

Cincinnati Bell Technology Solutions Scores With Comprehensive Data Center Services

Customers lining up to take advantage of provider's expertise and secure solutions

Cincinnati Bell has been serving the greater Cincinnati area since 1873, when the company incorporated as the City and Suburban Telegraph Company. Today, they offer a diversified portfolio of technology and telecommunications services. One of their fastest growing ventures is Cincinnati Bell Technology Solutions (CBTS), a service provider with enterprise customers in the Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana tri-state area. The subsidiary now counts several hundred Cincinnati-area businesses, from small shops to Fortune 500 companies, among its customers.

Collocation and virtual data center are among CBTS' most popular services. First offered in 2004, demand skyrocketed immediately and shows no signs of abating. Utilized data center space has increased from 10,000 square feet at the beginning of 2004 to more than 200,000 square feet in 2008. Based on anticipated demand, it will double in the next 24-36 months.

Planning for Long-Term Success

Ed Martin, director of CBTS data center operations, knew that trusted DC infrastructure vendors would be key to consistently smooth installations and maintenance in the rapidly growing centers. He evaluated numerous options and eventually settled on a package of lines, including Leviton's structured cabling solution, repped by Pat Currie's PC Telecom Group (PCT). "We require top-quality infrastructure to achieve the reliability needed in the critical data center environment," said Ed. "But just as importantly, we need 24/7 service. Pat has consistently been available around the clock to solve problems, which has contributed significantly to our continued success."

Leviton in turn has been an essential part of Pat's portfolio for several years now. He and Jim Martin (no relation to Ed), Leviton Network



Leviton patch panels, connectors, and patch cords provide copper and fiber connectivity throughout the CBTS data centers

Solutions District Sales Manager, had been working in the same circles for close to a decade when Jim approached Pat about adding Leviton as a PCT vendor. Pat jumped at the idea. "Leviton shares PCT's commitment to quality products and service. I was confident they'd make a great addition to the company's suite of data communications product solutions," Pat enthused. "My customers have been uniformly pleased with Leviton, and so have I. Leviton and Jim are true assets to PCT."

"When Ed and I discussed CBTS's needs, I knew that PCT's focus on service would be a perfect fit," Pat continues. "Leviton in particular has been right there when questions arise. More than once Jim and I have come in to one of Ed's facilities at 3 a.m. to work through something with the DC managers and technicians."

Standard Equipment Simplifies Operations

Ed and his team selected a standard set of products for all of their primary infrastructure components, including power, cooling, rack and cabinets, cable management, and structured cabling. The standards have proven very successful. Ordering, stocking, installations, and maintenance are all greatly simplified, and centers can transfer components between facilities freely.

CBTS uses Leviton's patch panels, patch cords, and connectors for copper and fiber connectivity in all of its data centers. QuickPort® 24-port 1RU unpopulated flat patch panels allow technicians to mix copper and fiber connectivity as needed and minimize unused ports. Color-coded CAT 6 patch cords, bundled cables, and connectors provide bandwidth and performance while distinguishing routing and connectivity at a glance. Preterminated 50/125µ LOMM LC-LC fiber trunks and MTP-LC harnesses offer exceptional Db loss rates and dramatically shorten time frames for completing large-scale installations. Approved-partner copper and fiber cable, optimized for Leviton product solutions, provides superior channel performance.



Tony Kidd, senior manager, and Brian Pace, lead technician, manage switches and servers at the Hamilton data center to maintain optimal performance

“Frankly, all of the Leviton equipment we evaluated exceeded our standards,” said Russell Fox, senior manager of CBTS data center operations. “We selected the components that we thought would provide the most flexibility and best integration with the rest of our infrastructure, but I would have been pleased with any of their solutions. Leviton’s structured cabling equipment delivers outstanding performance, quality, and reliability.”

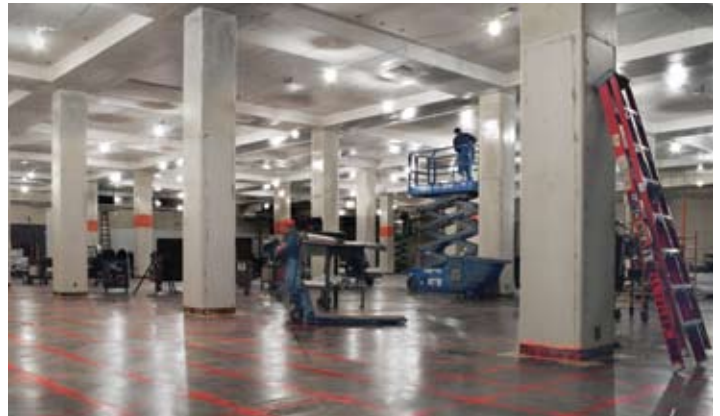
Leviton also creates custom solutions to meet CBTS’ unique needs. When DC staff discovered that they needed a new cable manager to adequately support the fiber in some of their cabinets, Leviton SpaceMaker patch cord organizers, installed vertically instead of in the traditional horizontal configuration, were the perfect solution. In addition, all copper and fiber trunk cables are made to exact specifications, including overall length. This eliminates the need to store excess cable, which can congest the already-dense infrastructure, compromise cable integrity, and impact cooling.

