# THE EDGE

## BUSINESS EXPECTATIONS DRIVING TRANSFORMATION OF DATA CENTRE

The data centre is under pressure to transform from a mere resource of hardware and software to a trusted partner helping businesses to compete in the digital marketplace, explains Sachin Bhardwaj, Director Marketing and Business Development, eHosting DataFort.

**THE DATA CENTRE OF THE PAST MAY HAVE BEEN A CUSTODIAN OF INFRASTRUCTURE BUT, GOING FORWARD, IT WILL NEED TO PLAY THE ROLE OF A PROVIDER OF LEADING-EDGE SERVICES FOR ENHANCED DIGITAL BUSINESS PERFORMANCE.**

In the past, the on-premises, enterprise data centre was the heart of the IT organisation. Today its importance and role is increasingly diluted, if you use its legacy responsibilities as a benchmark.

Similar to other operational functions of an organisation, the role of the data centre is rapidly transforming. But that does not mean its strategic importance for business is diminishing.

With the increasing migration of applications to the cloud through SaaS, PaaS and IaaS, the extent of workloads hosted on premises are also in decline. Gartner predicts that by 2025, 80% of enterprises will have scaled down their traditional data centres.

Data residency rules, an increasingly distributed global workforce, network latency, the Internet of Things and the emergence of managed service providers are some of the drivers for migration of workloads out of the traditional, on-premises data centre to more suitable options. Historically, the enterprise data centre used to address challenges such as: how do we best build the required infrastructure, in terms of cost, time and performance?

Today the demand has transformed to: how do we best place the workload in terms of agility and business benefits?

The on-premises legacy data centre is increasingly shrinking and becoming centralised to manage mission critical workloads with a higher degree of oversight, control and responsibility than is available through externally placed options.

While expectations from the traditional data centre shrink in terms of size of operations and IT spending, the expectations from the modern and digital data centre are rapidly increasing. The primary role of the data centre head is changing from being a builder and manager of data centre functions to becoming an enabler and collaborator for the business to perform.

As business heads increasingly choose to find more agile application and service options outside the IT organisation, by remaining steadfast on their traditional roles, the legacy data centre faces extinction. By transforming to becoming an enabler of the business and playing the role of broker and trusted adviser, the function of the data centre has a purpose in tomorrow's digital organisations.

Transformation of the legacy data centre into tomorrow's multi-function diversified role requires working on numerous fronts. Firstly, the on-premises data centre



*Sachin Bhardwaj, Director Marketing and Business Development, eHosting DataFort*

needs to be highly agile and responsive to meet internal demands. It needs to build a hybrid cloud delivery model, benchmarked using the best industry standards.

Secondly, it needs to attract and retain the best skills to manage internal expectations of delivering on machine language, Artificial Intelligence, business analytics and insights, amongst others.

Finally, and most importantly, it needs to help businesses to compete and differentiate in the fast-emerging digital marketplace, taking on born-in-the-cloud, pure play start-ups and other digital juggernauts. The story of the future data

centre is no longer about empirical metrics of hardware and software. It is about delivering real services that help businesses to accomplish their expectations.

The future of infrastructure is everywhere and anywhere and will be business-driven by nature, according to remarks made by a Gartner specialist.

According to Gartner, to drive success through this transformation, data centre heads can leverage various enablers:

- Artificial Intelligence: These tools will help the IT organisation to do vastly more with less resources, building suitable models for predictive failures and recovery.
- Severless computing: This is also known as function platform as a service and is an emerging software

architecture pattern that reduces the need for infrastructure management and planning.
- Network agility: Internal networking specialists must incorporate 5G technologies to enable the organisation to meet modern use cases and the customer's digital expectations.
- Edge Computing: This technology meets the expectations of the resident country and use cases, by bringing the workloads closer to the end customer.
- Technology partnerships: The IT organisation must enter into multiple supplier relationships to help scale operations and meet business expectations.

The data centre of the past may have been a custodian of infrastructure but, going forward, it will need to play the role

of a provider of leading-edge services for enhanced digital business performance. ◊

# TRANSFORMATION OF THE LEGACY DATA CENTRE INTO TOMORROW'S MULTI-FUNCTION DIVERSIFIED ROLE REQUIRES WORKING ON NUMEROUS FRONTS.