

GUIDE TO **AN EFFECTIVE DATA CENTER PARTNERSHIP**



DATABANK
Data Center Evolved™

Congratulations on **taking the next step** in your data center partnership journey!

Whether you are looking at a data center for a move, expansion, disaster recovery, or simply because you have outgrown your internal facility, there are many factors to consider and the best solution will depend on your specific needs — today, and tomorrow. No two providers are the same and all represent trade-offs in terms of price, service, and performance. Finding the right one can be as much art as science.

It used to be that picking a data center was simply a matter of pricing and evaluating a facility checklist. But in today's hybrid world, the decision is more about establishing a partnership that can grow with your business and adapt as your needs change: technically, geographically, and economically. This buyer's guide is designed to help you identify the factors that will ensure the best possible data center experience today and tomorrow.

At DataBank, our **Data Center Evolved™** approach is just that. It's about adapting our approach to meet your changing needs. This creates successful, long-term partnerships that are rooted in a deeper alignment around business issues, not just technologies.





The questions covered in this guide were adapted from real-world conversations with our customers and prospects, but you can use them to evaluate any data center and managed services/cloud/security provider. They will help you facilitate a conversation that goes beyond “speeds and feeds” to find alignment across the range of business factors and ensure a successful IT infrastructure partnership:

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Do you and the data center provider share the same goals and vision of a successful partnership, and will you be equally invested in each other’s success?

TECHNICAL ALIGNMENT

Are the technical foundations and resources of the data center provider matched to the performance and security requirements of your applications and data?

FUTURE ALIGNMENT

Can the data center provider “de-risk” your buying decision today, by clearly adapting to your needs — whether technical or personnel — as they change over time?

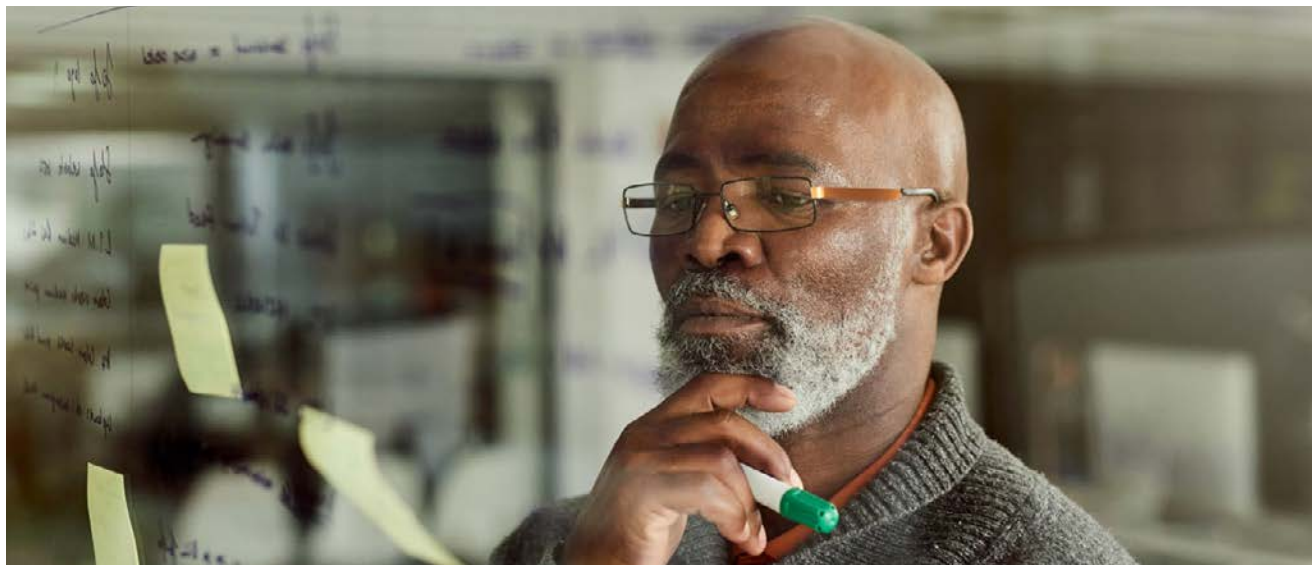


STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The decision to use a data center provider is really a decision to enter into an IT infrastructure *partnership*. In any partnership, where both parties are essentially *investing in a relationship*, there needs to be alignment around fundamental economic as well as behavioral elements.

While the price/value calculation will always be a factor in the decision, there are three important areas to explore beyond that:

- Investment Protection
- Partnership Mentality
- Financial Viability



You'll be investing a lot of time, money, and trust in a data center provider. Ensuring they are equally invested in you creates the foundation for a successful partnership and makes sure both parties are on an equal footing. Here are a few ways you can tell if that's the case:

Is the provider's pricing easy to understand, especially if your usage exceeds expected thresholds? Does it clearly account for installation, moves, and changes?