Speeding Installations with a Trusted Team

CBTS only adds data center space as new customers come on board, so a short build-out cycle is essential. Each center keeps stock on hand, but large expansions usually require a substantial quantity of infrastructure products to be delivered quickly – very quickly. Vendor and distributor coordination to keep sufficient stock on hand, in addition to the ability to get it out to the construction site at a moment’s notice, is essential. “We plan our expansions thoroughly, and we need equipment delivered fast, as soon as next day,” Ed notes. “We’ve never been delayed due to a lack of structured cabling equipment. PCT, Anixter, and Leviton have always come through for us.”

To further facilitate meeting the tight schedules, Ed also uses the same contractors to build out all new CBTS data center space. But CBTS staff experts design all the DC space and install all equipment racks and cabinets, cabling infrastructure, and of course active equipment.

Leviton partner certification training, which is provided annually, enhances CBTS staff expertise. Beginning in 2003, CBTS data center



Construction is proceeding smoothly at the downtown facility’s latest floor conversion

staff became Certified Cabling Systems Partners, and when Leviton changed to the two-tiered Strategic Partner Program, they upgraded to the Premier Partner (LPP) level. The knowledge and skills gained in the training, such as all fiber termination techniques, allows them to fulfill any customer needs. In addition, since certified LPPs install the Leviton cabling infrastructure in each CBTS data center build-out, the equipment and channel performance includes a lifetime warranty.

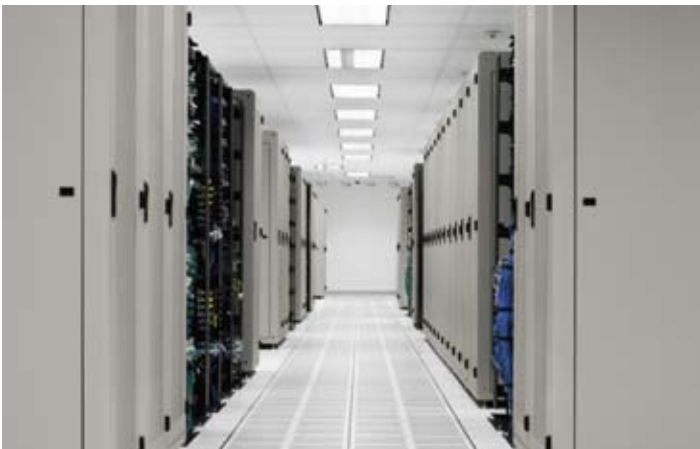
Thanks to Ed’s careful planning, vendor selection, and crack team of in-house specialists, installations are virtually seamless. “It’s a real partnership,” Ed reports. “Getting new facilities or floors up and running as quickly as we do takes a concerted effort, with everyone working cooperatively. I’m extremely pleased with the collaborative effort the CBTS team and our primary vendors put in to make each project come together so smoothly.”

Building the Future

Data center construction is the standard, not the exception, for CBTS. Currently, they are building out in two locations. At one of Cincinnati Bell’s downtown facilities, where CBTS already utilizes three floors, another level is being converted from workstations to DC space. This conversion will add 20,000 square feet of space for collocation and virtual data center equipment.

A completely new facility is taking shape in the historic suburb of Lebanon, Ohio. The building, at close to 200,000 square feet, will allow CBTS to keep up with customer demand for its services for some time. To make the large space more manageable, CBTS effectively split the building in two by walling it down the center. They’re currently working on their largest single build-out to date on one side – 50,000 square feet of active DC space, plus 48,000 square feet for cooling, power, and administration. Once complete, they plan to mirror the design on the other side.

After that? Undoubtedly, it will be yet another expansion or new facility, along with continued maintenance of existing facilities. And Leviton, PCT, and the rest of CBTS’s partners will surely be there, ensuring it all goes as planned.



Cross-connect racks feature Leviton’s structured cabling equipment