EBOOK

Making the Case for Managing Technology Assets in IDF Closets

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Introduction

IDF closets are everywhere—providing the network connectivity that keep hospitals running, stores selling, campuses online, and more. Yet, unlike core data centers, the technology infrastructure in these essential spaces are often overlooked and undermanaged.

IDF closets are more distributed, less documented, and prone to risk. As IT environments become more complex and more distributed, and downtime becomes more expensive, neglecting IDF closets is no longer sustainable.

At Sunbird, as the leader in second-generation Data Center Infrastructure Management (DCIM) software, we have the privilege of collaborating with the world's top data center, IT, and network professionals. A clear trend is emerging with them: Technology Asset Management for All Spaces, especially IDF closets.

In this eBook, you will learn why IDF closets are mission-critical, how they are often undermanaged, and what innovators are doing to gain control of these spaces with real-world success stories.

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The Growing Importance of IDF Closets

IDF closets are more than out-of-sight, small-scale rooms with some networking equipment. They are critical components of modern IT infrastructure. As organizations embrace distributed IT, remote work, IoT, and edge computing, the role of these small but vital spaces is evolving.

While they may not initially seem to carry the weight of a core data center, IDF closets increasingly support services that are customer-facing, revenue-generating, and mission-critical.

In retail, a single offline closet can halt point-of-sale transactions. In healthcare, it can disrupt patient monitoring systems. In education, it can disconnect entire wings of a campus from digital learning platforms.

This rise in importance means that IDF closets can no longer be treated as secondary. Organizations must shift their mindset and treat them as first-class citizens in their technology asset management strategy.

Common Challenges of Managing IDF Closets

IDF closets are integral to the functionality of modern IT environments, yet they often introduce unique management challenges. As businesses become more decentralized and rely on distributed networks, managing these smaller, critical spaces becomes increasingly difficult.

Some of the most common challenges that organizations face when managing IDF closets include:

- **No visibility into equipment inventory and configuration.** Organizations often lack the same visibility into their IDF closets that they might have for their data center sites, leaving teams without a clear understanding of what assets they have and how they are configured and physically connected. This lack of insight can lead to operational inefficiencies such as difficulty troubleshooting issues or planning deployments.
- **Lack of change management and documentation.** Moves, adds, and changes in IDF closets are typically not documented with the same rigor as in data centers. This results not only in poorer visibility into asset inventory, but potentially also in unforeseen issues that lead to unplanned downtime.
- **No monitoring of power and environmental conditions.** Monitoring power utilization and environmental parameters like temperature and humidity is often neglected in IDF closets. Yet, these spaces contain equipment that is just as susceptible to circuit breaker trips and overheating as in a data center. Another common issue is that rack-mounted UPS units are not properly managed or maintained and batteries unexpectedly fail which causes downtime.
- **Compliance and security concerns.** IDF closets may not adhere to the same stringent security protocols as data centers, leaving the organization exposed to compliance and security risks. Unauthorized access, poor documentation, and a lack of audit trails can complicate efforts to meet regulatory standards.

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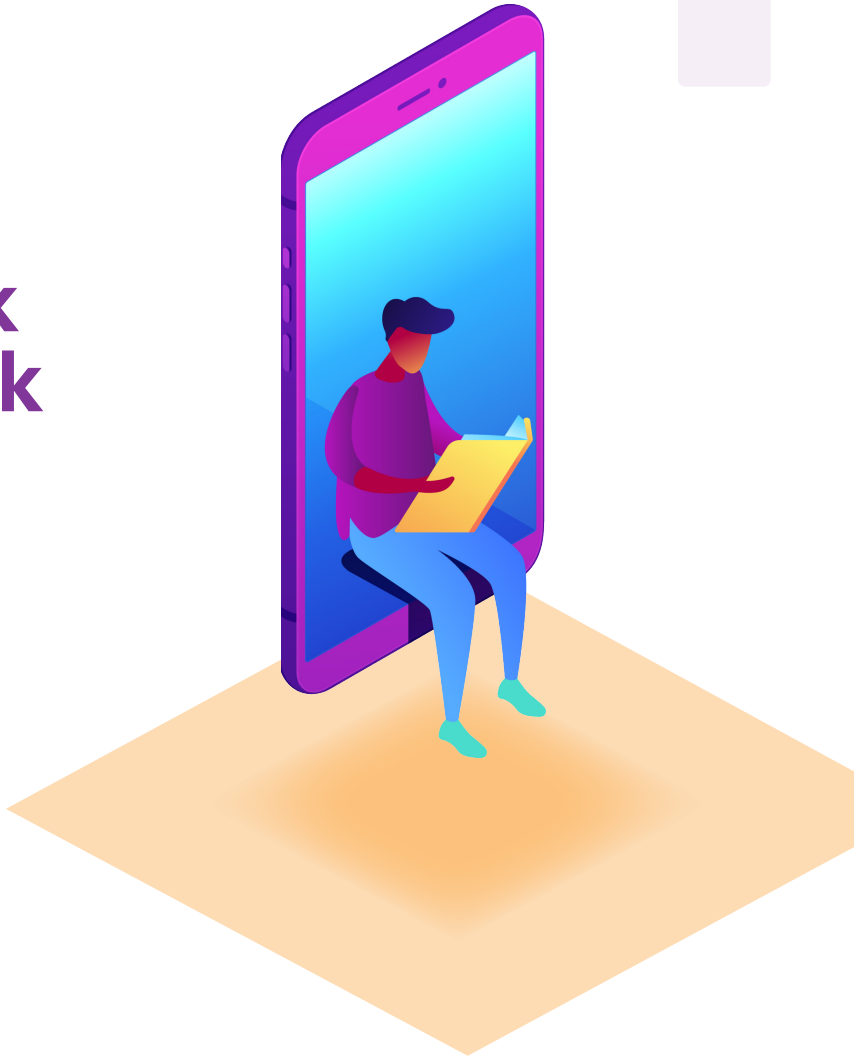

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