Birkman Taps Data Foundry as Data Center Outsourcing Partner

Company

- Developer of world famous Birkman Method® questionnaire and assesment method
- Support over 1,000 organizations around the globe
- Generates more than 8,000 assesments each month

Industry

Information Services

The Opportunity

Demand for Birkman's online services was skyrocketing, but its inhouse IT infrastructure couldn't keep pace

The Solution

Birkman selected Data Foundry to collocate its mission-critical web and database servers along with a suite of services that gives them the reliability, redundancy and security required.

The Results

A complete and scaleable outsourced data center solution to keep Birkman's sensitive data safe, secure and available:

- Colocation and Managed Tape Backup services
- Managed firewall services
- 24/7 network monitoring
- Fast, bulletproof Internet connectivity

Data Foundry's Enterprise Data Center Services Keep Birkman's Sensitive Data Safe And Secure.

The Company

Birkman International, a 60-year-old firm based in Houston, Texas, is one of the top behavioral and occupational assessment companies in the world, generating nearly 8,000 online assessment reports every month. They're the developers of The Birkman Method®, a well known questionnaire and human resource assessment methodology used by more than 1,000 organizations throughout the world – from the largest Fortune 100 companies to small, independent consultancies. More than 1.5 million people have taken the Birkman questionnaire to date.

The Opportunity

For years, The Birkman Method had been delivered to companies, consultancies and individuals via Birkman's proprietary client-server software. Then, in 2001, the company launched BirkmanDirect®, a fully integrated web-based system that would ultimately replace its clientserve software. BirkmanDirect was an instant success. Demand grew rapidly, and soared when the company signed a large new client with exacting requirements for web-based services. However, even as BirkmanDirect gained popularity with clients, Birkman faced an increasingly

> "They looked at our situation and tailored a solution to our specific needs, and even helped us identify gaps in our IT infrastructure. DataFoundry is proactive, unquestionably reliable and cost-effective – they're everything a corporate IT partner should be."
>
> **- Beverly Martin, Birkman International**

unwieldy IT infrastructure challenge. At the time, it wasn't uncommon for Birkman's in-house web servers to go down one or more times a day, or for the company's Internet connection to be unknowingly bumped offline for entire weekends. "We were not monitoring effectively and had no built-in redundancy for our web systems," noted Beverly Martin, Director of Information Systems for Birkman. "We went from 50 online questionnaires a week to over 200 every day. We needed an IT partner who could help us manage this growth, and do it quickly, reliably and cost

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effectively." Although Birkman had long-term plans to upgrade its in-house IT infrastructure to support web-based services, the outstanding growth of BirkmanDirect meant the company had to implement changes much faster than originally planned. And there was another reason Birkman needed to strengthen its IT infrastructure quickly. Martin explains, "When someone takes the Birkman questionnaire, their data stays in our system forever. Our clients need to know that this data is secure online and available at any time. If they can't rely on our system – even if it's only for 10-15 minutes – it erodes the confidence and trust they have in our company."

Corporate Data Centers: To Outsource Or Not?

Minimum Data Center Requirements	In-House	Data Foundry
24x7x365 multilayered security (physical and network)	?	YES
Guaranteed 100% uptime due to multiple levels of power, network, router and switch redundancy	?	YES
Precise humidity and cooling systems control, raised flooring	?	YES
Managed daily and weekly tape backup with secure off-site data storage	?	YES
Fully redundant power and multiple backup generators	?	YES
24x7x365 network monitoring	?	YES

The Solution

After evaluating more than four candidate companies – some local, some as far away as Atlanta, GA – Birkman chose Data Foundry as its IT partner, signing on as one of a growing base of corporate datacenter customers. Data Foundry immediately stood apart from its competitors because it offered:

• Exceptional network and data center reliability
• A financially stable history of consistent profitability
• Knowledgeable and resourceful sales and customer service engineers
• Better return-on-investment for its services and products

"Data Foundry already had a solid presence in the Houston market, and we corroborated this with several independent inquiries we made prior to coming on board," Martin noted. "We liked that Data Foundry's salespersons were highly technical." Today, Birkman's web and database systems are colocated off-site at Data Foundry's secure, state-of-the-art data center in Houston. The data center offers the advanced equipment, facility technologies and utilities that customers need to house and protect mission-critical servers. Data Foundry also provides a complete suite of services that gives Birkman the reliability, redundancy and security its IT infrastructure requires, including managed Internet and firewall services, server and router monitoring and routine tape backups on daily and weekly schedules.

Often no more than back-room closets, in-house corporate data centers frequently lack the security and infrastructure companies need to protect their data and servers. However, companies like Data Foundry, with four state-of-the-art data centers throughout Texas, allow companies to meet and maintain the minimum criteria above.

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The Power Of Partnering: Data Foundry's Corporate Data Centers Outsourcing Solution

Data Foundry Service	Benefits to Birkman
Colocation of Web and database services	Protects Web-based applications and databases at safe, off-site Internet DataCenter; easily scalable solution to match company growth
Managed tape backup	Automated backup prevents loss of data
Managed firewall services	Keeps data safe from intruders
Peacekeeper™ Server and Router Monitoring	Enables early identification and remedy of system problems
Managed Internet Services	Provides fast, bulletproof Internet connectivity via the TexasNAP
Managed load balancing	Promotes consistant availability of data, especially during demand surges

The Results

Today, more than 99% of Birkman's clients tap into The Birkman Method through BirkmanDirect. With Data Foundry as its corporatedata center outsourcing partner, Birkman's IT infrastructure now has the redundancy, security and reliability to ensure that:

• Clients have continuous access to BirkmanDirect, and
• Clients never need to worry about the integrity of Birkman questionaire data.

"It's been nearly two years since we started working with Data Foundry, and we're still as impressed with them as we were on day one," Martin said. **"Data Foundry is available at any hour, day or night. They're proactive, unquestionably reliable and cost effective.**

"Data Foundry's specialists worked directly with our team to ensure a smooth transition of Birkman's servers to the Houston data center – and accomplished this well within our pressing deadline," said Martin. "They did their homework regarding our needs, answered our questions, provided detailed operational schedules and were available throughout the entire process."

About Data Foundry

Data Foundry is a privately held company headquartered in Austin, Texas that provides data center colocation, disaster recovery and managed services for enterprise customers across a variety of industries including energy, healthcare and financial services. The company's premier data centers are supported by experienced onsite technicians, security staff and customer support 24 X 7 X 365. Founded in 1994, Data Foundry was one of the first 50 Internet Service Providers in the United States. Today, Data Foundry owns and operates purpose-built, carrier-neutral data centers in Texas and operates a global network with colocation presences for deployments worldwide. For more information, visit www.datafoundry.com or call 1.888.839.2794.

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