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DATA CENTRE SUSTAINABILITY

Going green is no longer just a public relations decision, but rather a critical choice for ensuring the continuation of a business. Richard Jenkins, Vice President, Marketing & Strategic Partnerships, RF Code, explains why ignoring data centre sustainability affects more than just your business.

So why should businesses suddenly take note? Well, Greenpeace alone expects the global demand for data centre related electricity to quadruple by 2020.

When we consider the fact that facilities already consume 1.2 per cent of global power (and 2 per cent in the US (451 Research)), it becomes an issue worth paying attention to.

Even more astounding is that there are approximately 13,000 data centres spread across the world - a figure that will continue to grow as data-focused services increase in popularity, especially as the developing world begins to introduce its huge population to mobile devices and better telecommunications infrastructure.

Stopping the riot

So the demand for data centre environmental control is definitely clear. The prospect of a significant percentage of the world's power being used by data centres in 2020 (a particularly reserved estimate if we consider data's already incredible growth in Western society) means businesses need to make strategic decisions now to create an efficient facility at the core of their operations.
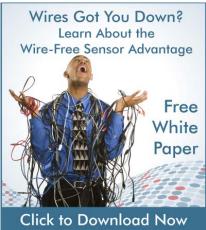
However, it is not just a case of reducing carbon emissions. There are direct benefits for businesses that recognise the advantages of sustainable best practice.

First, picture a data centre in disarray: Assets have been misplaced, staff are constantly fighting fires (metaphorical, hopefully), equipment is not running at optimum conditions, there are unsolvable environmental stresses, power costs are spiralling out of control and the auditors have arrived unannounced with large financial penalties in hand.

This may be a drastic image, but many of these concerns currently affect businesses in some form or another. Generally complications like those above

are a result of a single recurring issue: a lack of real-time data centre visibility.

After all, how can management maintain assets if they are unsure where they have been moved to? Cooling-related costs are unattainable because there is a lack of actionable environmental information. Regulatory consequences keep occurring because businesses cannot answer crucial auditor questions.

The knock-on effects are easy to recognise – financial penalties, regular downtime, a lack of scalability, big data and mobile services unpreparedness, higher asset operating costs and time-intensive labour processes.

conditions of their assets can react to IT fluctuations better.

The data centre management strategy is no longer reactive, but proactive. If an asset is radiating more heat or moisture than those around it, it can be removed for maintenance rather than being left to damage the assets around it and as a result, create more drastic problems.

Environmentally, businesses can also more effectively implement ASHRAE guidelines - the global standards that state data centre assets do not need to be run as coldly as many businesses think.

The benefits behind building an ASHRAE-compliant facility are obvious:

efficiency, which then filters down across the business for organisation-wide improvements.

A better business world

'Green' is no longer an IT offshoot designed to publically showcase corporate credibility. Instead, it has become (and arguably has always been) an embedded business belief that should be considered at every point of the IT ecosystem.

Every business wants to be leaner, more agile and better positioned to cope with market developments, and having a data centre that is prepared to respond ensures just that.

Focusing on sustainability means businesses can plan further into the future with greater accuracy and thus eliminate any inefficiencies that may not have been evident before. Real-time visibility is at the core of this forecasting process. If the right solutions are implemented within the data centre, businesses can be secure in the knowledge that their corporate expectations will be met.

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No CEO wants their business to be suffering the above, which is why data centre sustainability, optimisation and consolidation are of such critical importance.

Unleashing the solution

To increase profits and cut costs, businesses need a data centre that is running within budget, at optimal conditions and, most importantly, without mystery. Implementing real-time asset management alongside environmental monitoring can eradicate hidden dangers in the data centre and give management the clarity they need to begin solving complications.

Businesses that can see the live

raising temperatures means less cooling is needed; a reduction in cooling is mirrored by power and its associated savings and those savings can then be reallocated to other areas of the business for more effective use.

Forward-thinking businesses have realised real-time visibility is no longer a 'nice-to-have' component of the data centre, but rather a 'must have' – an essential feature for every facility and IT department. It not only improves departmental accountability, but it also helps bridge the gap between financial directorship and IT management; a necessary bringing together of departments that yields better business

Uncontrollable power costs will no longer be a factor impacting the bottom line, nor will failing assets, which can cause irreparable damage to the IT ecosystem.

Businesses can move from damage control and panicked capacity control to years-in-the-future planning procedures that accommodate new technology, large-scale data growth and the undeniable rising cost of fuel.