Do they offer revenue portability among their services and platforms so that you are free to move workloads between facilities or from colocation to cloud without penalty?

Do they guarantee 100% uptime of power to your infrastructure with a simple-to-understand credit policy?



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Partnership Mentality

A partnership is not just a contract. It's a way of thinking. A data center partner with the right mindset — embedded at every level of the organization and its operations — will deliver higher levels of accountability and greater adaptability to your needs over time. Here are a few ways you can assess their partnership mentality:

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Does the leadership team have a track record of success? Will they be readily accessible to you as a customer?

OPERATING CULTURE

Does the provider have a well-defined purpose and set of behavioral values, not just on their website, but woven into how they operate daily? Do they regularly survey their culture and measure themselves against those behaviors? Do they have defined rewards and recognition programs for these behaviors?

SUPPORT MODEL

Does their engagement model include pre-sales planning, post-sale implementation, and migration support? Do they provide staff on-site that are available as an extension of your team 7x24x365? Do they regularly track and report on their Net Promoter Scores (NPS)?



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Financial Viability

Building and operating data centers is a capital-intensive business. A strong financial foundation will ensure your data center partner maintains control of its destiny, inoculates it against macro-economic shifts beyond its control, and ensures it can scale over the long-term with your business. To better understand the center's financial footing, ask about the following:

INVESTORS

Are the provider's investors well-known and do they have a successful track record in the digital infrastructure space? Do they have a long-term investment horizon? Has the investor base been stable over the years?

FINANCIALS

Is the provider profitable and well-capitalized? How do its debt ratings (if applicable) compare to its peers? Is its customer base diversified enough to withstand sudden macro-economic changes that could affect some sectors more than others?

STRATEGY

Is the provider growing and expanding by building or acquiring new facilities? Does it own the underlying real estate or has it been selling the underlying real estate assets? If the provider is doing M&A, is it effectively integrating both operations and culture (or is it experiencing turnover of people and customers as a result)?



TECHNICAL ALIGNMENT

The success of any data center partnership will, of course, depend on the technical requirements of your workloads and the capabilities of the provider.

But the factors you'll want to evaluate go beyond the four walls of the physical facility and should extend to security, compliance, and the expertise of the people who will be responsible for your infrastructure. In particular, you will want to dig deep into the following areas:

Facility Suitability

Security and Compliance

Operational Maturity



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Facility Suitability

A data center partner who designs and builds its facilities to the highest possible standards will provide you with more consistent operations, higher-availability, and greater adaptability and scalability as your business changes. Among the most important factors to consider are the following:

PHYSICAL SPACE

Is there adequate space available if you need to grow and can it be configured as you wish (cages, cabinets, suites, etc.)? Does it offer the amenities you'll need for extended periods on-site (office space, conference rooms, lounges, crash carts, etc.)?

POWER AND COOLING

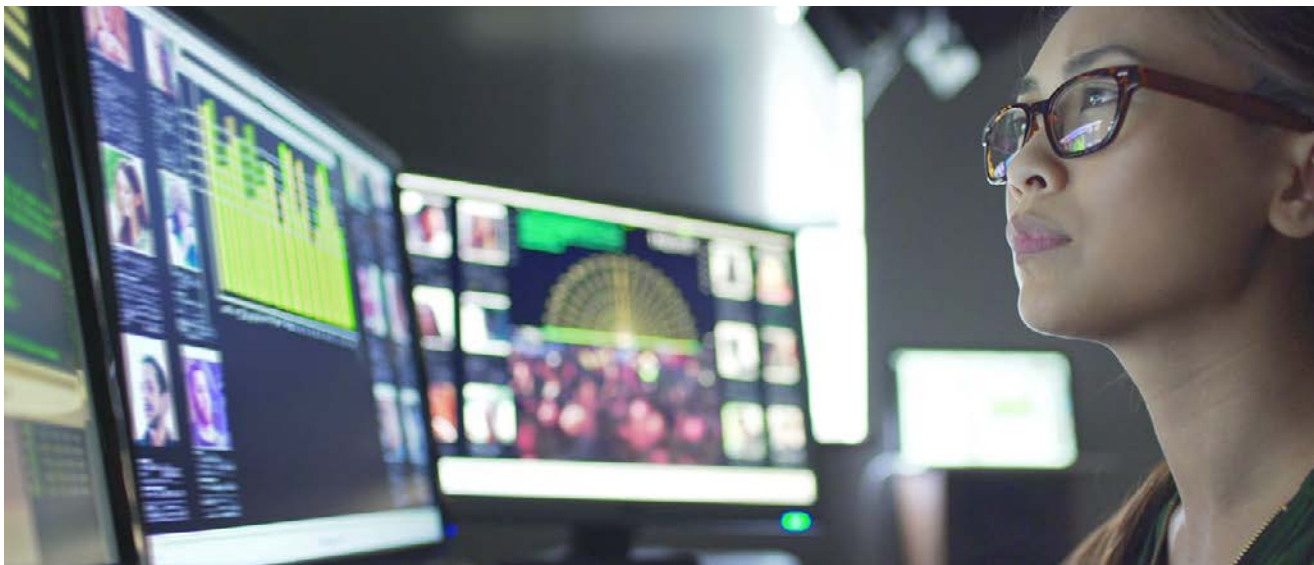
Does the facility offer higher density power options (more than 20kW per cabinet)? Do options exist for alternate cooling beyond traditional chimney (e.g. cold row containment)?

