



CenturyLink Solutions Featuring:

CyberCenter

Case Study: Outback Steakhouse, OSI Restaurant Partners CIO



Business Challenge:

Outback's data center was located in the heart of hurricane country in Tampa Bay Florida. To guard against service disruptions, IT decision makers opted to find a vendor offering a category five collocation facility. Additionally, the company experienced problems connecting restaurants across the nation using over 100 different vendors

Solution:

CenturyLink sales and engineering team designed a multiple data center solution that not only resolved the company's power and network issues but also secured their data and met their Sarbanes Oxley requirements.

Benefits and Results:*

After implementation, Hurricane Charlie knocked out the power to the former data center location. "...the restaurants knew nothing had happened."

- Excellent project implementation. "This project is the classic example of how to do a project."
- Strong partnership relationship with CenturyLink team.
- Enabled infrastructure consolidation and data backup (previously not done).

*These results are unique to this entity and should not be considered an indication of the amount of savings or improvements, if any, that may be realized by any other entity subscribing to comparable services.

Outback Steakhouse, OSI Restaurant Partners CIO

The Customer

Outback Steakhouse opened for business in 1988 with a single restaurant in Tampa, Florida—a venture launched by a group of visionaries who melded their concept of a casual, dinner-only Australian steakhouse with a passion for high-quality food, service and hospitality. In early 2006, Outback Steakhouse, Inc. became OSI Restaurant Partners, Inc., which includes more than 800 Outback Steakhouses in the U.S. and abroad, as well as the popular Carrabba's Italian Grill, Lee Roy Selmon's, Cheeseburger in Paradise, Roy's, Blue Coral, Fleming's Prime Steakhouse and Bonefish Grill restaurants. Still headquartered in Tampa, the company currently includes 1,200+ locations domestically, located in all 50 states; and Outback Steakhouses now serve guests in 21 countries.



The Customer's Challenge

In 2003, the Outback Steakhouse leadership team was growing increasingly concerned about the security of their company headquarters, housed in a building just 800 feet from the end of the Tampa International runway. Air traffic, however, was not the problem. Company facilities were potentially in the path of any hurricane that might hit land after traveling into Tampa Bay. The area had, in fact, experienced flooding just one year earlier; and the building, which had no redundancy or backup power, housed the burgeoning company's data center that processed many thousands of daily transactions.

Apprehensive about frequent power outages and loss of network connections, CIO Dusty Williams and his IT team set out to ascertain how these potential perils could be eliminated. (A well-timed initiative, as it turned out. One year later, in 2004, Hurricane Charlie barreled through the area, taking down power.)

We really feel that our Qwest team members are an extension of Outback Steakhouse.

—Dusty Williams, OSI Restaurants Partners CIO

Williams initiated discussions with four well-known communications providers, including CenturyLink. Not only was he looking for greater security and reliability, he was seeking to streamline the company's operations. "Overall, we probably had almost a hundred different vendors providing connectivity to the data center. We needed to simplify that entire process," Williams explains. "Our primary focus is to serve our customers—the restaurants and their patrons. We wanted no interruptions—no reasons that they couldn't fully perform their functions. They're a restaurant group, not a technology group. And we were looking for ways to make their jobs a lot simpler."

The Successful Solution

The company's number-one objective was to move the company's data center into a secure, "category 5" facility—and to do so while maintaining total service.

"We looked at a lot of different options, a lot of different facilities," Williams recalls. One option was clearly superior: CenturyLink's state-of-the-art CyberCenter in Tampa, which offered a single network platform complete with 24x7 technical expertise availability, as well as managed firewall and disaster recovery services.

The facility decision underway, the CenturyLink sales and engineering team designed a multiple data center solution that not only resolved the company's power and network issues but also secured their data and met their Sarbanes Oxley requirements.

"We began the process in mid-2003, and we had everything up and running by the end of the year," explains Dusty Williams. And what about the flawless execution he was seeking? "Two weeks after it happened, I went into a meeting and said, 'Did anyone know we're working out of a new data center?' All

around the table, I hear 'no's—which was a great thing. Nothing had happened. There had been zero interruption. It went flawlessly, and not a single person had reason to call me."

Since that successful launch, CenturyLink has provided OSI Restaurant Partners, Inc., with numerous additional cost-effective solutions, including a second, back-up data center located in CenturyLink's Chicago Cyber Center.

The Enthusiastic Endorsement

The data center move and subsequent remote backup facilities were only one aspect of multiple CenturyLink provided solutions now providing benefits to OSI Restaurant Partners, Inc. Williams explains that these solutions have improved the company's business efficiency by removing layers, simplifying processes and enhancing services never before available to OSI customers. Williams and his IT team applaud their new capabilities—and offer enthusiastic praise: "We've built a relationship, a partnership out of it—and that's what we were looking for when we started down this path," he says. "We really feel that our Qwest team members are an extension of Outback Steakhouse."

And how might he change the process were he to do it all again? Williams doesn't hesitate: "I wouldn't change a thing," he says. "If you think about how you want a project to go, that's exactly how this project went!"

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