SIMS LIFECYCLE SERVICES

Checklist for Selecting a Decommissioning Vendor

When embarking on a project as complex as decommissioning a data center, it is critical to have the right partner by your side. The entire project will be more successful and positive for your staff if the vendor you select is a good fit for your organization.

The vendor's service range, industry reputation, size and financial stability should all be considered. Can they provide a project plan, data destruction services, resell and recycle decommissioned assets, methodically account for all inventory and offer accurate reports? Can they support removal of racks, cables, UPS, generators and other ancillary equipment?

Here are six topics and questions that will help you find the right data center decommissioning vendor for you.

On-Site Services

Decommissioning and removal of assets is not just a matter of unplugging and packing unused equipment. It is a complex process that is often made more complicated because it frequently occurs in a live environment. As it relates to on-site services, you will want to ask your vendors these questions:

- ☐ Can the vendor decommission, disassemble and prepare equipment for shipping?
- ☐ Can they help you avoid costly data breaches by providing data destruction services at the data center?
- ☐ Are they able to provide a project plan with clear and complete allocation of responsibilities?
- ☐ Do they have documented processes to ensure there is no disruption to the live environment that manages your daily operations?
- ☐ Can they work during off-peak hours in a live data center?
- ☐ Do they have a proven track record of data center work?

Data Security and Data Destruction

Why take unnecessary risks when you can have your digital data destroyed before it leaves your custody? Data breaches have become more common and costly, and many are seeking services that will manage digital data by destroying it on-site.

No company is exempt, and it is critical for companies to take action. As it relates to data destruction, you need to ask these questions of your vendor:

☐ What data destruction/hard drive erasure services can the company provide? Do they have solutions to destroy data for the full range of storage media – magnetic hard drives and tapes, solid state drives, flash storage and storage area networks (SANs)?

☐ Can their infrastructure handle your volume requirements?

☐ What data destruction reporting is provided to demonstrate your compliance to corporate and regulatory requirements, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)?

☐ If data is not destroyed on-site, how are IT assets securely removed from the data center? How will they guarantee an unbroken chain of custody?

Compliance – Tracking and Reporting

For audit purposes associated with regulatory and corporate compliance, defined processes that demonstrate discipline, due diligence and best practices in how IT and data center equipment are handled and data destroyed are critical. Your decommissioning partner needs to provide proof that processes were followed and data was responsibly destroyed.

If you are faced with a legislative audit, it is important to demonstrate that IT assets and data were disposed compliant with regulations in a consistent, repeatable and predictable manner.

When speaking to a potential vendor, you will want to ask:

☐ How are IT assets managed once they are removed from the data center environment?

☐ Are there any vulnerabilities in the chain of custody after assets leave your custody? Does the vendor ensure security during transit? How are assets tracked when being processed for resale or recycling?

☐ What documentation and reports can the vendor provide for your corporate and regulatory requirements? For inventory reconciliation? How do they ensure accuracy of reports?

☐ What proof points can they offer to demonstrate what happens to your equipment once it is removed from the data center?

SUSTAINABILITY GOALS:

Companies today are quantifying reductions in their environmental impact and seeking ways to demonstrate positive sustainability results. Reusing and recycling retired IT assets plays an important role in the circular economy by decreasing mining of natural resources and landfill volumes. Some companies offer resale services and some offer recycling services. SLS offers both services, within the same facilities. Many companies prefer this single-source solution because it minimizes re-shipping of e-waste from a resale vendor to a recycler, thereby minimizing the overall carbon footprint of processing IT assets, as well as the potential for data breaches.

Resale of Retired IT Assets

Reselling your decommissioned IT assets is a great way to help offset project costs, as well as reduce the total cost of IT ownership. To understand a vendor's resale expertise it is good to ask:

- ☐ Does the vendor have the capability and expertise to sell a full range of data equipment profitably?
- ☐ How do they maximize resale value of IT assets?
- ☐ Do they offer unique processing capabilities to maximize value recovery from your equipment?
- ☐ Are they experienced in selling component parts as well as complete assets?
- ☐ Are they well connected in secondary markets? Can they sell items in bulk and also through retail channels?
- ☐ What global markets do they operate in?

Recycling of Obsolete Electronics

Equipment that is not resold will be recycled. This step can easily be overlooked but is an important part of managing the final disposition of IT equipment. A strong electronics recycling program will maximize your sustainability efforts and recovery value, minimize costs, and help you gain control over your reverse supply chain. When it comes to the recycling of your equipment you can ask your vendor the following questions:

- ☐ How is obsolete and broken equipment disposed of? Is this subcontracted out? If so, how are subcontractors vetted and managed?
- ☐ Are their operations certified to industry standards?
- ☐ What insurance do they carry? Does it include pollution liability coverage?
- ☐ What proof do they offer that no hazardous material is sent to landfill?
- ☐ Can they provide an audit trail to guarantee no e-waste is illegally exported?

With these questions answered, you will be empowered to choose the right data center decommissioning partner for your project, and can ensure your equipment and data is secure and responsibly processed at your data center, in transit and at a vendor's facility.

SLS provides data center decommissioning services including deracking, removing and destroying hard drives, inventory reconciliation, packing and shipping of assets, and resale and recycling for all data center equipment.

Visit simslifecycle.com for more information.