Considerations for Colocation

Has your business reached a point were hosting your own IT infrastructure internally is no longer a viable option for your sustainable long-term strategy? Or perhaps your current DC isn't doing your business enough justice?

With data, things aren't always straightforward – cloud-based businesses recognise the complexity of data centre moves.

What is Colocation?

Colocation has been around for years but is currently seen a resurgence in the number of businesses opting in for a Colocation Data Centre. Colo gives businesses control, security, dedicated power, and bandwidth, with an always-on approach for servers.

Businesses looking to make the move to cloud services usually either have internal racks within their office or already have infrastructure hosted and rented in at least one or more racks in a DC.

Considerations of Colocation:

Location

Connectivity

Security

Support

Compliance

Scalability

Disaster Preparedness

Cost

Location

Many businesses instantly opt for the closest DC for colocation to them, but a strategic location is more of a necessity – what works for your business in one DC may not necessarily work for another Colocation provider regardless of location. For example, if there is a DC housing colocation near you but it is located as a high-risk of natural disasters point, would you as a business opt for this strategically because of proximity, or rent a rack somewhere further away, that is near a key internet exchange point high above the ground with a much lower chance of natural disasters occurring. Thinking strategically like this helps further safeguard and secure your business's critical information. Or do you opt for 24/7 support or remote hands services?

It is a very crucial consideration for a business to make when investing in extra rack space to coincide with your business's changing requirements.

Connectivity

Tied in with location, a DC's connectivity plays a significant role in whether a DC is right for a business. If a business requires access to a particular region, it is often they choose one closer to their location. Having a good range of connectivity options ensures access to numerous locations for a fast and reliable network but provides the convenience of choice.

Security

Peace of mind is a primary benefit for colocation. Knowing that your business assets are secure and maintained enables businesses to continue doing their work without a second thought. Security is of high importance when evaluating providers. Within DCs, all aspects and technologies need to be fully up to date, with layered security measures and equipment to manage and maintain racks. Redundancy provides that extra level of security, with equipment, personnel, or storage in the event of a failure - all equipment (generators, air conditioning systems, etc) are monitored regularly for the best protection.

Support

A highly skilled support team can make a difference when it comes to data centre providers; just because a data centre may be local to your business, doesn't necessarily mean it is the best option for your business IT infrastructure. Most data centres nationwide offer 24/7 offsite support, making it more convenient for quick response issues i.e. reboots, or cross-connect installs.

Compliance

Staying up to date on the latest tech industry standards is a good way to carve out whether the business is taking all the necessary stages possible to protect their critical information. Compliance refers to the controls, processes, and procedures that evaluate a data centre's overall security. Most common compliance standards include SSAE 16 (SOC 1, SOC 2 & SOC 3), PCI DSS, LEED, and HIPAA.

Disaster Preparedness

A way to ensure business' critical assets are protected. First and foremost, a DC should have a redundant infrastructure in place – giving an "extra layer" of equipment, personnel, or storage that guarantees backup in the event of an outage or other unexpected event. Redundancy should function across all critical areas – generators, batteries, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, water, power, and telephone lines, as reinforcement will ensure that the facility can operate independently of the main system controls in an emergency. Furthermore, data centres should be able to produce a well-documented emergency response plan – a breakdown of steps to be taken before, during, and after a disaster.

Scalability

Does the DC facility have the necessary capacity to expand your business's IT infrastructure? As a business grows, the requirements change, and the need for expansion may be needed. Facilities that offer a variety of customized solutions to fit industry needs to provide businesses with the flexibility to scale their solution as needed.

Cost

Naturally, the cost is going to be one of the first considerations for any business looking to outsource their IT needs. Budgeting is the core to any decisions being made in a long-term strategy. Colocation offers viable packages with a range of pricing, giving various price levels. The amount a business pays for colocation services will likely depend on a variety of factors including power, facility size, supply and demand, connectivity, bandwidth, and security. In understanding each of the individualized components that tie into a robust colocation solution, one can be better aware of the potential costs of colocation.