NETWORK ACCESS

Is the facility a carrier hotel? Does it offer carrier neutrality? Can network connections be provisioned to provide access to your workloads in other data centers as well as public clouds?



Do they offer ready-made, downloadable reports that simplify your own compliance reporting and verification effort?



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Operational Maturity

Modern IT infrastructures require precision management and relentless attention to detail. A partner that has mature processes, operations and tools will manage your mission-critical infrastructure more effectively with fewer problems. Be sure to explore the following factors:

PROCESS DOCUMENTATION

Are the provider's Methods of Procedure (MOPs) for managing maintenance and operations well-documented? Are they tracked on paper checklists or managed via a modern, interactive digital interface with multiple checks and balances to reduce errors?

VISIBILITY AND CONTROL

Does the provider's online portal facilitate remote access to your infrastructure? Does it allow you to monitor all threats/alarms? Can it continuously monitor and visualize power by rack, device or circuit, and network performance by port and protocol? Can it be used to activate and deactivate your staff's access to the facility?

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

Are the majority of tickets activated by the provider's automated systems or tech teams rather than customer notifications? Are the majority of alarms resolved by the provider's teams with little or no customer interaction?



FUTURE ALIGNMENT

Making a long-term commitment to a data center partner rests in large part on how well it can “de-risk” your buying decision today.

That means demonstrating that it can evolve with you, providing the range of services, resources, and locations you may need to tap into on-demand as your needs change. Things to evaluate:

“As a Service” Options

Managed Services

Geographic Diversity



“As-a-Service” Options

Your needs will invariably change as technology and business cycles evolve over time. A data center provider that offers a menu of add-on capabilities — in an “as-a-service” model — will be better able to adapt and serve you in the long run. Those add-on capabilities should include:

CLOUD COMPUTE AND STORAGE

Can the facility provision private, enterprise-grade cloud compute and storage that can be integrated with your colocation services? Does it offer on-ramps to public cloud platforms as well?

DATA BACKUP AND SECURITY

Does the provider offer a range of data backup and managed Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS) options? Can it provide managed security services to protect your data, such as File Integrity Monitoring and Configuration Scanning?

NETWORK SERVICES

Can it provide managed Firewalls and VPNs? Does it have managed DDoS mitigation and IDS/IPS services to protect your applications from external attack?

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Managed Services

In periods of rapid change, you may find you can't get to the data center, or you simply lack the resources needed for a particular function or technology. In that case, a data center partner with ample resources and proven managed services frameworks can get you up and running faster, or bridge short-term gaps in staffing to help you continue operations without missing a beat. Look for the following capabilities:

MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Can they provide remote hands monitoring and reboots of your infrastructure on-site? Can their technicians do “smart hands” software patches on OS and other applications if needed? Do they offer on-site and off-site backup services and can they facilitate disaster recovery operations?

MIGRATION PLANNING

Can the provider assemble teams of experts to help you plan the migration of workloads between platforms?

IMPLEMENTATION SERVICES

Can their engineers project manage and support a complete migration of infrastructure, software, and data, if needed?



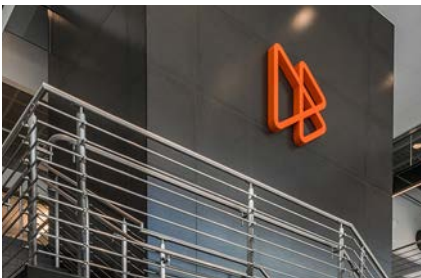
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Does the partner operate more than one data center in the metro, providing localized backup and diversity of facilities? Are the facilities on separate metro network paths?

Can they provision your workloads in multiple data centers within a region to ensure true disaster recovery in the event of a wide-scale event such as a hurricane? Are they within one day's drive of your primary location in the event air travel is not possible?

Can they offer you space in data centers across different regions for the widest possible diversity? Are their facilities on diverse power grids to offer the maximum resiliency?

Start your **data center partnership journey** with us.



Experience **Data Center Evolved™** in action.

Let us show you how we align business and technology to fit your current and future needs.

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