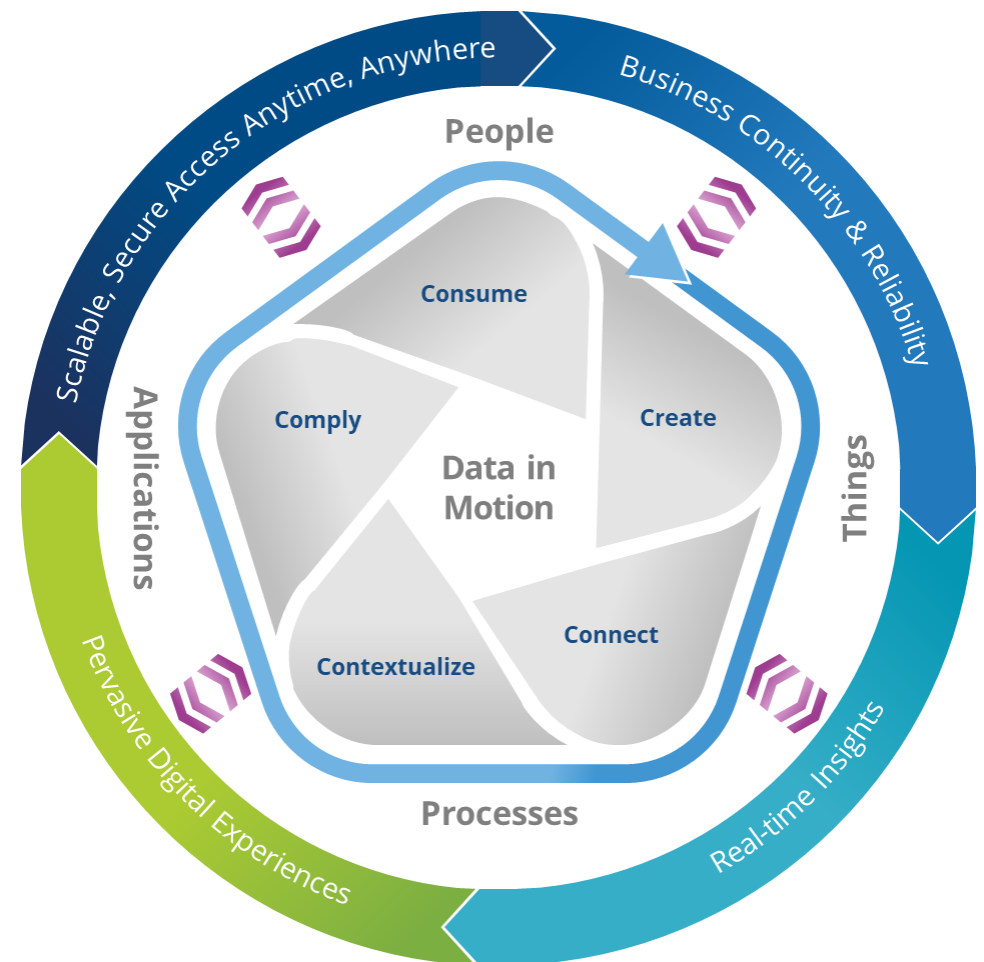
# The Future of Connectedness and the Digital-Native Network



**In the world as it is today, the need for connectivity has become more important than ever. During these uncertain times, the Future of Connectedness is unfolding as consumers and organizations see the value that it provides by allowing them to remain connected, informed, safe, productive, and entertained.**

