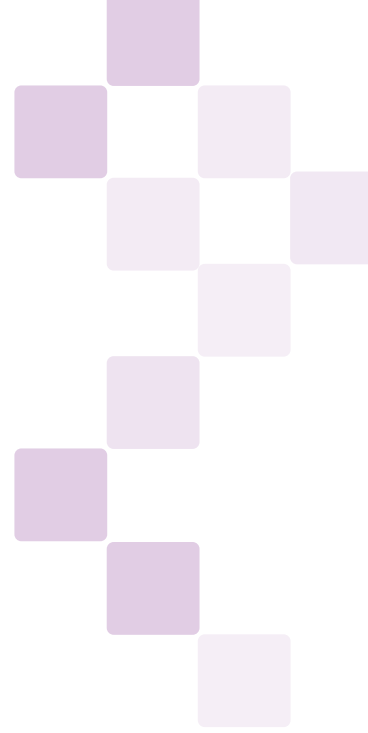# 10 Must-Have Skills to Be the Best Data Center Manager

Sunbird®

DCIM that's easy, fast, and complete.

Introduction

Data centers are a critical component of modern organizations. They must be managed and monitored properly to provide the business critical and online services that have become so ingrained into nearly all aspects of modern life.

Behind each data center is a data center manager that is responsible for maintaining the uptime and availability of these services while meeting corporate sustainability objectives and increasing the efficiency and productivity of their staff and resources.

To successfully achieve these objectives while keeping up with the ever-increasing demand of data center services and complexity of data center environments, data center managers need a wide-ranging technical and interpersonal skillset.

As a global leader in Data Center Infrastructure Management (DCIM) software, we've had the pleasure of collaborating with hundreds of the best data center managers in the world who actively participate in our user group program. Over many years, we have found that they possess common traits that separate them from their peers.

In this eBook, you will learn ten must-have skills that the most successful data center managers demonstrate daily. Use this information to fill any gaps in your skillset and put yourself on the path to being a topflight data center manager.

10 Must-Have Skills to Be the Best Data Center Manager

Data Center Facilities Infrastructure and Systems

#1

To manage a data center at the highest level, you need to have a deep understanding of the infrastructure and systems that data centers are comprised of and how they work together.

You should be familiar with:

- Server racks
- Servers
- Networking equipment (i.e., routers and switches)
- Storage equipment
- Power infrastructure (i.e., rack PDUs, busways, remote power panels, floor PDUs, branch circuits, UPSs, generators, fuel tanks, transformers, switchgear, switchboards, ATS, panelboards, DC plants, and DC bays)
- Environmental sensors (i.e., temperature, humidity, water, smoke, airflow, and air pressure)
- Structured, patch, and power distribution cabling
- Cooling equipment (i.e., CRACs/CRAHs, cooling towers, and chillers)
- Security equipment (i.e., electronic door locks and cameras for compliance with privacy laws such as the European Union's GDPR)
- Local building and construction codes
- Fire suppression systems
- Audits and reporting

? DID YOU KNOW?

In a typical data center, the energy needed to cool the IT equipment could be upwards of 30-40% of the total operational cost. It is therefore the biggest target for improving efficiency and sustainability, especially if you're still overcooling the data center.

⚇ FROM THE EXPERT:

"Sunbird simplifies and manages where everything is located and how it connects with the data center environment across the enterprise. It gives you a very good overview of everything going on within your data center in one single application."

EMERSON Kyle Kohne

Read the case study

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Project Planning and Management

#2

Data center projects can come in many forms such as migrations, consolidations, new site or cabinet buildouts, network connectivity installations, and hardware refreshes. However, no matter the project, the best data center managers have excellent project planning and management skills that give their projects a high success rate.

Project management skills you must have include:

- Fully understanding the requirements
- Developing a clear strategy
- Gaining maximum contribution from all staff
- Gaining buy-in from project stakeholders for maximum support
- Proactively managing risk by predicting potential negative outcomes and creating an action plan to prevent failure
- Completing projects on time, on budget, and to the highest quality

Many data center managers struggle to efficiently manage projects from creation to completion. Even the most experienced experts cannot avoid the pain of swivel chair interfaces. They need to copy and paste information between a multitude of spreadsheets, online forms, ticketing systems, and project management tools to keep projects moving and track their status. This process is manual and error-prone.

The best data center managers use DCIM software with infrastructure project management capabilities to consolidate tools and workflows. This enables data-driven collaboration and improved planning to help ensure every project is completed on time and on budget.

? DID YOU KNOW?

70% of all projects fail to deliver what was promised but implementing a project management process reduces the failure rate to 20%.

FROM THE EXPERT:

"The more tools and processes we can consolidate and move into dcTrack, the less swivel chair will be required between all these tools, and we can become more efficient and streamline all our processes."

COMCAST   Chris Heaton

Watch the video

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Data Analysis and Presentation

#3

Modern data centers are packed with devices, meters, and sensors that generate a massive amount of data.

Gaining insights from this data provides a critical advantage that helps you maintain uptime and increase efficiency. However, many data center managers don't have the time or training to know how to collect that data, analyze it, and derive value from it. Outdated management tools like Excel and Visio are commonly used, but they are not designed for data centers and it's an arduous task to use them for data center analytics.

The best data center managers use second-generation DCIM software that features zero-configuration analytics. The software automatically collects, stores, trends, and reports on the data your devices generate and transforms that data into actionable insights such as when you are about to trip a circuit breaker and create potential downtime, where you may be running out of capacity or where you have additional stranded capacity, how well you are progressing towards sustainability goals, and the status of all work activity that is occurring in the data center.

Keeping your management and stakeholders aware of the latest status is important to demonstrate your progress on projects and easily make your case for purchasing more capacity. With 3D data center floor map reports and intuitive dashboard charts, DCIM software makes it easy to display your data center's health and capacity at a glance.

⏱ **DID YOU KNOW?**

Modern enterprise-class DCIM software can collect over 11 billion data points a day to provide highly accurate information.

👥 **FROM THE EXPERT:**

"dcTrack significantly reduces our effort in creating [data center capacity utilization] reports by automatically creating them and emailing them to my capacity management team when required."

PADDYPOWER. betfair   Peter Giles

Read the case study

Sunbird®

Management of People and Teams

#4

Data center managers are typically generalists who work with many teams and individuals with more specialized skillsets. As such, the best data center managers have exceptional leadership skills to get the most out of their teams.

The most successful data center managers:

- Ensure all staff are trained on and using modern data center management tools
- Track the work activity in the data center by employee to ensure high productivity levels
- Coordinate the effort of various functional domains to ensure successful projects
- Get all team members to follow data center security policies and best practices
- Motivate team members to grow professionally

Managing people becomes easier when everyone has the same centralized view of all data center resources and follows the same documented processes. DCIM software provides clear port-level work orders to ensure that technicians always perform the job correctly the first time. Then, you can spend less time micromanaging and more time on strategic projects.

Acquiring data center certifications is an excellent way to develop professionally as a manager, boost your credibility, and fill the data center skills gap. Plus, they are often paid for by your organization. Consider getting a certification and encouraging your staff to do the same. See a list of the top data center certifications.

? DID YOU KNOW?

Companies with a highly engaged workforce are 21% more profitable and 17% more productive.

FROM THE EXPERT:

"Technicians can no longer just grab parts and go. They need to slow down and update the inventory before proceeding. This reinforces the need to track hardware and reminds the technicians that the assets need to be barcoded at the time of installation."

KPMG   Tom Wysocki   **Watch the video**

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