

Customer Care Series for Tenant Brokers: Colocation for Your Client's IT Infrastructure



Whether your client is in the market for additional office space for anticipated growth or is in downsizing mode, a solid data center strategy is key to any successful real estate deal. While space is certainly a concern for any data center, there are a number of other critical factors, from “storm-hardened” construction to 24/7 on site security, backup power generation and Uninterrupted Power Supply, to N+1 redundancy for the HVAC and other critical systems. When you can't meet all your client's needs in a single location, a data center colocation (or off-premise) may be the ideal solution.

Benefits of Colocation

- **Scalability** : The amount of data center space can expand or be reduced as your client's needs change so you can focus on the company's core needs.
- **Turnkey Solution** : There is no need for special buildouts or retrofits for the data center facility, so the space acquisition and move can occur faster.
- **Best-in-Class Technology** : The data center infrastructure is already in place, so your client can focus on running their business rather than designing a new space.
- **Dedicated Customer Service** : An oriented team of professionals managing critical infrastructure and providing 24/7 on-site support.

Key Questions

When you begin working with a client who has data center concerns, below are a few key questions to help you get the conversation started.

1. Is your client open to an off-premise (colocation) solution?
2. Who is the decision maker regarding the IT infrastructure?
3. Who are the influencers?
4. Do they have a business continuity plan?
5. How many racks do they currently occupy? What are their projected long-term needs?
6. What is their monthly power consumption?
7. What are their network bandwidth needs?
8. Do critical personnel need a storm safe disaster recovery workspace? If so, how many employees must it accommodate?

The next page is an inventory of key considerations when selecting a colocation data center. As you present colocation options, you can use it as a guide for the conversation or give it to your client so they can evaluate the options.





Colocation Data Center Facility Inventory

When evaluating a colocation data center facility, carefully consider all the factors listed below for each facility you visit. This choice is a complex one that will affect the health and growth potential of your company for years to come.

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Facility Name: _____

Date Visited: _____

Location		Acceptable	Not Acceptable
Drive Time	Most IT professionals consider an acceptable distance between the primary office and collocated data center to be less than 120 miles.		
Accessibility	The data center should be located near major roadways that have remained clear during past natural disasters.		
Geography	The data center should be located outside of an earthquake or flood zone (ideally outside of a 500-year floodplain).		

Building		Acceptable	Not Acceptable
Construction	The data center should be constructed or retrofitted in a way that makes it “storm-hardened,” which dramatically reduces the likelihood of damage from natural disasters and loss of access. This process typically involves concrete construction and a hurricane force wind-rated roof.		
Windows	Installation of blast guard window film—the type used in U.S. embassies to protect against bomb blasts—is necessary to prevent water penetration, damage, and injuries from flying glass and debris.		



Infrastructure		Acceptable	Not Acceptable
100% Uptime SLA	Since the integrity of your data is dependent upon power, cooling and Internet service, a 100% uptime service level agreement (SLA) is critical. The right continuity plans also must be in place to back the guarantee.		
Internet	The Internet should be a blended solution that incorporates at least three different services so when one goes out, two backups remain.		
N+1 Redundancy for HVAC	The environment inside the data center can never change, so insist on redundancy and concurrent maintainability for the critical systems delivering cooling. If a component of the system goes down, the infrastructure ensures functionality even in the event of a component failure.		
Backup Generator	Backup generator should provide 100% coverage for the entire facility at full capacity for a minimum of 24 hours without refueling. Generator(s) must be run and load-tested on a regular basis. Your partner should maintain two or more geographically diverse fuel suppliers should be on standby.		
Replication	Critical data might need replication to a second data center that is geographically situated in an area not susceptible to the same natural disasters to ensure seamless access and recovery.		

Onsite Support		Acceptable	Not Acceptable
Phone Access	All phone calls should be answered by personnel at the data center rather than from a call center in a different location.		
24/7 Tech Support	It's important to reach someone 24/7 physically staffing the data center trained to handle any number of immediate requests, from checking lights and cables to replacing hard drives and racking equipment shipped to the data center.		



Access & Security		Acceptable	Not Acceptable
Secure Access	Biometric and/or access cards based on multi-factor authentication will help assure secure access. Onsite personnel also must maintain a current list of approved employees (of customers) should they forget or misplace their access credentials.		
24/7 Security	The data center must be a safe, secure place with 24/7 onsite security guards. Closed-circuit TV systems should be monitored in real-time, with footage archived for at least 30 days.		
Access Points	All doors must have alarms to alert security personnel when they don't close properly, as well as constructed in a manner that prevents "piggy-backing" on someone else's credentials.		

Amenities		Acceptable	Not Acceptable
Resilient Office Space	Space for mission-critical employees to pick up and move to in emergency situations is vital for business continuity. It should be adjacent to or near the data center, have similar resiliency with generator backup power, available UPS, and a dark fiber cross connection to the data center environment.		
Dining & Lodging	Business continuity office facilities must be located near dining and lodging options, which is especially important when extended stays are required.		
Comforts	When tensions are high, it's often the smallest comforts that make the biggest difference. See if colocation personnel are willing to go the extra mile to make your team comfortable, like stocking your team's favorite foods and drinks.		

Overall Impressions:

Questions:

