

Cedar Creek Software
Questions for potential new colocation facility
Please email replies to jw@mailsw.com

Dear Sales Rep,

Please answer the following questions as completely as possible. It will help us decide if your facility can supply the quality of service we are looking for. If you are unable or unwilling to answer any given question, please explain why (to the best of your ability) in a brief statement. If you, as a sales person, do not know the answers to some of the questions, please ask your supervisors, or the facility technicians. It helps us to know that you, our sales contact, are able to find and obtain answers to our questions, or contact someone who can. Please feel free to type your answers into this document, or attach extra sheets or send answers in a separate document if we have not provided enough space. Thank you!

Please start by providing us a basic cost estimate for 1 cabinet, with power and bandwidth costs (if separate). Please define the power and bandwidth allocation as clearly as possible. Please state and describe initial setup fees, if any.

Specific Questions:

Power

1. If we need a second power drop to the cabinet in the future, how much will you charge for it?
2. Please describe your facility's power backup configuration. We are looking for power that is backed up by an auto-switching generator and a UPS on the power line coming into the rack. Power to the cabinet power drop should never be disrupted - we should not need our own UPS in the rack.
 1. We would like to come to the facility in person and look at the battery back up system. Please let us know if we may come to the facility and look at it, and if not, please explain why.
3. Does the facility's incoming power come from multiple power grids?
 1. If there are multiple grids, do the lines come into the facility building from different directions/locations or are they all together? Some facilities we have used had all of their lines running together and lost power to the whole building when construction workers digging in the street outside cut the line. If the power lines run together someone digging outside may cut/damage all lines at once even if there are multiple cables.
 2. Is there any equipment that all the power lines run through that could cause a single point of failure? At one facility we have used, all the power to the building went down when 1 transformer blew out on the street, because all incoming power ran through that one transformer. Can a situation like this occur at your facility? Please explain why, or why not.
4. Generators. Please provide a detailed and clear description of what the facility's backup generators can and will supply power for (e.g., all racks, the complete or partial cooling system, facility lighting, border and internal network, physical access system, etc.)
 1. How many generators are at the facility?
 2. What type, size and capacity are the generators.
 3. We would like to come to the facility in person and look at the generators. Please let us know if we may come to the facility and look at them, and if not, please explain why.
 4. How much fuel is stored on-site for the generators?
 1. How many hours will the generators run without a fuel refill?
 5. Can fuel tanks be re-filled while the generator is operating?

6. Are generators redundant?
7. Is one of them a hot backup?
8. Do you have a regular test and maintenance cycle to insure all your generators are working?
9. Are they always tested in rotation (e.g., all generators get tested in each position, not just the primary generator)?
 1. Please provide a schedule of your regular test maintenance windows for your generators. We would like to verify that your facility really does test its generators in a regular fashion, according to your own schedule.
10. Are spare parts kept on site?
11. Is a technician on-site able to repair generators if they break down or won't start?
 1. If generators are repaired by a contractor, who is the contractor, where are they located and how fast is the contractor able to come for repairs should one of the generators break down while operating?
 2. Is the contractor available 24x7?
5. Should incoming grid power to the building be lost, does the facility use equipment that automatically starts the generators and switches over from grid to generator without power disruption to the building? One company we have used could not switch from a broken street transformer to generator automatically, manual intervention was required.
6. How many amps are provided in the cabinet power drop?
7. Are you willing to put two power outlets on the power drop at the cabinet?
8. Some facilities provide two physical power lines to the rack for redundancy, ending in separate outlets or power strip, which we prefer. Do you provide redundant power drops?

Internet Connection

1. Do you have redundant Internet providers?
 1. Please list your providers:
 2. Please explain how you integrate your network to your provider's network[s] redundantly.
 1. Are all providers used simultaneously, with traffic dispersed across all providers?
 2. Or is one provider the primary with others used for "hot spares" and failover?
 1. If the extra providers are failover, is the failover system automatic or does it require manual intervention?
 3. If you have multiple Internet providers, do they come into the facility building over multiple local loops? One facility we have used had multiple providers, but they all came in over a single SBC local loop. Their facility's entire network went down when SBC technicians cut the fiber on the local loop. Can this situation occur at your facility? Please explain why, or why not.
 1. If there are multiple local loops, do they come in to the building from more than one direction? If all fiber enters the building in one place, or runs down the street together, someone digging outside on the street might take out all loops at once, even if it's multiple cables.
 2. If one loop goes down, does traffic automatically switch to the other loop with no traffic interruption or does a technician have to take action (have to move hardware, reboot equipment or change router settings or other intervention)?
2. Do your provider[s] utilize and control their own BGP4 routing, and can on-site facility staff/technicians speak with the provider's BGP engineer?
3. Does your facility and its technicians have a working relationship and established contacts with your providers?
 1. If you have a problem with your provider's network, who do you contact?
 2. How long does it take, on average, to reach your provider's technicians who can help you?
 3. How long is the average response time from your provider?
 4. Has your provider's network ever gone down, preventing you from using their network?

