

Top 9 Considerations When Shopping for a Data Center



From stats to site visit, researching a new colocation provider can be overwhelming. Moving your organization’s IT infrastructure can be daunting, but knowing you’ve selected the right provider can bring some peace of mind to the project. Here are top considerations to ponder when selecting a data center provider:



1. Location, Location, Location

The most obvious component to location is finding an area that isn’t prone to natural disasters. Another factor to consider is how far the data center is from your employee team. If you ever have to get to the data center quickly to replace or repair down equipment, think about how long it may take you to get there. Extended downtime can outweigh the savings of selecting a hyper-remote facility. Finally, map the route to the data center for consideration in the event of bad weather, such as flooding and ice. Seek out a data center with multiple avenues to and from your location.



2. Connectivity

One of the major advantages of utilizing a colocation facility is the access you gain to multiple telecommunications carriers. Circuits from multiple carriers should be available in a “carrier neutral” fashion. If the complexity of managing BGP (border gateway protocol) infrastructure isn’t desired, look for a provider that will supply redundant connections using a high availability (HA) protocol. If your organization relies on cloud-based services, make sure the data center offers options to purchase a direct connection into a cloud provider. Services like Megaport allow for fast, easy-to-configure, and inexpensive direct connections to all of the major cloud providers.



3. Reliability

Reliability is key when looking at providers. This is measured by uptime, and most reputable data centers should have at least five 9s, or 99.999% uptime. If you can find a provider guaranteeing 100% uptime, even better. Make sure you understand the backup power and cooling infrastructure each provider has in place to support the IT load.



4. Availability of Onsite Staff

Data centers should be staffed by both NOC (network operations center) and engineering personnel at all times. NOC staffs typically handle all of the day to day customer interaction performing tasks such as hard drive replacements, cable management, and tape rotations. The engineering staff is responsible for all of the critical infrastructure supporting your deployment such as automatic transfer gear, generators, and chillers. Having both of these on site 24/7/365 is paramount to maximizing uptime.





5. Ease of Doing Business

While this one may seem difficult to evaluate without a working relationship with the vendor, you can quantify this through the research and discovery process. Is the data center responsive in nature? Do they seem genuinely interested in your success? Ask what the amendment process entails for customers. Ask for testimonials such as examples of where the vendor went above and beyond for their customers. Typical agreements are over 3 years so you will want to choose a provider that is easy to deal with throughout the agreement.



6. Reputation

Sometimes the best way to evaluate any provider is to ask their customers about their experience. Many, if not all, data centers should comply with a reference request. Do your research and make sure to not only speak to current customers but those that have left the data center as well.



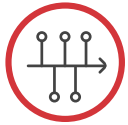
7. Service Level Agreement

A data center contract should contain a written SLA detailing the uptime guarantee. In addition to uptime, some will guarantee response time, bandwidth, security measures, and others. Make sure that the SLA details what measures are taken if the provider fails to meet the uptime promised.



8. Workspace Accommodations

If you or your team plan to be on site for any period of time, you might find that working on the cold, noisy raised floor may not be ideal. Many data centers offer customer work areas and conference rooms in a shared or dedicated fashion. Ask about connectivity in these areas of the data center, such as access to WiFi and telephones.



9. Your Timeline

Before contacting a potential vendor, make sure you understand your own timeline to go live. Work backwards from your "go live" date. You'll need to consider the physical move, carrier circuit moves, backup/testing period, and vendor installs in order to make your space ready. Some data centers can quickly accomplish their own task and in some instances, assist with referrals and relationships they may have with other providers.

About Fibertown

Our Houston data center is located on a Digital Realty Campus, easily accessible from two major highways. Megaport-enabled and operated by the world's largest data center provider, our Houston team provides Fibertown's signature personalized service, expertise and family feel.

Our Bryan data center is far from the coast for safety and it is home to the Brazos Community Emergency Operations Center (CEOC), a multi-jurisdictional organization comprised of emergency management personnel. The Bryan data center offers access to two separate, geographically diverse, frequently tested utility substations. Its primary substation also feeds the utility company headquarters.

We believe extraordinary service should be ordinary. Highly trained and experienced, Fibertown's customer care team provides dedicated, round-the-clock service.

