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The Evolution of Data Centre Management

WRITTEN BY
GEORGIA WILSON

PRODUCED BY
LEWIS VAUGHAN

Arun Shenoy, SVP Global Sales & Marketing at Serverfarm, discusses the history of Serverfarm, how the sector has evolved and current industry trends

In a digitally-driven world led by automation and optimisation, the critical infrastructure powering such innovation is undergoing its own transformation. A perfect storm is pushing the business community to embrace new ways of streamlining IT and data centre operations – in order to keep pace with unprecedented capacity demands while minimising costs.

As a company that's been at the forefront of the sector for the past 20+ years, Serverfarm is at the heart of that effort, helping service providers and enterprises digitally transform their IT and data centre environments. In an often challenging business climate, Serverfarm sees automation, efficiency and sustainability as the path forward.

"Quite early on in our life as a company, we identified two things," explained Arun Shenoy, SVP Global Sales and Marketing. "The first thing that we spotted towards the end of the nineties is that the real estate part of data centres - the buildings, the land and the locations that they reside in - are actually very inefficient. In fact, in terms of real estate assets, data centres are probably the least efficient."

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SVP Global Sales & Marketing,
Serverfarm

Shenoy explains that the reason behind this is because most data centres have much more capacity than is, or can be, utilised. "We saw this as an opportunity in that market to really help customers become more efficient. We would buy data centres from customers and lease back just the portion that they needed. For us as a company, this marked our first change in our operating model from being a real estate acquirer into a real estate operational company. As a result, we started to run these environments for companies."

In the 10 proceeding years, Serverfarm came to its second conclusion: that the same inefficiencies in the real estate space were beginning to emerge in the infrastructure space. "The way that people deployed physical infrastructure, mechanical and electrical systems, IT, and network and storage environments was also inefficient. Again, most companies were building more capacity than they needed. The end result for us as a company meant that we started to become a much broader operating company in terms of the sorts of services that we were providing to our customers."

As a result of these changes to its operating model, Serverfarm has moved further into the IT environment over the years, helping with capacity planning, asset management and change management so that it can bring together the three main elements that make up a data centre — the real estate, the facility environment and the IT environment. "When you bring those three together, that's when you can really make data centres reliable and efficient. You cannot make a data centre efficient by simply focusing on one of these elements."

Serverfarm developed its award-winning InCommand Services to achieve this goal for customers. InCommand is an integrated service platform that brings together people and processes into a portal-based solution for maximum data centre operational efficiency – creating a cloud-like experience for data centres.

When it comes to digital innovation at Serverfarm, Shenoy believes that in the last 10 years there has been a relatively big shift in the market. "Firstly, the large hyper-scale cloud providers have come into the market

EXECUTIVE PROFILE:

Arun Shenoy

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Title: SVP Global Sales and Marketing   **Location:** London

Industry: Information Technology & Services

Arun Shenoy is responsible for developing the success of Serverfarm's Data Centre colocation and InCommand Services business globally. He joined Serverfarm from Schneider Electric where he was Vice President of the IT and Data Centre business in the UK & Ireland. Arun has previously worked at major companies including Intel, ABB, IBM and Romonet in general management, sales and marketing roles with over 20 years in software, services and technology markets.

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Changes in the Industry

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to solve a very important problem - increasing efficiency and agility when it comes to building and deploying applications that their businesses needed. Cloud became a very obvious solution for that." However, Shenoy doesn't expect the data centre industry to be completely cloud based for at least seven to ten years. "Most will adopt a hybrid approach. As a result, in order for companies to maintain reliability and efficiency when it comes to physical infrastructure, I believe our role in the industry is to help customers solve these challenges."

Other trends Shenoy has seen in the industry include the need for capacity. "In the last six months, the need for capacity has been continuing to grow, and with the industry becoming much more mature and industrialised, it is interesting to see the shape and size of this change. The industry isn't just building faster and bigger, but also distributed. This evolution is driving these hyper-scale environments." In parallel, another trend Shenoy has seen in the industry is edge computing - "the idea of creating a much more distributed internet and network of data centres,"

Serverfarm Partnerships

i3

When it comes to collaborative partnerships like i3 and Serverfarm, Ansett explains that "respecting each other and what the other person does, avoiding situations where people become dogmatic, and a general sense of just wanting to do a good job," are essential.

"Serverfarm finds data centre assets and develops their potential in ways that others can't see. We are the engineering side to this - that is we provide consulting and engineering services purely in mechanical, electrical and power. Their approach is different and the reason it is a successful partnership is because we understand what they are trying to achieve," adds Ansett.

