

# INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interview on behalf of Qwest

Mark Boyce

Scribe Healthcare Tech., Inc.

CEO, CDT

Last updated: 2008 Nov 17



**Product(s): Hosting**  
**Industry: Healthcare**

## 1. Business need

"We have been in business for about six years now and had been at one colocation provider with one service provider and one telecom provider for those entire six years. Over the past year, I would say, we had some extreme displeasure with our telecom provider, which then also translated into some extreme displeasure with our colocation provider because our business is rapidly growing and we had chosen our previous vendor because they had lots of expansion capability--so they said. And when we came to expand significantly in the fall of 2006, they told us they were out of power and they didn't know when we would be able to get power. And so we were in a crisis situation because we had taken on significant new customers which would require us to expand our data center and had no way to be able to do that. We needed to expand primarily in our existing colocation center, and then because we were growing so quickly, we also needed to have a disaster recovery site, and the current vendor that we were with also was unable to give us any timeframe in which they could have space in their colocation centers there. So we just began to look for a new provider."

## 2. Evaluation & selection

"We were looking at three primary factors: One was cost, of course, because we wanted to grow and we wanted to be able to afford two data centers as opposed to just one. The second was location, because we needed to be in locations where we had people that could go to the site if necessary. And third, we were looking for competency and reputation because we didn't want to get into the same situation as we had with our prior vendor where we simply had no relationship left. There was no trust left in that relationship, and so we wanted somebody that was extremely competent and had a good quality reputation for taking care of their customers.

We had about three different alternatives that we would consider. I know there are a lot of smaller regional players, but we were looking for a national and, actually, international player--primarily national; somebody that had a lot of different locations. Our business requires that we're up all the time with the same kind of redundancy and quality and security as you would find in a bank. We provide services to hospitals and healthcare providers across the country, so we have to be up, we have to be in a secure environment with a first-class provider, and there aren't a lot of those."

## 3. Why Qwest?

"Primarily because of cost. They came back with a very competitive bundle of services for both the colocation and the Internet connectivity--location because they had a location that was in Chicago, actually, in the same building that we were already in, which meant that the downtime that we would suffer for moving from one provider to another would be a lot less than it would have if we'd gone with some other players.

Their competency and reputation--we met with the president of the region and his entire sales staff. The whole team that was put together to take care of us was extremely first class and that made us feel very, very comfortable that we were going to get taken care of.

They also had availability in locations that we wanted to be in; we were looking at either Denver or Dallas. And we have a large customer in Denver, and so they had space there that made it very easy for us to move in or to plan to move into Denver. And they had a nice package of combined offerings. Today, we look at primarily the colocation space, power, and the Internet, but they had storage capability, they had management capabilities that we could look at as we grow to get into that were very fairly valued, and we thought that overall, they would be the best partner

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to grow with."

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## 4. The implementation/installation

"It was primarily great, but there were, of course, a couple of hiccups--but nothing ever goes according to plan when you've got so many different moving parts. The thing that was different about Qwest is even though there were a couple of hiccups--one of which was just waiting for some capacity and telephone lines, which really had nothing to do with the hosting, but just with some additional telecom providers; another was with some connectivity specifications--no matter what the problem was, there was a team that was there 24x7 that was passionate about getting whatever the problem was solved for us, and so that just continued to build our trust across the board with them as we went through this. Whatever the problem was, they would escalate it, they would bring all the right people in. The sales team, our sales rep was just phenomenal in terms of making sure that all these moving parts stayed together. So that was a huge help to us."

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## 5. Overview of solution

"Currently, we are up and completely running in their Chicago data center. We have two racks probably of about 40 different servers. We have a redundant Internet connection that's currently a 10-megabit connection, and we have five telecom PRI lines that actually come into our cages, as well, because we do a lot of phone work, so that was another nice thing to have one provider for that, as well. We are switching to a 100-megabit connection here in the next couple of weeks and we have minimal presence in the Denver colocation facility, Highlands Ranch, and we expect to be growing that over the next three to six months so we have a complete disaster recovery situation there.

Currently, we are in the process of building out our second data center, which will be our disaster recovery solution. Its two-fold with Qwest. One is the connectivity piece. We did a lot of planning with the Qwest team to determine the most cost-effective solution to actually have a connection up and going between the two data centers, Chicago and Denver.

And they were great at looking at a variety of ways that we could connect the two centers together to meet the high bandwidth needs that we would have to make sure a good disaster recovery scenario was set up. So we are getting the connectivity in place to be able to support moving around large files. We manage a lot of audio for dictation. And then we also manage millions of files. We currently have over three or four terabytes of storage that were going to be making sure that we can properly mirror between our locations.

