

Growing your Data Centre estate?

10 Reasons to consider an infrastructure specialist.

A guide for IT Managers, Network Managers and anyone who uses Data Centres

Public and private Data Centres are growing rapidly as companies put more and more storage and applications into dedicated facilities for security, availability and the benefits of virtualisation and cloud computing.

However IT Managers in Systems Integrators, Service Providers and Cloud companies all face the same dilemma;

Do you:

Build your own facility;

Rent colocation in a number of facilities and manage multiple providers; or

Focus on one or two sites hoping to fit all customers into them?

Systems Integrators, Service providers and Cloud companies all want to have a large element of control to create their own product offerings to meet their clients' needs but with control comes complexity; Multiple data centre contracts, multiple carrier contracts, power, IP Transit, and how to accommodate growth and changing client demands.

One way to deal with this and focus on your applications, services and end-users is to use a specialist, wholesale infrastructure provider which provides colocation in multiple data centres, connectivity between sites and IP transit, all under a single contract with support tools that let you keep track of customers, facilities and bandwidth usage .

What benefits are there in partnering with an Infrastructure Specialist for your data centre and connectivity?

- 1. No Capex.** Sourcing from an infrastructure specialist means you don't have to sink a large amount of money into your own Data Centre or dedicated suite. Capacity can be added in line with your business growth.
- 2. No risk.** What happens if the Data Centre market is flooded with capacity, colocation rates fall and you are left with an expensive facility driving your cost base higher than your competitors? Better to add capacity at current market rates as you need it.
- 3. Network Connectivity.** Building your own data centre is a time-consuming task and finding the right site with enough power for today and in ten years time is a hard enough task without adding in the variable of cost-effective network availability. By using a specialist,

you can choose sites with multiple carrier connections and high bandwidth connections at cost-effective prices.

4. **Location Flexibility.** If you build your own data centres or take dedicated suites in large facilities you will end up always trying to fit customers' requirements to your facilities' locations. By using a specialist partner for your physical infrastructure you can meet your customers' needs every time, no matter whether they want 2 racks in Wakefield, 10 in Docklands, or 100 on the M4 corridor. An Infrastructure Partner can support this geographic reach through its own dedicated network.
5. **Technical Flexibility.** If you outsource only the physical infrastructure you can remain in control of the equipment, match it to your applications and your customers' needs and win more business.
6. **Cost Flexibility.** No two customers are alike. They all have different trade-offs in term of price and functionality. One buyer's low cost, low-profile DC site is another buyer's converted cash & carry warehouse. By outsourcing physical infrastructure you have access to a range of Data Centres to meet every budget.
7. **Flexible growth.** If you decide to lease a big hall to get the best price and secure your own dedicated space there will always be space available and not earning revenue until it is full. However if you start with just a few racks and grow, all the racks may not be in the same hall, or close together. An infrastructure partner has greater buying power and can often secure flexible deals with space reserved for future growth and its developed support tools and processes help you manage an estate spread over several sites.
8. **Future-Proof.** Using an infrastructure specialist you can source the newest and best facilities every time, making your customer proposition always up-to-date. If the customer wants cold aisle containment, low PUE, green power and Tier 4 reliability – you can offer it without expensive upgrades to existing real-estate.
9. **Customer retention.** As customer contracts expire you can offer to renew in the same site or relocate them to a newer, better, faster, greener site and not lose them to the competition.
10. **Customer Acquisition.** Analysts at Quocirca warned in May 2011 that **UK data centres must improve** if the country is to remain a financial powerhouse. It found that the majority of organisations are having trouble ensuring that existing data centre facilities meet the changing needs of their businesses. You can place your business at the top of the list of suppliers by being able to meet your customers' needs through the right Data Centre combined with the right network connections.

Summary

IT managers are driving down costs and creating products for customers that increasingly rely on equipment located in data centres. As the demand for DC space grows, IT managers face the decision to build their own facilities, rent infrastructure in an existing DC or outsource everything including equipment to an Infrastructure as a Service provider.

There are major risks associated with capital expenditure in a dynamic, technical industry like data centres and building and owning a data centre is not for everyone.

Renting space in a single or pair of Data Centres means buying into the strategy of the Data Centre owners and having a limited portfolio of prices and technical specifications. Flexibility is limited and the DC specification may gradually become out-of-date with time.

Using an IaaS provider restricts the choice and flexibility of equipment and the ability to easily adapt to changing standards and customer demands.

Partnering with an Infrastructure Specialist leaves IT managers free to match specification and location to end-user demands and to build and operate their own hardware and applications. Varied locations and network connections are all accommodated under a single contract and SLA.

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