1. If so, when was the last time?
2. How many times in the last 2 years has your facility lost contact with your provider's network, when it was your provider's problem?
3. How many times in the last 2 years has your facility lost contact with your provider's network, when it was your facility's problem?
4. Have you ever had a difficult time getting your provider to respond to network issues?
Please describe in detail:
4. Who controls your facility's network routes? Are there technicians on site 24x7 who are both trained and authorized to configure the facility's network routes if there is a problem?
5. Since you provide our network IP blocks, are you able to set up reverse DNS records for us.
 1. Please describe what course of action we have to take when we need a new reverse DNS record put into effect.
6. How much does a second network drop cost if we need one later?
7. Does your facility provide the incoming network switch in our cabinet, or do we?
 1. If we provide the switch, do your facility network technicians configure it or do we?
 2. If your technicians will configure it, is initial configuration free, part of your setup fee, or an extra charge?
 1. What is the charge if initial configuration costs extra?
8. Please provide us with an Internet connection availability report. Please include at least the past year, more if possible. We ask for this because we have had widely varying experiences with other facility's Internet connection uptime and availability, both positive and negative, that does not always agree with what was stated or claimed before hand.
9. Are you able to provide us with Mixed IPs from different class C's in the network drop to our cabinet?
10. Does your facility use end-to-end HSRP redundancy?
 1. Definition: Hot Standby Routing Protocol, a proprietary protocol from Cisco. HSRP is a routing protocol that provides a hot backup to a router in the event of failure. Useful for quick replacement of a router without changing the default gateway configured on other LAN clients. Using HSRP, several routers are connected to the same segment of an Ethernet network and work together to present the appearance of a single virtual router on the LAN. The routers share the same IP and MAC addresses, therefore in the event of failure of one router, the hosts on the LAN are able to continue forwarding packets to a consistent IP and MAC address. The process of transferring the routing responsibilities from one device to another is transparent to the user.
11. What type of equipment does your facility use for network control, routing, firewalls, bridging, binding, failover, etc? Please describe. At one facility we have used the network went down shortly after we moved in and the NOC technician stated that a PC being used to run the facility's firewall had locked up or broken down. We consider a Cisco router or other dedicated device to be much more reliable than a PC for handling network traffic.
12. Do you block ICMP/ping traffic on your network border routers? We like to be able to monitor our servers with ping from "outside" to verify that our servers are "up".

Cooling

1. The purpose of cooling in a co-lo facility is to keep the computer hardware within operating temperature range, so that the hardware is not damaged and data loss or corruption does not occur. We would like rack temperatures to be part of our sales contract. Some of the facilities we have used have had very unreliable and/or high temperatures, while others have been consistently cool with no problem.
 1. Do your technicians monitor the facility's temperature in the co-location area?
 2. What temperature (or range or temperatures) do you keep in the co-lo area ?
 3. We monitor our cabinet and/or room temperature[s]. What action will the facility

technicians take if our temperature monitor shows the temperature has strayed out of range?

1. Is there someone on-site who we can speak to over the phone and is authorized to take action if the temperature gets out of range, or do the on-site techs have to get permission from off-site administration?
 1. If NOC techs are not authorized to adjust temperatures, who is?
 2. Please provide a log or report of the colo area's temperature for the last year, if possible.
2. Are your climate control systems redundant?
 1. Are the climate control systems powered by the backup generators in the event of power outage?

Physical

1. Where are you located?
2. Please describe the type of cabinets you use.
 1. Please describe the ventilation system[s] in the cabinets. How many exhaust fans are in the cabinet and where are they located?
 2. Please describe how well ventilated the cabinet doors are – is the face of the door[s] solid with slots/holes, or made of a mesh/grille material? Please attach a pictures of a cabinet with the doors both open and closed.
 3. Are the cabinets lockable?
 4. Do we get a copy of the cabinet key?
 5. How much floor space separates the cabinet rows (distance between rows)?
3. Please describe your physical access system and routine.
 1. Do you use electronic or manual sign in?
 2. Do you use electronic badges for tracking and door access?
 1. If so do we get an electric badge to let ourselves in and out of the doors or does a NOC tech have to open doors for us with his badge?
 2. If your facility uses electronic badges for door access but we do not get a badge during our visits, are we able to leave the building without being escorted, or do we have to wait for a NOC tech to come escort us out of the building?
 1. If we have to wait to a tech to come retrieve us from the co-lo area, how do we contact the NOC to let them know we are ready to leave?
 3. Will a NOC technician escort us to our cabinet when we come to access our cabinet?
 1. If so is this a requirement or a courtesy?
 4. Do you use any method to verify that personnel who arrive and request access to our cabinets are actually authorized by Cedar Creek Software?
 1. If you use an access list to verify personnel, how hard is it for Cedar Creek Software to add another person/agent to the ACL if we need a new person to access our servers on short notice? Please describe the method we would use for adding personnel to the ACL.
 2. Do you allow personnel who are on the ACL to bring in other people or “guests” with them, who are not on the ACL?
4. Please describe how your air flow is handled. Are your air ducts in the roof blowing down, or does your facility use a raised floor, with the air conditioning coming up through the raised floor?
5. Is the co-lo facility accessible by us and our agents 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year?
6. Are the administrative offices and the co-lo facility located in the same building?
7. Is the co-lo building NOC staffed with technicians 24x7, 365 days a year?
 1. Is the NOC phone always answered when we call, 24x7, 365 days a year?
 2. Do you offer free “Remote Hands” support services when we need a NOC technician to access the equipment in our cabinet? A typical scenario would be to have a tech put a monitor and keyboard on one of our servers and control the server while we walk them

through doing some task over the phone.

