



COLOCATION BEST PRACTICES



COMPANY:
Collins Engineering



USES:
Colocation Services



INDUSTRY:
Engineering Solutions

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE RIGHT PARTNER

Whatever your reasons for considering a colocation provider, the reality is, the decision to use an off-site data center in your IT infrastructure is just the first critical step in the process. Most likely you've read the whitepapers and blog posts and understand the benefits of colocation. However, the importance of finding the right partner can often be overlooked or undervalued.

Understanding the significance of this process is critical in achieving success. Manus Cowley, IT Director for Collins Engineering, helped shed some light on the process. When it comes to the intricacies of shifting your company's data center to an off-site colocation provider, Cowley sits in a position of authority. As a veteran in the field for over 15 years, Cowley knows first hand the importance of going about the process the right way. He's seen how his company has benefitted from the right IT partners, and has heard plenty of horror stories of how it can go wrong.

Following these guidelines will help you and your company find a colocation partner that fits within your company's IT delivery, and allows for reduced IT infrastructure costs, increased redundancy, greater reliability and uptime, as well as better overall business continuity.

WHAT MAKES A "PROPER COLOCATION FACILITY"?

Cowley believes that finding the right colocation provider starts with the "proper facility". It's critical that the infrastructure is built to handle the rigors of a colocation environment and can also handle the shifting IT needs of its' clients. Cowley outlined a few questions you may want to consider:

- Is there proper cooling and connectivity?
- Are there any vulnerabilities around power?
- Has the provider invested and continued to invest in the infrastructure?

In order to avoid problems down the road, it is vital to ensure that the facility is built to handle your company's needs. Cowley noted, "You may think a situation is safe and secure, but only later find out that the systems route through a single point of failure". If you take the time to do your research in the initial steps, you can save yourself a lot of headaches in the future.

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MANUS COWLEY
IT Director, Collins Engineering

"WHERE" IS AS IMPORTANT AS "WHO"

In addition to the infrastructure of the facility, Cowley placed great importance on proximity. "What happens in the event of a major catastrophe?" asked Cowley. "If something ever happened to the power grid in Chicago, it's going to take down anything in Chicago", Cowley stated. "It's important for the location to be close enough that we can gain access and put our hands on it", but "far enough removed, to give us separation."

Cowley believed that OFFSITE's location outside of Milwaukee was "close enough that if you need to get there it is just up the road, but on a separate power grid protecting you from a major event in Chicago". Understanding the value of proximity is an important part of the process and should not be overlooked.

THE TRUE COST OF "LOWEST COST PROVIDER"

Cowley states that businesses can sometimes fall for the siren song of "lowest cost provider", often a costly mistake. Can you imagine investing the time and resources in moving all of your IT assets to an off-site data center, only to have them go out of business a year later? Unfortunately this happens, and it can be extremely costly and disruptive to business operations.

One way to avoid this common pitfall is to take the time to look into the provider's "long term prospects", said Cowley; "Are they likely to be around?" Eclipse Telecom, with whom Cowley has had a long working relationship, suggested OFFSITE as a colocation partner. Cowley still took time to familiarize himself with OFFSITE's operations and quickly became confident in OFFSITE as a reliable partner. Knowing that your provider is going to be around in the future is critical.

FINDING THE "RIGHT FIT"

Cowley and Collins Engineering chose OFFSITE as a colocation partner 4 years ago and have never looked back. He stated that he knows some companies just want "one of the big national providers, so you feel secure. If that's what makes you happy, that's what makes you happy. But if you are looking for more of a hands-on approach, check out OFFSITE."

"Dealing with OFFSITE for the first time, they walked me through the process", said Cowley. He liked how they took the time to talk with him personally and explain everything. He stated that they do a great job of "abstracting the physical layer by taking out physical equipment, but still achieving the same or better level of redundancy."

Over the years Cowley has gotten to know the members of the team at OFFSITE. "If I need anything, I can call and speak to someone in the NOC and it's the same team I work with all the time.", said Cowley. He also noted that he appreciates the additional services offered by OFFSITE, "but never feels bombarded with sales pitches". Cowley and Collins Engineering can easily adjust services with OFFSITE to fit the current needs of their IT delivery.

"OFFSITE is big enough to provide the breadth of services I'm looking for, but small enough to give me the attention I like" said Cowley. "While it's secure, it's welcoming. It's convenient - offers everything I am looking for and not onerous to get in and out of the facility."

Finding the right colocation partner can be a tremendous task for any business. Following some simple guidelines can ensure your company finds a colocation provider that is in sync with your IT strategy and delivery, giving you the peace of mind to know you are covered under any situation.

LEARN HOW YOU CAN BENEFIT FROM OFFSITE COLOCATION SERVICES

Contact our data center team or check out Off-Site.com for all your company's data center needs. Or pass on OFFSITE to other companies.