And so the first phase as we open up Denver was to get the connectivity going. The second will then be to make sure that we have redundant backups from our Chicago site backed up to the Denver facility. And then by the end of this year we will be putting in the additional computing power so that we'll have a hot failover so that we won't have any down time at all. Whether it's telecom, web, or any of our database or backend processing servers."

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## 6. Customer service

"Awesome--in one word. Our primary sales rep, all the people in the Chicago center, all the people in Denver who manage all the projects, they've all been really great to work with. They're very quick to work with you on providing solutions to your particular needs, from high-level network design questions and thoughts, equipment that we could potentially use in the situation, all the way down to providing you cables when we had a situation where we had a set of bad cables--we were working with another telecom provider to hook up to our cage--and they went out from their stash and pulled a couple of cables and gave us those and made sure that we were all working just fine. They stood right by us in every situation to make sure that we got done what we needed to get done."

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## 7. Non-financial benefits

"We see four primary benefits. One is reliability; that's a real key thing for us because we have to be up all the time and we had many problems with reliability with our previous providers. The second is scalability, and a lot of people will tell you they can scale out, but when you go to ask about it and actually try and do it, they can't, or it's not in your time frames. And Qwest is constantly working with you to make sure that as your business grows, or as your needs change, they stay in the loop. They became one of our partners to help us plan that.

The third is the quality and trust. Because of the reliability and the scalability, we were afraid before to use some of the hands-on service and other services that our prior provider supposedly offered because we didn't necessarily trust them; we didn't believe in the quality that they had to offer. But with Qwest, we have no problems doing that, so that's a huge benefit for us, because then we don't have to send our people into the data center all the time to do things that we really don't need to do; we can have them help us, too.

And the fourth is some of their self-service tools--like their Q.Control--are much better and they allow us to see things, to monitor things, to plan in advance where we were not able to do that in the past."

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## 8. Measurable benefits

"We think that from a pure financial standpoint, we've probably saved 30 percent on the package of services that we are getting from Qwest over our previous providers--and that's not including all the savings that we'll get from the telecom piece of the equation, which allows us to be able to go out and afford to bring on a second data center.

Also, because of the ability to trust in their service and their work and their people, we're actually going to have some labor savings because we won't have to have people on call and pay for people to go and actually make changes to our systems from remote locations in the suburbs of Chicago all the way to downtown all the time. So that's gonna save us probably 20 percent in terms of what we previously would pay. We actually have saved, too, in terms of capital equipment. We used to have to have some additional capital equipment to enable us to interface with the Internet, and with the Qwest solution, it actually simplified our connectivity and so we've been able to do away with more expensive routers that we had and use the Qwest solution instead."

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## 9. Areas for improvement

"One of the things, thinking back on the implementation process, is that while the team is always there to support you, sometimes it's good to have some documentation and things that you can disseminate up front. We got the documentation after the fact; I think some simple things that just let us know how some of that stuff works up front, early in the process, that we could disseminate to some of our technical team would be great."

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## 10. Future plans

"We look to three growth areas in the next six months with Qwest. The first is an increased bandwidth capability, and that's setting the stage for our disaster recovery scenario, which is the second piece, which will be scaling out our Denver colocation center. And then after we get the Denver colocation center up and going, we will be looking potentially at some data storage, data backup services, that we might use as an additional managed service with Qwest.

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## 11. Recommendations and advice

"I think one of the most important things in choosing any vendor of this type, particularly if you're a growing company, is to take the time to meet personally with the team that's going to be supporting you. You learn an awful lot by sitting down with the Qwest team; you get a sense for all the people that are there to support you, from the sales team, the network engineering people, the hosting center people, and the senior management. I encourage people to do that face-to-face, because you get a different sense for the people as opposed to just talking to them over the phone.

The second thing is that I would recommend that they pay a visit to the Qwest site, walk around with the people because you get to learn a lot about behind the scenes and actually what goes on and how all the processes and things work that, again, you don't get from a document or from a phone call or from a bunch of staff people. If you're negotiating it, go take a look at it and make sure you feel comfortable with it. So those are some of the key things I would do.

And I wouldn't be afraid, finally, to ask questions. As you get into the details, they're always happy to answer them, but they help avoid the gotchas that come up in any implementation process.

And the final thing I always recommend is, while we all would like things to work to a certain schedule, I know we try to cram a lot into a short period of time and we've always got to make sure that we allow enough time in our scheduling to make sure that everything works properly--because they have a great team; you've just got to work hand-in-hand to make sure that all the schedules fit together."