1. If you charge separate for hands-on support requests, what is your fee?
3. When we need support, will the NOC techs who staff that facility help us or do you have a separate support department?
 1. If you have a separate support department, is it staffed 24x7, 365 days a year?
 2. Are we allowed to call the NOC for assistance?
 3. If you have a separate support department, please explain how we get help when we need to someone to access our cabinet or need to speak to someone in the co-lo building.
4. Do NOC techs/support department techs have Linux, UNIX and/or Mac OS X experience?
5. How long on average does it take the NOC to answer the phone during the graveyard shift?
6. How long are the average hold times when we call for the support department?
 1. How fast, on average, can a NOC/support technician get to our servers with a monitor/keyboard and the phone in his hand?
8. Do you use any request tracking system for all service requests?
 1. If so is the tracking system used by the internal on-site staff/NOC technicians? Please describe in detail:
9. What is the average number of months your techs have been employed (churn rate)?
10. What is the average number of months your administration/lower management have been employed (churn rate)?
11. Please provide a list of who we can contact for help and especially who in the administration we can contact when the regular NOC/support staff, and sales contact[s], are not providing/not able to provide the support we need.
 1. Will you continue to be our sales/billing contact as long as we stay with your company?
 1. If not, is there some other sales person who can be our single point of contact?
 2. Do you have a supervisor we can contact if we are not able to get reach you, or you are not able to provide the help/information we need? Please provide their contact info:
 3. Is there a VP, owner or president we can call when we need more assistance? Please provide their contact info:
 4. Is there a NOC supervisor? Please provide their contact info:
 5. Is there any other network or facility admin/supervisor we can contact when we need more assistance? Please provide their contact info:
 1. Who in the administration supervises the technical administration? Please provide their contact info:
12. Does the facility employ an on-site electrician? At one facility we used, we had problems with the power and the on-site NOC staff was not even able to test the outlet to see if it was working. I was told the company electrician was a contractor "on call" who was "about an hour away" and they really didn't want to call him in. The on-site techs did not even have an electric meter to test if the outlet was hot, and certainly could not repair or replace any of the electrical infrastructure components.
 1. If something goes wrong with our cabinet's leg of your electrical system, how much downtime will there be before a qualified electrician can come investigate the situation?
 2. If you do employ one or more qualified electrician[s], are they on-site 24x7?
 1. If not on-site site 24x7, are they on-call 24x7?
 2. If they are on call, but not on site, how long will it take for them to arrive during "off hours"?
13. Does the facility employ one or more on-site network admin[s]?
 1. Is a network admin on-site 24x7?
 2. If not on-site site 24x7, are they on-call 24x7?
 3. If they are on call, but not on site, how long will it take for them to arrive during "off hours"?
 4. Are all NOC technicians trained and authorized to administer the network?

14. Do you provide "crash carts" with monitor, keyboard and mouse for use when we visit our cabinet for maintenance?
15. Does the facility provide a customer work area, with tools available in case we forgot or were not able to bring our own tools with us?
 1. Do you also have on hand other supplies such as network cables, ties, rack brackets, spare NICs, UPSs or routers in case ours break? Please describe:
16. Does the facility have an automatic fire suppression system?
 1. Non-water based or water based??
17. Is your co-lo facility multi-story/multi floor?
 1. If so, do you have cabinets vacant and available on the first floor?
18. Please describe where/how far visitor parking is in relation to the facility door.
19. Do you provide carts we can use to transport equipment from vehicles outside?
20. Do you guarantee 100% or 99.9% uptime, or any other similar guarantee? If so can you explain what you mean by "guarantee".
 1. Will uptime be part of our contract?
 1. If so, and we agree on a price for "24x7 uptime" or any similar uptime agreements, can we get any sort of credit when unscheduled downtime occurs?
21. Can we get a right of first refusal on spaces/cabinets adjacent to ours when they become available?
22. If we rent/lease only one cabinet now and want expand to a second cabinet at a later time, will we have to accept new space in another room, on a different floor or in another building?
23. Can we lock in a price on future expansion space (another cabinet) now?
24. If our needs shrink (2 cabinets down to one, or a full cabinet down to half or quarter rack) can we give up part of our space without penalties?
25. How long has your company been in business?
26. How long has your facility been at it's current physical location?
27. Does your company have other locations/office?
 1. Where?
28. How long has current management been there?
29. Are you in good standing with the Better Business Bureau or Dunn and Bradstreet?

References

1. Could you please provide us with a few customer references.