
Optimizing Colocation Infrastructure Strategies



Information Technology (IT) has never been more strategic to businesses of all kinds. The cloud, big data, social media and mobile technologies are creating new opportunities to serve customers, enable workforce collaboration, and keep costs under control. IT's high strategic profile, thanks to these new business initiatives, is placing new pressures on servers, storage, and networks – as well as the data center infrastructure on which they rely.

Colocations around the world are responding in several ways. This white paper addresses how to gain maximum value from current and new data center infrastructure to mitigate risk and achieve greater cost efficiencies.



Change happens quickly in business today. Opportunities develop suddenly and just as quickly they are gone. Colocation providers must respond by rapidly launching new business initiatives and marshaling IT infrastructure to support them. The key to remain competitive for colocation business leaders is to ensure elasticity throughout the operation.

To capitalize on unexpected opportunities and be highly agile for customers, colocation providers must quickly launch enhanced systems and services to meet the need of the ever-changing landscape of technology. At the same time, maintain and keep core IT systems up and running with greater efficiency than ever in the face of tight budgets or resource limitations.

Enabling Agility

Many colocation leaders are pursuing an agile and scalable business and IT structure. With the right infrastructure foundation, colocation's can provide more space for critical workloads, enhance security, and give customers the freedom to concentrate on core competencies rather than managing and maintaining infrastructure. Encompassing a complete system of engagement also improves the ability to add resources quickly as customer needs change. To provide this security and elasticity, colocation leaders should understand how to accommodate an agile space for customers:



Technology innovation. As a colocation it is critical new technology is constantly scaled and implemented to meet data trend demands. The colocation will need to gain the benefits of the latest advances while avoiding IT lifecycle expenses. This is also beneficial to customers as they are able to focus on their core business.



Distributing accountability. Solid service level agreements (SLA) are desirable to prove the provider is sharing the responsibility of high performing data center infrastructure and services.



Real estate cost avoidance. A driver for selecting a colocation facility is to eliminate costs, potentially millions of dollars, of building or adding onto a data center. As a provider, the more attractive your solutions and services investment and management is, the more likely you will beat the competition.



Staff savings. Using a colocation means your customer's need less on-premises IT equipment, therefore there is less need to recruit, train, and compensate skilled experts to manage it.

Supporting Critical Workloads

Colocation providers need physical data center infrastructure of the highest caliber. The solutions should be geared to deliver maximum efficiency, agility and scalability. Solutions should include:

- 1 Converged infrastructure.** The solution should be part of a full line of data center infrastructure equipment so there is no need to deal with multiple suppliers, purchase substandard aftermarket equipment, or mix and match infrastructure components, which could lead to compatibility issues.
- 2 Monitoring solutions.** A full-featured monitoring solution provides complete visibility into select colocation spaces. This helps improve power usage, space utilization, thermal management, and tracking assets.
- 3 The right fit.** Equipment should be designed to work together so it can be deployed without delay. Prompt deployment prevents potentially lost revenue due to lags in uptime.

Colocation's may provide a lot or a little infrastructure, ranging from a complete managed service to a minimalist approach. Since each arrangement is tailored to the unique requirements of each customer, "The provider may acquire the infrastructure of a customer, then run and manage it in the hosted facility. However, a customer with lots of data center experience may just ask for electrical power and install its own standard infrastructure for things like cabinets and cabling," notes Paliga. It is the tenant's IT leader's job to pay close attention to the physical infrastructure – whether provided by the colocation, or their own installment. It is a task that can be greatly assisted by the right tools. By offering a full-featured data center intelligent monitoring solution, the tenant will experience a more successful engagement with the hosting provider by helping to manage:



Electrical power. Tenants are looking to reduce electrical costs by minimizing power use. By offering a comprehensive monitoring system, the tenant will gain visibility into whether power is being used economically or not. Providing this type of control garners trust and allows the tenant to better manage their on-premise and hosted facilities costs.



Space. A robust monitoring system presents an accurate map of the tenant's hosted facility space and the equipment within it. The space used within the facility should be conserved, since rent typically depends on the amount of space occupied. If the tenant needs to expand, it will be easier to accomplish if space is already being used efficiently.



Thermal risk management. Although a tenant may receive ambient temperature readings from a colocation base contract, it may not supply readings for individual pieces of equipment. To provide more control, visibility and improve SLA agreements, a full-featured monitoring system will help. This system will provide complete thermal information to help avert problems before they occur. This helps mitigate risk, secure uptime and avoid unnecessary costs.



Physical security. Preventing unauthorized access to IT assets, as well as permitting access by authorized administrators is critical. By housing cabinets with locking doors, with local or remote accessibility, will greatly help keep infrastructure safe. To add another layer of security, monitoring systems will document each time a cabinet is accessed and should trigger alarms for unauthorized access. A security camera to monitor assets is also desirable.



Compliance. Responsibility for regulatory compliance continues even when IT equipment and the data they contain are housed at a colocation. It is always best practice to ensure assets provided are compliant. Assets may be audited for compliance with security standards such as Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) for health care providers and Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) for retail and financial services companies.



Conclusion

The evolution of technology is becoming more and more challenging for colocations to keep pace with and prepare for what is coming. Because of this, the importance of colocations to be highly elastic is critical. An effective strategy to enable agility, scalability and efficiency, particularly for systems of engagement, is to augment current infrastructure. Fully deployed monitoring systems gives visibility and the power to manage performance. Colocations must also ensure new deployments are inclusive of the most innovative and future focused infrastructure to adapt seamlessly with technology advancements.

The result: Stabilized costs for all parties involved, more security, growth, and achieve measurable ROI.

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