

By being better, more affordable, more efficient and, above all, more flexible – that’s how Datacenter.com wanted to conquer the world of data colocation. The company is already well on the way to doing so at international level.

For its data center in Amsterdam, Datacenter.com chose to work with Legrand’s new Nexpan platform. CEO Jochem Steman explains why and reflects on the results so far.



CEO Jochem Steman

**Jochem Steman,
CEO Datacenter.com:**

‘We’re the most difficult customer in the world’

Datacenter.com was founded four years ago with the idea of challenging the status quo. The aim was to revolve around maximum flexibility: ‘data storage as a service’ rather than long-running fixed contracts. The concept was a hit, and companies all over the world – from SMEs to large corporates – are now benefiting from Datacenter.com’s services thanks to the company’s data centers in Europe, the USA and Asia. The customers range from cloud providers, financial organizations, digital media and gaming giants to smaller e-tailers.

MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY

Jochem Steman: “We realized that existing data center services were failing to meet customers’ wants and needs. Companies need flexibility; they want to be able to scale data capacity up or down depending on their circumstances. We decided to address that need.”

He didn’t expect it to be easy, and it wasn’t: “Besides being flexible, our services must

CUSTOMERCASE

also be completely reliable and secure, of course, and preferably affordable too. Moreover, the demand for data capacity is still rising – just think of how many more people are watching Netflix and the sudden growth in online schooling in these times of coronavirus lockdowns. People are also increasingly communicating by video and there is an incredible amount of content being transmitted back and forth. On top of that, users have come to expect high speed and ever-better data quality.”

WITHOUT COMPROMISE

“End users are very critical and our customers are very critical, so we are too. From a supplier’s perspective we’re the most difficult customer in the world. We want nothing but the best quality, without compromise, simply because we can’t afford to take any risks. We’re the first company anywhere in the world to work with Legrand’s new Nexpan cabinet platform. The racks have been custom-made for us. That added an extra element of uncertainty, because you know there’s a chance of teething troubles – and there were a few, but nothing major. They were all resolved beforehand so that the cabinets could be installed correctly.”

The Nexpan cabinet platform is located at the data center in Amsterdam, where Datacenter.com is substantially expanding its capacity. The data center itself is a huge 10,500 m2 warehouse, of which 5,000 m2 is in use at 100% capacity. It currently has

enough room for 1,800 cabinets. Jochem: “We’ve already completed our first growth phase and we will soon be heading into the second. We’re currently running an IT load of 3 megawatts fully continuously, and we’re steadily growing towards 12 to 15 MW. Our data center is very energy-efficient; our power usage effectiveness (PUE) is 1.08. We make a point of cooling the heat generated by the servers as efficiently as possible.”

CURIOUS ABOUT LEGRAND’S SOLUTIONS

“We were attracted to the Nexpan platform because of our specific needs. In Amsterdam we work with 54U, the biggest size of cabinet. We want to maximize the amount of IT equipment per cabinet; that’s more efficient and better for the customer. Besides that, we’d had some issues with hot air leaking out of our existing cabinets. Our contact person at Server Technologies, which supplies us with power distribution units, alerted us to the new platform by its parent company Legrand. Although we try to stay loyal to our regular suppliers, we decided to contact Legrand because we were very curious about their solutions.”

“The people at Legrand really had to convince us; we certainly didn’t make things easy for them. But it’s a solid company with production in Europe, which means good lead times – and that’s crucial for us. They listened carefully to our wants and needs, and custom-built the racks in line with our requirements. As the first customer for this solution we’re also serving as a pilot project

to some extent, but we always give lots of feedback to all our suppliers so that we can improve together. The implementation went fine apart from a couple of mini teething troubles, and the platform is now fully up and running.”

NEW EXPANSION

“As for the reactions from our customers, we’ve had nothing but positive feedback so far. It’s a bit of an adjustment for some of them, such as those with a combination of old and new data storage. But all the space that we bought has already been sold, so we’ll be expanding again soon. The next upgrade is scheduled for after the summer – and I’m pretty sure that means we’ll be installing more Nexpan cabinets.” ■

The Nexpan cabinet platform installed at Datacenter.com has a non-standard size (54U) that was specially made for the customer. The first delivery comprised 2 x 80 racks with containment (corridor).

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