

F R O S T & S U L L I V A N

# 2024 COMPANY OF THE YEAR

*IN THE GLOBAL  
MANAGED SASE SERVICE  
INDUSTRY*

LevelB/ue

F R O S T & S U L L I V A N

BEST  
2024 PRACTICES  
AWARD

## Best Practices Criteria for World-Class Performance

Frost & Sullivan applies a rigorous analytical process to evaluate multiple nominees for each award category before determining the final award recipient. The process involves a detailed evaluation of best practices criteria across two dimensions for each nominated company. LevelBlue excels in many of the criteria in the managed SASE service space.

AWARD CRITERIA	
<i>Visionary Innovation &amp; Performance</i>	<i>Customer Impact</i>
Addressing Unmet Needs	Price/Performance Value
Visionary Scenarios Through Mega Trends	Customer Purchase Experience
Implementation of Best Practices	Customer Ownership Experience
Leadership Focus	Customer Service Experience
Financial Performance	Brand Equity

### Organizations Face Challenges in SASE Implementation

In Frost & Sullivan’s 2023 ICT network services survey, 83.2% of organizations worldwide have embraced a flexible work arrangement, with remote employees working from home offices at least once a week.

*“With investments in innovation and an effort to establish SASE expert teams, coupled with long-standing experience in providing managed network and security services, LevelBlue has gained a competitive edge over its close competitors in the global managed SASE service market.”*

**- Vivien Pua**  
**Senior Industry Analyst**

The shift to remote work and increased use of cloud applications have fundamentally changed how businesses consume technologies. As more businesses move their workloads to the cloud, including private, public, and multi-cloud, their physical data center is no longer the focal point of access for remote users and applications.

To facilitate the acceleration of digital initiatives, organizations are looking to transform their networking and security architecture to support the work-from-home requirement better and secure the

highly distributed environment. This trend drives a stronger demand to shift from traditional WAN connectivity, such as multiprotocol label switching (MPLS), to secure software-defined wide area network (SD-WAN) or to embrace secure access service edge (SASE).

Many organizations, however, face challenges in moving to a new SASE architecture. SASE solutions can

be complex to deploy, especially among larger organizations, because of legacy infrastructure and disjointed networking and security functions. Organizations' internal IT or security teams may not have enough knowledge to create the strategy and roadmap for SASE implementation that can address their business needs.

As a result, organizations increasingly turn to service providers, such as managed security service providers (MSSPs), for managed SASE service or consulting services. In addition, these organizations are looking for third-party experts to support their SASE projects, in terms of planning, architecture design, vendor selection, roadmap, implementation, fine-tuning, and ongoing management and monitoring.

### ***Long-standing Experience and Expertise Extend the Leadership Focus and Drive Best Practices Implementation***

LevelBlue, previously known as the cybersecurity division of AT&T Business, has transitioned into an independent entity following a joint venture between WillJam Ventures and AT&T. Now operating under the name LevelBlue, the company has been delivering cybersecurity services for over 25 years and AT&T Business has been delivering network services for over 100 years, providing it with the unique position to deliver managed SASE services. LevelBlue has ownership of the managed network security, MDR, and cybersecurity consulting services, making it one of the largest security services providers globally. With LevelBlue integrate its comprehensive security capabilities with AT&T's networking solutions, enabling the managed SASE service to secure workloads for physical datacenters, cloud environments, edge computing, and users across multiple branches and remote sites. It's continued partnership with AT&T and extensive experience in delivering both networking and security services differentiates LevelBlue from other close competitors, making it a trusted partner to support organizations' transition to SASE.

LevelBlue was among the first service providers to launch managed SASE service to the market in 2021. The company offers complete SASE service, including SD-WAN, cloud access security broker (CASB), secure web gateway (SWG), zero trust network access (ZTNA), and firewall as a service (FWaaS). LevelBlue collaborates with leading SASE vendors, such as Palo Alto Networks, Cisco, VMware, and Fortinet, to offer a managed SASE service that suits organizations of all sizes. Recognizing that many organizations will need assistance for a smooth transition to SASE, LevelBlue has skilled and experienced network and security professionals who provide managed SASE service and consulting services, including assessment, design, and implementation.

In addition, LevelBlue has been continually expanding its engineering team and has introduced an expert engineer role to go deep into detailed design and configuration to achieve the best outcome from the managed SASE service. The company has rolled out mini labs into these engineering teams so that they can be trained continually with new SASE capabilities as the technology continues to evolve. With investments in innovation and an effort to establish SASE expert teams, coupled with long-standing experience in providing managed network and security services, LevelBlue has gained a competitive edge over its close competitors in the global managed SASE service market.

*“Frost & Sullivan commends LevelBlue for differentiating from competitors by building a strong vertical sales and marketing strategy and dedicated support to deliver an effective SASE implementation that is aligned with customers' business needs.”*

**- Vivien Pua**  
**Senior Industry Analyst**

### **Addressing Industry Demand with a Comprehensive Cybersecurity Services Offering**

LevelBlue understands that customers will increasingly look for integration between SASE and other security service areas, including managed detection and response (MDR), incident response, endpoint security, and vulnerability management. As a result, the company is developing an overlay service management platform that is built on top of LevelBlue's USM Anywhere platform, a software-as-a-

service (SaaS) security monitoring solution that centralizes threat detection, incident response, and compliance management across all types of environments. In 2024, the management platform will provide enhanced data sharing and platform integration across all security services, a unified dashboard, and a centralized customer portal for an improved customer experience and flexibility in adding services based on their needs.

