Considering moving your company's infrastructure off-site? Here are ten factors to consider as you select the right technology partner for your business.

1. Reliability: Insist on five nines reliability – meaning the service provider can demonstrate that its infrastructure is up and available at least 99.999% of the time.

2. Security: What measures has the service provider taken to ensure your infrastructure will be safe and secure? Is access to the facility – and to your systems – strictly controlled with multiple layers of protection?

3. Network connectivity: Choice and redundancy matter. Make certain your colocation partner is carrier neutral and offers direct physical connectivity to multiple communication networks on premises – enabling you to select your carrier of choice without concerns about "last mile" access. You also want to make certain cost-effective alternatives are readily available in the event your primary network connection goes down.

4. Redundant power: Since power is the lifeblood of any IT infrastructure, look for a service provider who offers fully redundant power systems – double the amount needed to operate without a single point of failure. Ask how many outages the company has had over the past five years and how those outages have impacted customers.

5. Protection against storms, fire and other disasters: Ask lots of questions about the physical infrastructure of the data center you are considering. Is the building hardened and well protected? Has it been built to withstand hurricane-force winds? Are there redundant fire protection systems in place? Is the data center geographically located in a low-risk area for both natural and man-made disasters?

6. Engineering and IT service support: Is comprehensive engineering support available to help you make a smooth transition? Make certain the company offers a highly skilled and experienced team. Also explore whether the provider has the capacity to augment your core IT team as needed – giving you a way to extend your resources without adding headcount.

7. Continuous, on-site monitoring: Ask whether the service provider has an on-site network operations center staffed 24/7 by a team of experts, with sufficient redundancy to handle peak times and contingencies. If so, you can rest assured any potential issues with your systems will be identified, flagged and resolved before they escalate and impact performance.

8. Financial stability and strategic alignment: Be apprehensive of new start-ups – as well as firms owned by venture capitalists and private equity groups whose strategic focus may not align with your own best interests. Instead, select a partner with proven staying power, financial stability and a customer-centric strategic focus. If you move to a data center that has operational issues due to insufficient funding, or to a firm that is focused on taking profits out of the business instead of investing in new capabilities, you can waste significant time and resources and place your own company's operations at risk.

9. Compliance: Make certain the provider is SSAE 16 and PCI-DSS audited. Ask how your colocation partner will help you comply with any other certifications your business requires, such as HIPAA, Gramm-Leach-Bliley, Sarbanes-Oxley and HITECH.

10. Customer service and satisfaction: Nothing matters more than a proven track record for customer service and satisfaction. Ask for references and contact them for feedback on the provider's strengths and weaknesses.