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Retrofitting Data Centers

Overcoming Budgetary Restrictions Successfully

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If you're working in a data center be it as a Director, Manager, or even Administrator right now you're dealing with countless challenges and for some of you this could include getting the buy in from Executive Management to permit data center adds, moves, or changes.

Let's face it; in 2007 you could probably get any one of those three functions approved with comparatively minimal questions. Today it's probably fair to say ordering \$20,000 in equipment is like walking across hot coals. What many management teams in today's climate do not understand, for the most part, is the true importance of upgrading technology and infrastructure. That is not to say all management teams do not respect and understand the value of data centers, there are in fact many who have their fingers on the pulse of the data center and are involved in every last detail.

The reason most data centers do not get the attention they deserve is because for a long time there was no such thing as a data center, there was the computer room, and literally this room housed a computer. There are even data centers today that are in closets, converted warehouses, and even as weird as it may sound, basements in buildings from the 19th century. The point is, most data centers today were not made to be data centers and organizations are struggling to put a "finger in the dam" to keep up with the speed of change but with many of the budgetary restrictions there is only so much a data center team can do.

So in this brief, we want to explain some ways to maximize your data center budget and illustrate ways that certain savings in areas that might not have been thought of can help cover expenses in others. The first thing I always ask clients to prepare is a long term data center plan- what are you going to do and when. This helps whoever you are working with be in the best possible position to help you. Another item you'll need to have in mind is how old is your current equipment and what is the life expectancy- why do consultants ask this- because this can help navigate some of the objections that your Finance and Executive teams will have.

Possible Solution 1- Invest in better airflow management and cooling techniques and solutions. By investing in these two areas many organizations have found that a substantial energy savings or even utility rebates have helped them purchase additional equipment that had initially been put on hold.

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Possible Solution 2- Invest in overall greener solutions such as cabinets that may come with already increased airflow and improved cable management. It is possible that these solutions may also offer you potential energy rebates and lower utility expenses allowing you to allot funds to other technology areas.

Possible Solution 3- Invest in solutions that are versatile, by doing so you are not tying yourself to a single OEM solution. I tell many customers that by tying themselves to a single server, storage, or switch vendor's cabinet you're really setting yourself up for a very expensive bill should you need to change those technologies in the future. By showing your management team that you've purchased a high quality, long lasting solution that will survive several changes, you increase the chances of their acceptance.

Illustration of Solution 3 in depth:

Let's say from OEM Company A you purchase their servers with their server racks, and let's say they sell you the racks at a dramatic discount like \$500 and you buy 100 of them. You've now invested in addition to the servers, \$50,000 in racks. Let's say two years goes by and for whatever reason you need to change systems, while keeping the same prices in mind let's say the next OEM gives you the same \$50,000 to buy another 100 racks, so now you're up to \$100,000 in two years on racks. Let's not even think what the removal fees might be for the old 100 racks.

Let's assume looking back to that initial purchase you come to a company like SharkRack and let's assume that a price of \$850 is offered to you for the same kind of racks with better quality and guarantees to fit all standard sized equipment regardless of vendor. So for the same 100 racks you will spend \$85,000 but they will last through whatever changes you make. The point of this being while even though you are spending more up front you are at least going to have the peace of mind of a fit guarantee and the higher quality would come into play.

We at SharkRack recommend that even if no immediate changes are to be made to our client's data center environment that they at least do a one year check up, just in case to see where potential energy savings or other financial benefits may be and if you're not a client of ours we recommend that you contact a qualified organization such as SharkRack for an overview of what benefits there might be for you. It is also a best practice to make sure that whomever you choose to provide you with data center

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solutions has a long and proven track record of doing so with verifiable references from customers in the same line(s) of business as your organization.

About SharkRack

SharkRack is a premier provider of infrastructure solutions for data centers, telecommunications and network operations centers. We provide products and that improve the cost-effectiveness, availability and viability of mission-critical data and networking systems. With over 15 years of experience in supporting over 28,000 customers around the World, SharkRack is a proven industry leader that keeps the best interests of it's clients in mind and emphasizes our policy that clients are customers for life.

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