



Maintenance Perspectives
Ways to get more from your hardware agreements

Can you afford to get there from here? Don't overlook transition costs when changing service providers.

Feb 22, 2011

Keep an eye out for typos.

Details at the bottom of this newsletter's content.

A potentially costly oversight

Most B2B services are reasonably straightforward when it becomes necessary to switch providers. Whether changing your service provider for temporary employees, bottled water or cleaning crews, you can base your decision entirely on the costs, benefits and value of the end result and transition is not likely to be a factor to consider from a financial standpoint. Unfortunately, changing hardware support providers is not like flipping a switch, and the costs of a sloppy transition can be substantial.

The support providers covering your servers, storage, and networking products and their operating systems have more in common with software support than HVAC maintenance providers, even if the results on paper look more like a commodity than a custom service. The core issue is that systems are highly complex and highly integrated at the same time, while single-provider service is rare. This means it can be very difficult to determine who is providing what level of coverage on what product during a transition, and if access is not properly handed off there can be larger issues in the future with patches and licensing. This is only compounded when IT teams don't have an accurate snapshot of their total infrastructure, including what's on-premise and what's housed in other locations.

The first step in avoiding unexpected and potentially spiralling costs due to support lapses, uncovered hardware failures, and hardware license issues is to ask specifically and directly for transition plans from potential service providers as part of your Request for Proposal (RFP). The result should go far beyond a marketing statement stapled to a spreadsheet of costs; you should see specific plans regarding transition areas, responsibilities, service levels and recourse if a failure does occur.

Without these statements, it's impossible to assess the full costs of changing providers and difficult to compare services between those who address transition and those who don't. Asking up front about transition plans and receiving a cost quotation in writing also ensures you have legal standing in

case a great deal on maintenance turns out to be too good to be true in the end.

Free Maintenance Consultation

Thinking about changing hardware maintenance service providers? Our white paper, "Transitioning Data Center Hardware Support" lists dozens of specific areas of inquiry to pursue with potential providers and to reduce the risk and headaches involved in a complex RFP. Be sure to request this [white paper](#) if you have an interest in this topic, and feel free to browse other related [white papers and research briefs](#) on our site.

Did you spot a typo?

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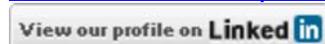
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