



Case Study

Clothing Brands Complete Complex Cross-Country Relocation to Consolidate Data Centers

Industry:

Fashion & Retail

CDCT provided:

- Consulting and strategic support
- On-site networking engineers and project management
- Network assessment and architecture
- Data center consolidation

CDCT services:

- Consulting Services
- Professional Services

The client

The client is a pair of two distinctive American clothing brands owned by a private equity firm. Founded in 1980, one of the brands specializes in California-inspired casual apparel and beachwear for the youth market and operates approximately 400 stores nationwide.

Over the past century, the other well-known brand has grown from a small sports and outdoor shop to global purveyor of clothing and outdoor gear. The company employs 10,000 people around the world.

The challenge: Move a complex and aging data center halfway across the country in under three days

After acquiring the two well-known clothing brands, the private equity company that owns them decided to combine operations, requiring a move of one of the brand's decided to combine operations for the two retailers, requiring a move of Eddie Bauer's complex and aging data center infrastructure from Chicago to Southern California. Not only would the move consolidate operations, it would also save the client one million dollars in rent each month.

Even before engaging Insight Cloud + Data Center Transformation (CDCT), the client had considered consolidating its data center. In 2020, however, the building housing the data center was sold, and the client was informed the move would need to be completed by April 2021, accelerating the timeline. To complicate matters, the client only had a 48-hour window to accomplish the move, which meant that the data center hardware would have to be flown from Chicago to California to meet the deadline.

Faced with the risky task of shutting down the complex data center and moving the aging systems and cabling across the country and then bringing the system back up on such a short timeline, the client drew on its long-standing relationship with Insight to get the job done.

The solution: Create a comprehensive plan to assess, organize, and accomplish the move via a chartered plane while minimizing downtime

Since most of the team from the brand had already relocated, Insight worked with the IT team on the ground in California to determine how best to move the equipment and to create a plan to make sure that the whole system could be brought back up within the allotted timeframe. After exploring commercial and private flight options, Insight recommended that the client proceed by chartering a plane in order to minimize risk to the business. After considering all the options we presented, the client proceeded with chartering a plane based on our recommendation.

Prior to the move, the client began organizing cabling and consolidating racks and drives to free up physical space and expedite the process, ultimately reducing the number of racks from 42 to nine, based on the planning suggestions laid out by Insight.

In addition to helping the client physically plan and prepare for the move, we relied on our extensive experience with data center migration to also identify the many potential issues that could cause problems for the client, including the possibilities that old hardware was likely to experience failures and that systems that hadn't been rebooted in years might not come back up after being shut down. Furthermore, our team identified that careful attention would have to be paid to the order in which the system would need to go down and then come back up.

On the day of the move, severe weather and power outages delayed the arrival of the charter plane, eating up 12 hours of valuable time. Despite the unexpected delays and problems outside of anyone's control, the Insight team stayed calm, and with the help of a fresh cabling team on the ground in Anaheim and a few key parts delivered by a third-party maintenance provider, the entire system was back online and running by the deadline, limiting the amount of downtime experienced by the client. In total, our team planned for and oversaw the move of nearly 150 pieces of equipment — used to store 80–90 terabytes of data — halfway across the country.

The benefits: A consolidated data center that relies on less hardware and saves millions of dollars each year in rent

Despite the significant challenges posed by a data center lift and shift of this scale and complexity, the Insight team was able to instill confidence in the client by methodically approaching the project and providing detailed analysis of the challenges and possible solutions. Throughout the entire planning and moving process, our team carefully adhered to COVID-19 pandemic social distancing and public health requirements, and accomplished the consolidation without putting the client, third-party vendors, or our team at risk.

According to the client, "From start to finish, Insight provided the experience and assurance we needed to successfully undertake a shift of this magnitude and risk. Despite numerous obstacles, the team remained confident and professional and ultimately delivered everything we asked for on the accelerated timeline we needed."

In response to stress and unforeseen roadblocks, the Insight team assisted the client through the entire process, providing leadership and expert support to help the client make sound decisions about complex issues with little lead time. Our extensive experience and resources helped the client achieve its longstanding goal of consolidating its data centers, saving millions of dollars in the process.

Benefits:



Significant savings on data center rent

Consolidate operations for two divisions of the company



A strong relationship with a trusted partner to execute the project

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CS-CB-2.0.06.21

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