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PRODUCTS

## Data Center Capacity Planning: What to Look for in a Vendor

In today's era of rapid digital transformation, capacity planning plays a crucial role in the performance, scalability, and sustainability of data centers. Although it might not always be as visible as other aspects of growth and innovation, its significance cannot be overstated.

Capacity planning is increasingly recognized not just as a routine operational task but as a strategic differentiator. Data centers are embracing advanced capacity planning strategies to avoid common pitfalls such as:

- Stifling innovation
- Falling behind the competition
- Inefficient planning, which leads to wasted resources
- Under-planned capacity, resulting in operational challenges during peak demand

### Beyond Infrastructure: A Holistic Approach

While optimizing infrastructure is central to capacity planning, there is a growing acknowledgment of the importance of supply chain management and vendor relationships in ensuring the success and competitiveness of data center operations.

However, misconceptions about vendor relationships can hinder your capacity planning efforts. Let's explore some common myths and the realities behind them.



## Debunking Myths About Vendor Relationships

With these goals in mind, it's also helpful to acknowledge the following common challenges:

- **“A rack is just a rack. It doesn't matter where or who you get it from.”**  
In reality, not all racks are created equal. It's essential to find a vendor whose primary focus is on infrastructure rather than treating it as just another product in their portfolio.
- **“A low price is always the best deal.”**  
Focusing solely on price can lead to hidden costs down the road. Consider factors like quality, service, and long-term compatibility when evaluating vendors.
- **“We don't need to manage vendor relationships.”**  
Neglecting vendor management can result in miscommunications about lead times, inventory, and other critical details. Establishing a direct line of communication with vendors ensures reliable information and minimizes the risk of delays.
- **“Vendor relationships are all about negotiation.”**  
Collaboration and open communication are key. A strong vendor relationship built on trust can lead to win-win situations for both parties. By focusing on collaboration, quality, and long-term value, you can ensure that your vendor relationships contribute positively to your data center's capacity planning and overall success.



## What to Look for in a Vendor:

In the race against deployment deadlines, building strong, strategic partnerships with vendors is essential for aligning goals and improving supply chain resilience.

As technology continues to advance, data centers are increasingly turning away from vendors who can't meet their pace and requirements. In 2023, data center construction reached an all-time high, but extended lead times for key infrastructure components delayed many project delivery timelines.

Data centers should seek to work with suppliers who go beyond simply fulfilling purchase orders on time. Long-term relationships with vendors enhance access to their expertise, strategic insights, and analysis, helping data centers forecast demand, optimize resource allocation, and proactively identify potential issues before they arise.

## Here are eight key things to look for in a vendor:

- **Superior R&D** — Choose vendors with cutting-edge R&D facilities that enable real-world testing and demonstration, tailored to specific use cases and technical requirements. For instance, CPI's 10,200-square-foot R&D and Training Center allows data centers to interact with and observe solutions in action, ensuring optimal performance.
- **Rapid Customization** — Opt for vendors with a collaborative approach and a proven track record of delivering purpose-built turnkey solutions. CPI's modular platform-based design strategy offers rapid customization without compromising speed or pricing, making tailored solutions a standard, not a luxury.
- **Pre-Configuration** — Look for vendors that offer pre-installed components like PDUs, cable management, and thermal management in data center cabinets. This integration streamlines deployment, reduces setup time, and minimizes packaging waste, supporting sustainability by cutting down on materials and disposal efforts.
- **Current Capacity Analysis** — Your vendor should offer in-depth analysis of current infrastructure, including power usage and cooling efficiency, to identify specific needs for expansion. CPI offers inventory analysis, monitoring your current utilization of power against total power availability, and CFD modeling to assess the effectiveness of cooling systems to maintain optimum performance.
- **Expert Market Awareness** — Vendors should provide insights into emerging technologies and infrastructure trends through collaborative road mapping and active industry participation. As a trusted advisor, CPI stays ahead of market shifts, offering expertise in sales trends, geographical demand, regulatory environments, and more to deliver scalable, future-proof solutions that ensure compliance.
- **Data-Driven Insight** — Vendors that leverage advanced analytics for forecasting can better anticipate capacity needs and align production with your project timelines. CPI analyses sales and spending trends and leverages advanced analytics for data-driven forecasting to ensure fast, seamless deployments, adjusting production schedules to fit budget cycles and project timelines.
- **Agile Global Manufacturing** — As capacity expansion occurs globally, look for vendors with global manufacturing capabilities that offer flexibility, scalability, and risk management. CPI's global lean manufacturing, product availability, and logistics capabilities means we can quickly and reliably scale up or down and ensure fast lead times anywhere in the world while meeting local requirements, providing a competitive edge.
- **One-On-One Support** — Seek vendors offering knowledgeable direct account managers who understand the complexities of the data center landscape. CPI goes beyond traditional vendor roles, offering strategic partnership with deep expertise and dedicated support to ensure long-term value.

Connect with CPI today to leverage a strategic partnership that offers the expertise and support needed for effective capacity planning in today's complex data center environment.

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