

The components of a high-performance data center

CtrlS is having a profound effect in the IT industry in Asia. Located in India, CtrlS prides itself in being the country's first Tier IV certified data center. With the outsourcing market hitting great heights in India, ETM spoke to Sridhar Reddy of CtrlS to see why the company as well as the country has become an emerging technology hub.

ETM: CtrlS' quest for quality has led you to create a data center that's apparently a landmark in Mumbai, India, so would you like to give our readers a profile about your company.

Sridhar: CtrlS began nearly five years ago. We started with a vision of creating the very best data centers across the globe. And that's how we started and we built the first Tier IV data center in India. We integrated a data center three months ago, which is the largest tier four data center in the entire industry. Our total ownership approach from the best-in-class infrastructure, and our total ownership philosophy is to ensure that the customers unmet and unspoken needs are also met.

ETM: Many IT vendors think they've found the perfect solution for operational data center efficiency so, what would you say makes your data center hubs unique in this respect, Sridhar?

Sridhar: I have seen a lot of work happening with respect to green IT in terms of investment. For example, there are some organizations which created data centers in very cold locations where there is no air conditioning required and ensured that energy and engines are very low. However, I am slightly critical of that approach because it is like saying that since you use a lot of electricity in Chicago to warm up our homes, you will have to move people to California and live there — so is it practical?

What we have done in CtrlS is that we must embrace green IT. I personally believe that it's a fundamental duty for any citizen of this globe to show environmental consciousness.

The second thing is that despite all the advancements in the network and the infrastructure etc. the location, all of a sudden, has to be closer. The data centers cannot be far away in very, very remote locations where there are only one or two telecom

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providers working, taking a few hours for any expert IT person to go to those data centers. The logistics are not ideal. So a data center has to be close to a mature location in terms of infrastructure.

And the third and most important thing is the viability of creating green IT by making vast amounts of investment. Having green IT should not leave the company in the red on their balance sheets. So what we have created at CtrlS is a data center which is the most efficient considering all the pre-factors which go into the three typical aspects of the data center — the uptime, location, and the budget. Keeping those in mind, we have created a commercial data center which is viable but yet at the same time, consumes less energy by 20-25% than any other data center in India which is commercially operated. This is the most energy efficient data center in possibly the top five across the globe operating on a 1.5 Power Usage Effectiveness [PUE] rating.

ETM: CtrlS' data centers are Tier IV certified, the first and only one certified to that level in India. How have your products evolved and what are the key technologies that your company has implemented to make your data center what it is today?

Sridhar: People think we are an infrastructure focused provider. That's because of the number of things we have done in establishing a Tier IV and green IT infrastructure but you'd be surprised to know that more than 60% of our revenue has come from the

recess around this infrastructure. We have come up with a number of technologies and products which not only deal with best in class infrastructure and the network that they want to use, but also provide a serious advantage in IT investments in the data management of the customer's IT departments. We have done pioneering work in the area of disaster recovery whereby we have reduced the cost customers pay by more than 40-50%.

We have done this by establishing the on-demand framework, which is developed for all of those popular applications and technologies. Using this framework we have tremendous cost margins and today in India it has become the industry's benchmark. We have signed up a number of enterprise clients for disaster recovery services.

Similarly we have launched a very unique product in the cloud area. Private cloud is the most popular today for enterprises today in India because of the security benefits. Private clouds are benefitting from costs but they don't have the same costs benefits of the public cloud; the reason being that the elasticity of the private cloud is limited.

We have come up with an offering of our cloud with an on-demand feature which has ensured both the objectives of the client are met in their infrastructure. We have delivered a number of solutions around the storage departments on cloud like live security services required by the client. We are also coming up with several applications like Customer Relationship Management [CRM]. Those kinds of applications are on-demand, and we are also coming up with remote infrastructure labs.



ETM: India has been synonymous with outsourcing in the IT services space for some time now. Do you think there's an advantage India, and in particular, CtrIS can offer to businesses globally in the IT infrastructure and services space?

Sridhar: The short answer is yes. But so far it has not been very popular. India's connections used to be very high but that is now changing dramatically. Every year for the last 16-17 years, the bandwidths have dropped consistently of a minimum of around 50 percent.

We are still quite expensive when it comes to connectivity costs but we are cheaper in our service delivery as our infrastructure build out costs are 30-40 percent less than the data coming into the country. If anyone is looking at a combination of the Infrastructure-as-a-Service delivery and increasing in the quality of the deliverables — if one looks at it from these points of view and conducts more analysis, India is definitely cheaper and more attractive.

ETM: Finally can you outline the direction data centers are going into the future? It was not too long ago we were saying data centers were very expensive and inefficient, but to some extent you could say that's still the case but we are gradually improving as an industry. Where does the industry go from here?

Sridhar: Yes, it's still definitely expensive today. Data center providers used to sell companies which do need internet presence for their e-commerce platform or a dot.com company. But today's data centers are predominantly settling enterprises for the regular IT needs of different departments within them. There's a significant sea change which has already happened in that the cost of progress discovered that outsourcing to a data center and their regular IT needs are far more cost effective.

There are a number of case studies. Some of our customers have saved up to 40%. This year I've also discovered that the effectiveness, the uptime, the efficiencies, the turnaround for any problem tickets by users, all showed improvement just by outsourcing to a good data center.

Smart enterprises have already outsourcing to the data centers. However, going forward, what's happening is very interesting. Organizations are soon realizing that cost effective improvement is less compared to the cost of managing the same. Their IT staff costs are probably more than the infrastructure or the hardware costs. And there are administration issues, despite all the additional checks they have to keep on guaranteeing the deliverables, they are facing to choose issues with their service deliveries with different technologies because technology is constantly evolving. So the smarter ones have realized that a good data center should focus on managing services as separate entities as people focus on different technologies and that they are one of the same. They reduce the issues around IT staff and also with data centers.



Sridhar Reddy
Chairman and Managing Director
CtrIS

Sridhar Reddy is the Chairman and Managing Director of the CtrIS, which runs India's first and only Tier 4 certified datacenters in India. Credited with the achievement of a PUE of 1.42, CtrIS runs the most energy efficient Tier 4 datacenters in India and is recognized as one of the fastest growing companies by NASSCOM, the premier trade body and the chamber of commerce of the IT-BPO industries in India.

Sridhar is also the founder of the Rs750cr Pioneer group with interests in IT and IT infrastructure. He has been instrumental in registering a 100% growth for the group consistently for the last 15 years.

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