

Reasons Data Center Owners May Not Be Sleeping At Night

The data center industry is on the cusp of the next cycle in its maturation as a business sector. Infusion of capital, a push towards outsourcing, higher density and peaking utilization rates, the disruptive nature of hyperscale companies and further advancement of edge computing are a few of the dynamics that are shaping our industry.



But while business is trending favorably for the data center sector, data center owners are questioning how these changes influence how they can, or more importantly, how they should operate their critical facilities. Paramount of them: What is the primary motivation and mission of my critical facility management provider? Is it protecting and operating my most critical assets, or winning a contract and chasing a financial goal?

According to Uptime Institute's 2019 Data Center Industry Survey, one-third of data centers experienced a service outage in the past year. Gartner has reported the average cost of data center downtime is \$5,600 per minute, with another study reporting 70% of all data center and critical facility downtime being attributed to human error. Delta Airlines is still haunted by their 2016 data center outage that grounded over 2,000 flights, cost the company over \$150 million and tarnished Delta's image and brand.

In an industry where 100% uptime is the expectation, how do these situations occur and what can owners do

to proactively de-risk their data center operations and protect their company? Based on our team's decades of experience both operating data centers on behalf of enterprises and serving as data center operators ourselves, we propose these five questions data center owners should be asking operators to ensure that service provider goals are consistent with their own.

1 Is the service provider 100% focused on operating data centers?

Most data center service providers run multi-faceted businesses, with critical facility management being just one of their offerings. This creates a lack of focus and at times, competing business interests. A service provider who attempts to balance multiple business interests are much more likely to fall short of expectations. The service provider should be dedicated and laser-focused on a single mission: operating and protecting your critical infrastructure. Nothing else should matter.

2 Is there a single point of accountability?

Most critical infrastructure service providers utilize multiple vendors to perform both critical and ongoing operations and maintenance. The result can be a lack of accountability and at times, finger-pointing among providers. A service model that puts subject matter experts (SMEs) as first responders that self-perform the majority of the preventative, corrective and emergency

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maintenance; optimizes the efficiency of mission-critical facilities. Critical facility management, IT service management, physical security, risk assessments, program audits and professional services should be performed by a single partner using their own trained and certified employees. In essence, a critical facility service partner should operate your data center as if it was its own.

3 How do they deliver excellence?

The constant care and attention required to operate a 7x24x365 mission-critical facility is prompting data center owners to seek long-term partnerships; not just service providers looking to survive the next contract renewal. Ask to see the written playbook that guides processes for administration, operations, reliability centered maintenance, IT service management and physical security. Data center owners should meet not just with salespeople but with the people who will be charged with operating and protecting their mission-critical infrastructure. Data center owners should assess the confidence, passion and dedication to quality that the team brings to the partnership. Do they love what they do? Are they experts in their discipline? Do they understand your goals and are they fully committed to helping you achieve them?

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4 Is the service provider willing and able to show its work?

Data center owners deserve to be fully aware of the level of care, attention and detail that goes into the operations of their critical facility. The best qualified service providers will allow owners to peek behind the curtain to gain total transparency into the people, programs, processes and technology that's used to operate and protect their critical facilities as well as how those resources are applied to benefit the customer. The customer should be able to drop in and inspect operations at any time for any reason. The service provider should be able to explain what it is doing to proactively deliver higher performance and additional efficiencies.

5 How does the service operator impact my bottom-line?

Data center owners that rely on multiple vendors to manage and operate their critical facilities can have a direct impact on the owner's bottom line and overall cost of ownership. Margin-stacking, mark-ups on outsourced services and inefficient use of staffing can impact operational costs by over twenty percent. A service provider should be motivated to improve total cost of ownership and take a performance-based approach. The service provider should be able to set fixed operational costs that enable the facility owner to meet forecasted operational costs and budgets without sacrificing service delivery.

The mission-critical facility operations model is at an inflexion point. Data center owners are in a position to take the lead on influencing where the industry goes next. Data center owners can sleep well at night knowing that their critical facilities are in good hands. But it starts with asking the right questions.

About BCS Data Center Operations

BCS is an enterprise-level critical facilities operations company focusing exclusively on data centers. The BCS solutions portfolio includes facility management, IT services, physical security and a range of value-added professional services through one fully integrated self-performance model. BCS serves the needs of Fortune 500 companies, including three of the nation's leading financial service providers.

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