"Collaborations like this are vital. Together, we get on with it. In order to do good work - which is why i3 exists - you need

collaboration, you need skill and you need motivation. This partnership provides all three."

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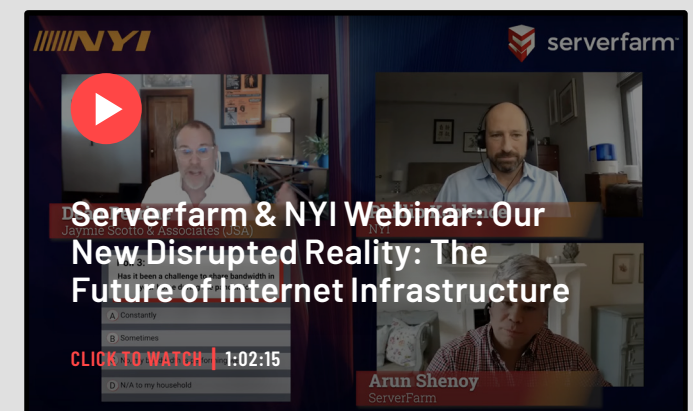
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NYI

Phillip Koblence, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of NYI co-founded the company in 1996. "At NYI we run mission critical data centres, offering customisable hybrid solutions and high-touch managed services across the United States (US). We focus on optimising infrastructure and providing a seamless client experience by cutting through complexity and hype."

When it comes to NYI's partnership with Severfarm, Koblence explains that "the unique thing about Serverfarm is that they fill the gap in the industry when it comes to data centres and critical infrastructure. You have this large multinational organisation that has a culture and customer experience focus that aligns almost perfectly with what we have been preaching to our customers for over 20 years."

Serverfarm & NYI Webinar: Our New Disrupted Reality: The Future of Internet Infrastructure
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Salute

When developing a successful partnership, Okroy explains that, "highly tuned processes executed by disciplined staff enabled by technology produces world class results. Seldom do you see all three of these come together and with Salute Mission Critical and Serverfarm's combined strength we become unique and set apart from all other providers," commented Jason Okroy, Co-Founder and CEO at Salute Mission Critical.

For its partners Salute Mission Critical supports IT infrastructures. "We support the day to day operation of the business - security, remote hands, engineering," adds Okroy.

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he explains. "As a result, anything that is IoT related - smart homes, smart cities, smart government, digital transformation - has driven the market to really grow in parallel in these two areas. So very large hyper-scale facilities, but also a much greater deployment of distributed edge environments. Which, in turn, makes data centre management a much bigger challenge, and the processes and people much more important."

Running in tandem to these trends is the data centre sustainability question: how can the industry do its part to fight

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climate change while still delivering the capacity that the world needs? The answer, for Serverfarm, is in repurposing existing facilities instead of building new ones.

To analyse the carbon savings potential from the reuse of an existing facility, Serverfarm asked an independent consultant, HKS, to calculate the carbon cost of using an existing sata centre compared with a new build of the same scale. Buildings and construction directly represent around 39% of all annual global greenhouse gas emissions, according to HKS. HKS analysed Serverfarm's completed Chicago facility, a six-story building of just under 150,000 square feet with a capacity for housing more than 4,000 server cabinets. Reusing this building eliminates the carbon emissions for a standard new construction building, resulting in a modeled 88% embodied carbon emission reduction.

