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Don't Forget These **8** Things When Choosing a **DATA CENTER PROVIDER**

You look for certain things when selecting a **data center provider**, such as location, services, redundancy, uptime and security. These are among the major considerations. But there are also many smaller details—often overlooked, sometimes completely forgotten—that can mark the difference between a highly successful data center deployment or one that's continually plagued by inefficiency and failures.

Here are some of the key points to think about:

Ownership: You should know something about the organization you're planning to work with. Is the data center provider publicly owned or venture supported? How long has it been in business? Is it in good financial condition? **What sort of satisfaction grades is it earning from its current customers?**

Fuel Access: Backup generators kick in whenever the local power grid completely fails. But generators need fuel for continued operation. To ensure full power redundancy you need to know how much fuel is available at the data center, how long this supply will last at full load and what arrangements the data center provider has made for continuing fuel deliveries in the event of an extended outage.

Leak Detection: Fire is certainly a major data center threat, yet water can cause as much damage—and just as many headaches—as flames. Leaking condensation pans, exterior walls and humidification lines can all go unnoticed below a raised floor. Fortunately an under floor leak detection system can

assist in notifying when a leak does occur to properly respond in enough time before critical equipment becomes damaged or electrical wiring shorts out. When evaluating a data center provider, ask what sort of leak detection technology it uses.

Certification: Certified systems, designs and practices indicate that the data center provider is committed to the highest levels of quality. SAS 70, for instance, is one of the most stringent standards for auditing service companies. Any [data center provider that has SAS 70 certification](#) has worked hard to achieve this goal. There are also other important types of certification. [Tier Certification](#), for example, is a vendor-neutral, third-party certification for system and operational sustainability delivered by the Uptime Institute Professional Services.

Compliance: If your organization operates in a regulated industry, such as healthcare or finance, you'll want to make sure that the data center provider can offer an environment and infrastructure that meets all of your regulatory mandates.

Local Threats: Most organizations looking for a data center provider are at least marginally aware of major local threats, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes and blizzards. But a [variety of other potential dangers](#) often fall under the radar, such as civil disturbances, river and tidal floods, runaway vehicles and pests that can foul equipment and/or eat away at wiring. Think of your worst fears and then discuss them with the data center representative.

Competence: A data center provider's competence, its ability to do things right and to support its customers' needs and goals, is an intangible yet crucial part of the service it offers. Ask the data center provider about the [people it employs](#). What types of skills and experience they have? Then think of several specific problems and challenges and ask the data center representative how the company would handle these challenges. If you don't like the answers you're hearing, you'll probably want to look for another provider.

Physical Access: You'll need to get people and equipment to the data center. Is the facility located along a major highway or a narrow country road? Can it easily receive shipments from delivery services? Is there on-site office and meeting space? Are there loading bays? How about freight elevators? Who will be in charge of moving equipment within the data center?

Bottom line: These are just a few of the commonly overlooked points you need to consider when evaluating data center providers. For a detailed checklist that you can use during your search to compare up to three providers, download this handy [data center checklist](#).

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