Leveraging the comprehensive managed security services (MSS) offering and extensive expertise in cybersecurity, LevelBlue can expand the integration beyond SASE service into other MSS and security operation center (SOC) services through this centralized platform. The company, therefore, distinguishes itself from other competitors that only focus on providing standalone SASE or MDR services and may have limitations in addressing evolving customer expectations with a comprehensive cybersecurity service offering.

### **Building Trust through a Positive Customer Purchase and Service Experience**

LevelBlue structures the enterprise business into the following four groups: manufacturing and transportation, retail, finance, and industry solutions that cover all other verticals. This approach provides dedicated support to meet customer needs, such as tailored marketing, operations, and specialized indirect partners. Each of these vertical groups is supported by specialized sub-vertical teams, including case-driven marketing, product management, and sales teams. Similarly, the company applies a vertical-focused sales and marketing strategy for mid-market segments, primarily focusing on healthcare, manufacturing, transportation, retail, professional services, tech, and media.

Most of LevelBlue's customers are still dealing with legacy technology stacks, making it more challenging to shift to the new SASE architecture that cuts across networking and security stakeholders. LevelBlue specializes in helping these types of customers embrace SASE with cybersecurity consulting services that focus on SASE strategy planning, roadmap, engineering and design, and implementation. The consulting team works closely with the MSS team to execute the transition to SASE, helping customers achieve the best outcomes from the SASE implementation.

In addition, LevelBlue offers a 'try before you buy' SASE service that includes a zero-cost proof-of-concept (POC) environment to support network, security, cloud, and connectivity platforms; agile deployment that showcases how the solutions are designed to address customers' business challenges; dedicated SASE workshops to address customers' specific use cases; and a structured engagement and delivery process to provide customers with a mini-managed service experience.

Frost & Sullivan commends LevelBlue for differentiating from competitors by building a strong vertical sales and marketing strategy and dedicated support to deliver an effective SASE implementation that is aligned with customers' business needs.

### ***Strong Business Track Record Led to High Brand Loyalty***

Following the acceleration of digital technology adoption to meet changing customer expectations, financial institutions have a stronger need to modernize the network and security architecture by converging networking and security functions for better network performance, workforce productivity, and customer experience. With its strong business track record of supporting leading financial institutions, LevelBlue deployed SASE solutions for a financial company, supporting more than 50 domestic sites and more than 1,000 remote employees. Customers want high-performance networks to process time-sensitive financial transactions, transform the banking experience into a 'Branch of the Future' for improved digital customer and employee experiences, and provide reliable network access and cloud application performance for remote employees.

LevelBlue supports customers with an SASE readiness plan, solution design, deployment, integrated Fortinet's security and networking functions into one platform with optimized security policy practices, and 24/7 security monitoring services from LevelBlue's SOC. A successful SASE deployment provides customers with improved network performance and resilience; centralized security management; faster access to SaaS and cloud applications with lower operating costs; and a future-proof, scalable SASE platform that can add on additional security features based on customer needs.

In addition to supporting financial companies, LevelBlue has a strong track record of supporting leading organizations in the healthcare and retail sectors. These three sectors are the largest vertical segments for LevelBlue's managed SASE service. With such a well-established brand name among these key industries, LevelBlue continues to strengthen its market leadership position in the global managed SASE service market.

## **Conclusion**

---

LevelBlue's strong global market leadership position is primarily based on its continual investment in innovation, strong commitment to expanding its SASE expert team, vertical-focused approach to address customer needs, dedication to providing high-quality customer service, and strong track record in supporting leading organizations in the financial services, healthcare, and retail industries. This strategic combination enables the company to achieve a competitive edge in the market and remain the top-of-mind choice among enterprises worldwide.

With its strong overall performance, LevelBlue earns Frost & Sullivan's 2024 global Company of the Year Award in the managed SASE service industry.

## What You Need to Know about the Company of the Year Recognition

---

Frost & Sullivan's Company of the Year Award is its top honor and recognizes the market participant that exemplifies visionary innovation, market-leading performance, and unmatched customer care.

### Best Practices Award Analysis

For the Company of the Year Award, Frost & Sullivan analysts independently evaluated the criteria listed below.

#### *Visionary Innovation & Performance*

**Addressing Unmet Needs:** Customers' unmet or under-served needs are unearthed and addressed by a robust solution development process

**Visionary Scenarios Through Mega Trends:**

Long-range, macro-level scenarios are incorporated into the innovation strategy through the use of Mega Trends, thereby enabling first-to-market solutions and new growth opportunities

**Leadership Focus:** Company focuses on building a leadership position in core markets and on creating stiff barriers to entry for new competitors

**Best Practices Implementation:** Best-in-class implementation is characterized by processes, tools, or activities that generate a consistent and repeatable level of success

**Financial Performance:** Strong overall business performance is achieved in terms of revenue, revenue growth, operating margin, and other key financial metrics

#### *Customer Impact*

**Price/Performance Value:** Products or services provide the best value for the price compared to similar market offerings

**Customer Purchase Experience:** Quality of the purchase experience assures customers that they are buying the optimal solution for addressing their unique needs and constraints

**Customer Ownership Experience:** Customers proudly own the company's product or service and have a positive experience throughout the life of the product or service

**Customer Service Experience:** Customer service is accessible, fast, stress-free, and high quality

**Brand Equity:** Customers perceive the brand positively and exhibit high brand loyalty