More and more, enterprises and service providers look to data centre professionals to make their IT operations more sustainable – and, therefore, efficient. When it comes to helping their customers, Serverfarm
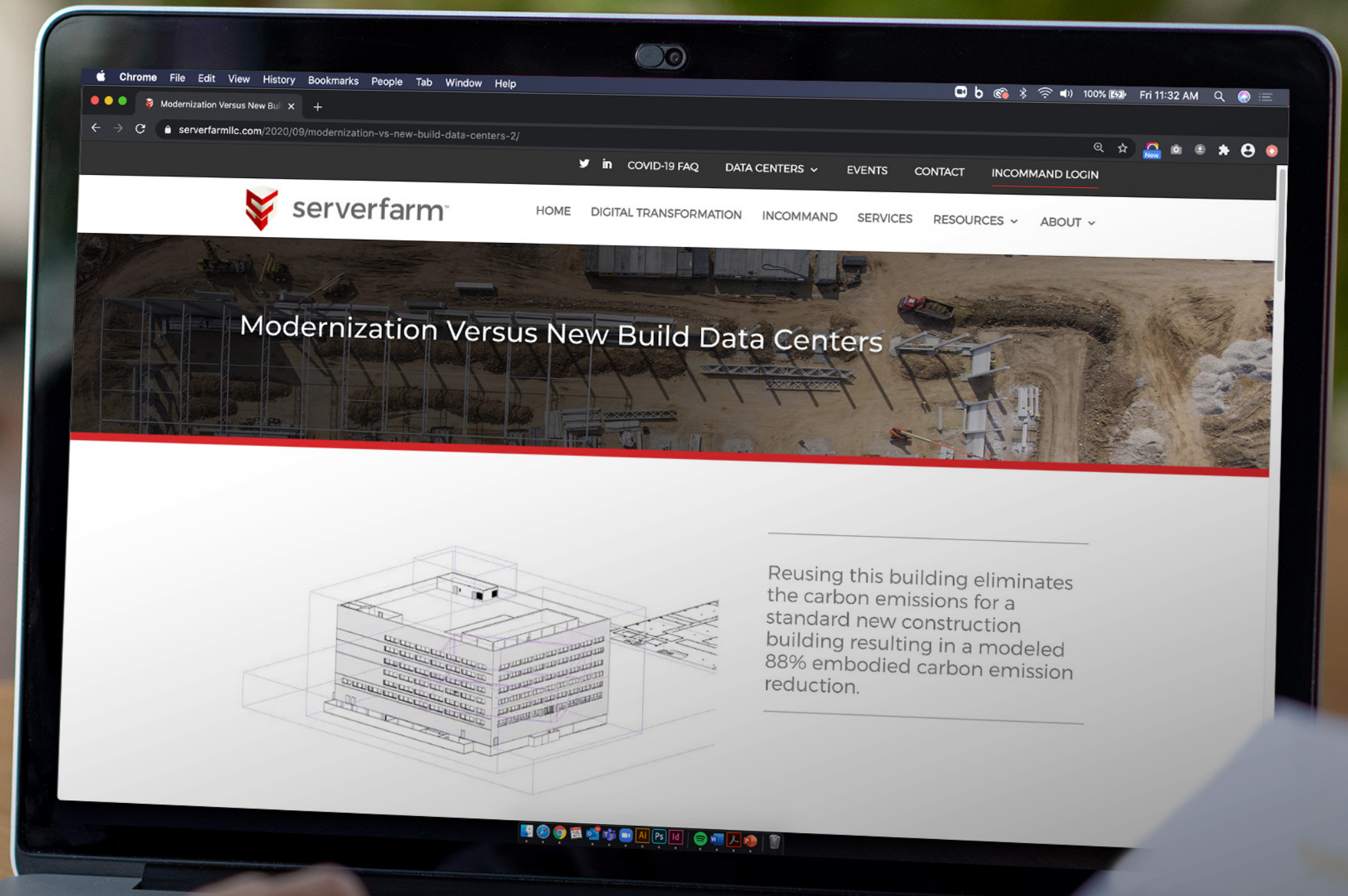
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i3 Solutions Partner Video

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explains that their data centre management as a service (DMaaS) is more than just a platform, it's the people and processes too. "DMaaS is the ability for any organisation to truly understand what they have, where it is, how it is being used, and how useful, reliable and efficient it is. In other words, having an overall view of the entire infrastructure coming together in one environment. To do that in the most effective way possible, organisations need to bring together the people, processes and platforms."

With customers striving to discover the right way to deploy technology, software and hardware tools, Shenoy believes that, "most organisations find this challenging because they are only solving one part of the problem - the technology. Simply buying and deploying a platform isn't enough, you have to change and refine the processes and ensure that you have the right people." In order to help its customers, partnerships with other companies such as i3, NYI and Salute are incredibly important, and a big part of its strategy.

NYI Partner Video

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"Part of that is down to the complexity of the work that we do for our customers, which requires an ecosystem to come together. In order to create enormous benefits and value opportunities for our customers, we require a selection of strategic partners. This is not something that we can do on our own. In fact, it's not something that any company can do on its own. Bringing together the right partners is critical."

By teaming up with some of the most experienced, cutting-edge partners in the industry and listening closely to evolving customer needs over the past 20+ years, Serverfarm has emerged as an innovator and disruptor in the data centre management as a service (DMaaS) space. Serverfarm is now delivering DMaaS at over 100 locations across 40 countries. DMaaS, to Serverfarm, goes much deeper than simply offering DCIM software in the cloud; it delivers a fully managed service for busy C-suites who want to focus on their core business. It's the answer to the latest demand from enterprises and service providers alike.