



## Ken's Korner

### SELECTING A HOSTING DATA CENTER

More and more businesses, large and small, are beginning to reach a point where their data needs have outstripped their in-house computing capabilities. Instead of spending the capital or devoting resources to upgrade their infrastructure, they are seriously considering contracting with a retail data center to host their data. Your concerns when outsourcing data hosting are the same as when it is on-site, access, availability, reliability, security, and cost.

The following checklist identifies some of the key features I would ask, from a facilities stand point, when evaluating a data center for future hosting purposes.

#### LOCATION

Is the data center located in an area that is subjected to weather issues such as:

- ☐ Flooding
- ☐ Hurricanes
- ☐ Tornados
- ☐ Earthquakes
- ☐ Ask what steps if any are being taken to limit downtime related to the exposure to these natural occurrences.

#### UTILITY

- ☐ Check on the history of power outages experienced by existing customers.
- ☐ Does the data center have multiple substations feeding the building?
- ☐ What are the power rates, this can effect your overall cost?

#### FACILITY & SECURITY

- ☐ Does the outside perimeter of the building have some type of safety barrier such as fencing?
- ☐ How secure do the entrances appear? Does the data center have both an inner and outer door? I like it when the inner door won't open until the outer door is closed, in effect creating an air barrier. This helps to keep positive air pressure in the building.
- ☐ Key card readers, biometric scanners, are they being used and where?
- ☐ Does the site have 24x7 security staffing to ensure only authorized personnel are able to enter the data center?
- ☐ Are there raised floor rules posted on all entrance doors to the raised floor and are they strictly enforced?
- ☐ Do they have fire detection systems both above below the raised floor?
- ☐ Do they have an automatic fire suppression system in the event a fire breaks out to protect your equipment and the building itself?
- ☐ Are there EPO buttons by all exit doors and do all staff fully understand what these are and when and why they should be engaged?

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### BACKUP POWER

- ☐ Do they have redundant UPS modules?
- ☐ Do they keep UPS replacement parts onsite?
- ☐ Do they have a vendor maintenance contract for their UPS system and batteries with a guarantee to arrive on site within four hours?
- ☐ What is the type and age of the UPS batteries and are they being properly maintained and monitored?
- ☐ Do they have back-up diesel generators with N+1 redundancy?
- ☐ Is there a maintenance contract in place for their generators?
- ☐ Are the generators exercised under a load at least once per month to ensure they will work when needed?
- ☐ How many hours of fuel do they keep on site in the event of a utility outage?
- ☐ Do they have more than one fuel vendor to ensure fast delivery if they experience a long outage?
- ☐ Is the diesel fuel tested at least twice per year to ensure it has no contaminants such as bacterial growth in the onsite fuel tanks?

### FACILITY STAFFING

- ☐ Is there a 24x7 facilities staff onsite to handle issues at a moment's notice?
- ☐ How well trained are the facility staff on the overall operation of the data center?
- ☐ Check the cleanliness of the data center?
- ☐ Are all packaging removed prior to be brought into the raised floor area?
- ☐ Are any combustible materials sitting around the raised or left stored in server cabinets?

### COOLING

- ☐ Is there ample cooling capacity for your server cabinets with room for growth?
- ☐ Are there N+1 cooling components, i.e. cooling towers, CRAC/CRAH units and chillers?
- ☐ Do they have a contract with a vendor to provide needed chemicals and best practices for their cooling system?
- ☐ Are they utilizing hot/cold isle configuration for servers on the raised floor?
- ☐ Are they running their power and communications whips in the hot aisles and brush grommets for the tile cutouts. All of these practices will cut cooling costs which in the end can save you rental costs?

### ELECTRICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- ☐ What type of maintenance program to they employ for the critical power paths?
- ☐ Is switch-gear cleaned, IR tested and inspected at least once per year?
- ☐ Are the PDU/RPP' cleaned, buss connections torque settings checked and all circuit breakers tested prior to being installed and exercised at least every three years?
- ☐ Are the power whips UL listed, properly tested prior to being energized and proper labeled on each end as well ad PDU/RPP directories labeled?
- ☐ Is there a good documented disaster recovery plan for the entire data center?

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