

VALUE DRIVERS: A Brief Overview of Sustainability at IO (pt. 2) - IO



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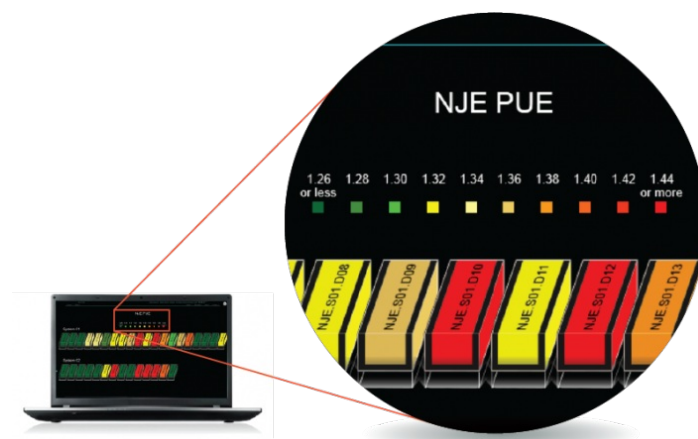
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Value Drivers for IO Sustainability:

There are tangible and intangible value drivers for sustainability. The biggest argument in favor of increased corporate sustainability is that it broadens the scope of strategy and analysis. Just as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, business “best” practices depend on context. A choice that seems optimal in the near term can compromise long-term outcomes, and an elegant solution to a narrow problem may wreak havoc on the broader enterprise. As an extreme example, who wins if you negotiate a price with your supplier so successfully that product quality suffers and hurts data center uptime?

Under the lens of sustainability, “best” decisions are measured to include all the complexities of the business context as well as the environmental and social systems that it affects. Sustainable business practice means seeing the forest, not just the trees. This broad thinking helps to insure that we are not optimizing a sub-set of what should be considered, like reinventing the jet engines instead of simply inventing winglets.

In IO’s case, broad thinking is what got us out of DC1.0, and it will usher in the

age of 3.0 and beyond.

Pursuing sustainability strategies sometimes involves a leap of faith. Like all revolutionary change (versus evolutionary) there may be short term sacrifice for the sake of long term benefit. Had we not embarked upon the disruptive DC2.0 strategy and instead kept building world-class DC1.0 sites, we would not have a very exciting future ahead of us.

Measuring long-term and diffuse benefits is not always easy. Sustainability efforts often struggle to achieve momentum. There are two ways to overcome this challenge. First, a company must have a supportive executive team who understands that healthy organizations never stop changing. The second is to have an industry with clear areas of alignment between good business strategy and good sustainability strategy. IO has both. Our executives understand revolutionary versus evolutionary processes. They also understand that sustainability is in line with the core of IO DNA: constant reinvention, relentless innovation and elegant engineering.

*Next week, part 3 in the Sustainability series: **The Business Case for Sustainability***

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Tags: data center, data center 1.0, data center 2.0, data center 3.0, sustainability, Uptime, value driver

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