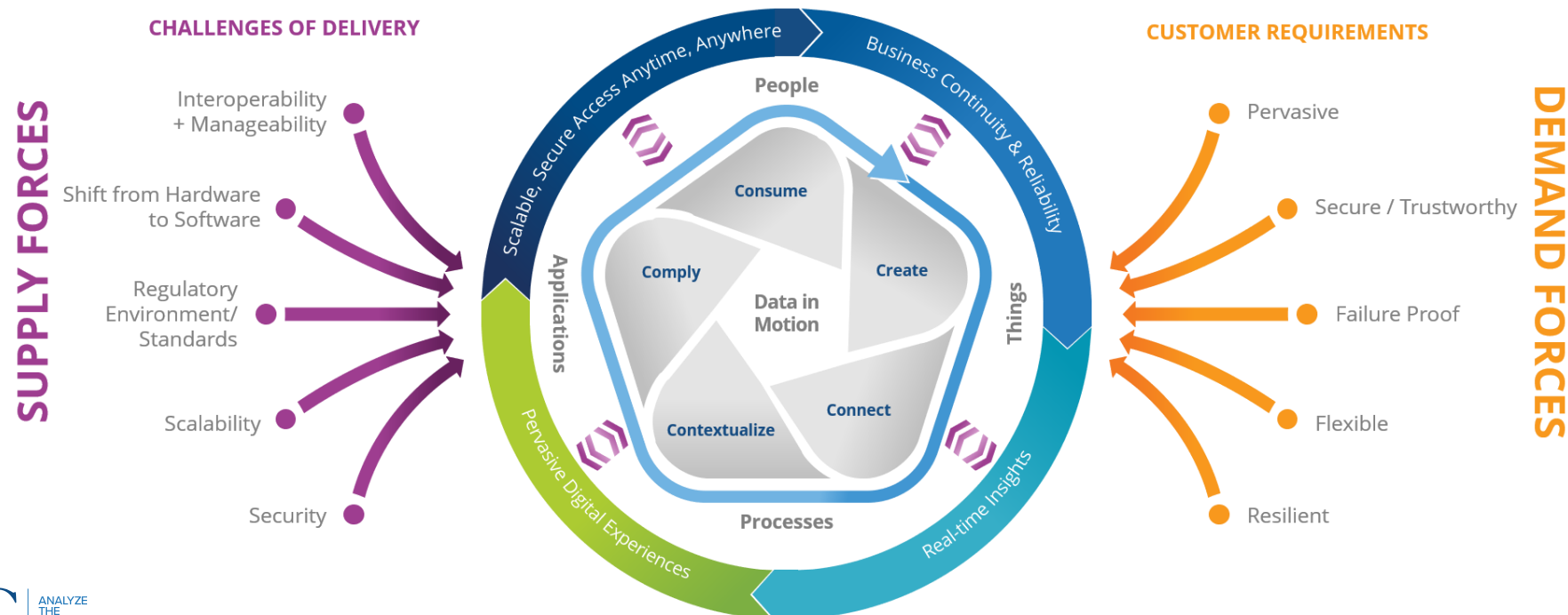
The Future of Connectedness enables the timely movement of data across people, things, applications, and processes to create seamless digital experiences. Under the Future of Connectedness, organizations must aim to change operational processes, drive real-time decision making, create innovative digital services and provide a seamless experience to customers, partners, and employees. IDC has created the Future of Connectedness Continuum, comprising three separate but interdependent layers that must interact seamlessly and continuously: The Cycle of Data, Data Consumers, and Data-Driven Outcomes.

**Connectivity is now recognized as one of the top three strategic elements in the digital transformation of the Future Enterprise transformation.**



For an organization to successfully digitally transform and become what IDC calls a Future Enterprise, it will need to embrace Connectedness, usually in the shape of a digital-native network. This is an application-centric network that supports the right end-user experience for each application and user. While Connectedness is a continuum, there are two separate and important forces powering it:

1. **The Challenges of Delivery** (the Supply side forces). Networks of the future (e.g., 5G, Wi-Fi6, SD-WAN and beyond) will aim to address these challenges and, in the process, power the Future of Connectedness.
2. **Customer Demand** (the Demand side forces). These are universal wishes about an idealized network that are driving delivery innovation.



## The Opportunity for Technology Suppliers

Under the two forces of connectedness, vendors and service providers have the opportunity to build better-than-ever networks. There will be demand and supply-side challenges, but the race to address the challenges will mean a leap in service and network innovation.

The Future of Connectedness calls for an application-centric network that supports the right end-user experience for each application and user.

Organizations are interested in cost effectiveness: achieving an economic balance between growing connectivity requirements and much flatter budgets. Technology suppliers can use this opportunity to focus on delivering that balance as well as improving delivery of experience/engagement. In a world that has become much more virtual, and where the business is shifting to an online, 24/7 environment, the network has become a critical component to ensure and drive higher customer experience.

## Advice for Business Leaders

- **Position the digital network** as a driver of digital transformation. Be sure to build your business case for network transformation on this premise.
- **Identify the key demand-side forces**, which will vary per vertical market, company size segment, and geography. Use these to build your wish list for an idealized state of connectedness.
- **Carefully consider a migration plan.** Map the path from your organization's current architecture to the desired network of the future. Your plan is not all about a wish list but is dependent on the network. The future network should touch both the demand-side and supply-side forces of Connectedness.
- **Know your vendor options.** Be aware of those that are making strides in Connectedness. Consider the following criteria for the supply side of your network: portfolio, partner ecosystem, deployment model, sourcing strategy, and execution power.



Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen how critical it is for information to be created, shared, and consumed in real time. Organizations have moved very quickly to reassess remote working policies and, in the process, emphasized the importance of Connectedness. The performance of many applications depends on the quality of the network. Our hyperconnected reality is driving network requirements to new heights, not just in terms of volumes and bandwidth, but also in terms of flexibility, agility, security, and cost. The Future of Connectedness means that organizations need to look to connectivity as a strategic element to maintaining, sustaining, and growing business operations. It will require additional investment, more strategic planning, and greater oversight.

To learn more about IDC's Future of Connectedness research, contact your Account Representative or read the latest blog, "[The Future of Connectedness – Connectivity's Second Act.](#)"

The IDC report, [The Forces of Connectedness](#) (IDC #US46853620) introduces the concept behind the forces of connectedness for the future of connectedness.

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