



Building a best-in-breed ecosystem of business solutions

Abacus Solutions' AS/400 Clouds leverage QTS colocation to save money and accelerate hybrid strategies

Founded in 2000, [Abacus Solutions](#) is a global provider of IT infrastructure hardware and services. Based in Atlanta, the privately held organization is dedicated to supporting customers' IT needs through its managed services, AS/400 (IBM i) support, and hardware brokerage services. With an expertise in the AS/400 market, Abacus needs a colocation provider who can deliver the uptime to support its cloud environment, and the scalability to keep pace with its business growth. The MSP also wanted a data center that provided an ecosystem of businesses that could leverage one another's expertise to design hybrid business solutions.

- Dynamic ecosystem promotes hybrid business strategies
- Secure, scalable colocation flexes to align with growth
- Ongoing investments in IT environment supports visibility and eases data center management
- Dedicated team of experts fosters a strong partnership

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Scalable, geo-diverse colocation required to secure and grow AS/400-focused business

With more than \$50 million in annual revenue, Abacus Solutions is one of the world's largest AS/400-focused platform-as-a-service providers. While the AS/400 market is shrinking, many organizations are still highly reliant on their customized platforms to support core backend applications. Unable to transition away from these investments—and lacking the inhouse skill set to properly manage them—companies turn to Abacus' team of specialists.

To support this environment, the reliability of its Abacus Cloud is critical. With its production site in Atlanta and its target/disaster recovery (DR) site only 26 miles away, the organization recognized the need to diversify its data center footprint to achieve the necessary resilience.

Abacus began evaluating data center providers in other areas of the country to establish a disparate DR site. Having experienced some service disruptions and capacity issues with its existing provider, Abacus wanted to ensure its new provider could deliver unrelenting availability and accommodate its growth.

A commitment to customer service was also important as Abacus had experienced less-than-ideal service. *"As an MSP, we treat our customers well and provide them with an exceptional level of service,"* said Patrick Schutz, Chief Sales Officer at Abacus Solutions. *"We realized we want to be treated like a customer, too. We want to be appreciated and taken care of, and not just treated like a commercial tenant."*

In addition to these needs, Abacus wanted a strategic partner with whom it could create an ecosystem of world-class business solutions that could be parlayed into hybrid business strategies.





Secure, resilient colocation delivers on promises for PaaS provider

In late 2016, after an exhaustive search, Abacus chose to leverage QTS' family of data centers to support its cloud. With its production environment running out of QTS Atlanta-Metro and its redundant site in QTS Irving, Texas, Abacus achieved the requisite geographic diversity as well as redundant power, cooling and connectivity within each facility.

While QTS checked all the boxes for Abacus around reliability, the size, breadth and presence of the data centers also impressed Abacus. Offering 970,000 square feet of enclosed space, QTS Atlanta-Metro is the largest data center in the Southeast. The mega facility provides its own onsite power station and delivers flexible space and power to accommodate Abacus' growing needs.

"The QTS Atlanta-Metro data center was much more impressive than every other data center we saw. The vastness and quality of the product really resonated," said Schutz. *"There was a lot of vetting, but QTS continued to stand far above in every scenario."*

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Schutz was also surprised by the competitiveness of QTS' pricing. *"We expected this space to be the most expensive that we saw, but it wasn't. It was competitively priced. You usually don't see that quality and price combination."*

Adding to the cost efficacy of the solution was the economy of scale Abacus achieved by keeping its data

center footprint within the same provider family. This allowed the MSP to deploy two data centers without doubling its costs.

Since partnering with QTS, the wins have continued for Abacus, beginning with QTS' commitment to customer service. Working with a consistent team of experienced sales and service personnel, Abacus has built a solid relationship that promotes operational understanding and efficiency. This was missing with its previous data center provider.

"Once we joined QTS, we were really pleased with their level of service. There are things you don't really know as a potential customer, but once you're in, you appreciate it," said Schutz. *"We're not the biggest customer by any means, but we feel valued as a customer, none the less."*

Abacus also appreciates QTS' continual investment in its environment and service offerings. QTS' Service Delivery Platform (SDP) provides real-time insight in the data center environment to allow administrators to effectively manage and optimize the data center environment. Users can order new services, facilitate user deployments, oversee daily tasks, manage data center assets and more. Available 24/7, from any location and any device, this tool provides an ease of access and use that improves customer productivity. The platform also provides email notifications to keep Abacus abreast of maintenance and other information related to the environment. This is an essential piece of keeping Abacus updated and feeling like a valued partner.

"The QTS portal allows me to easily provision new users, request new badges or services, and check power, cooling or networks from my mobile phone or tablet. This is incredibly valuable," said Thomas Harris, Chief Operations Officer at Abacus Solutions. *"As a company we are always on the go—especially now, working from home [amid the COVID-19 pandemic]. It's nice to have that flexibility."*

Remote hands capability enriches this level of support. *"The COVID-19 pandemic diminished our ability to be onsite,"* said Harris. *"Having remote hands to help get work done at the data center, and knowing that we can get in touch with someone who is knowledgeable, has been essential. QTS has been an extension of our team."*



An ecosystem of opportunity drives business growth and efficiency

While the reliability, scalability and quality of the facilities and services were essential to support Abacus' customers, the ecosystem of potential partners within QTS' data centers was also compelling. The number of businesses within QTS' environment provides extensive opportunities for businesses with diverse expertise to utilize one another's services to design hybrid business solutions that satisfy unique and evolving business needs.

Businesses that need AS/400 support could tap Abacus for their best-in-class capabilities. Other customers may need managed IT services or human resources expertise. The QTS ecosystem provides a pool of best-in-breed resources that allow businesses to procure the services they need to accelerate hybrid IT strategies.

By outsourcing non-core business components, businesses can reduce risk, control costs, improve efficiency and strengthen competitive value. This hybrid approach also frees internal staff to focus on other more strategic initiatives.

"Successful businesses do one or two things really well," explained Schutz. "QTS provides exceptional data center services and Abacus delivers best-in-breed AS/400 services. There are other businesses within QTS' data center environment that excel in their spaces, too. The QTS ecosystem can help these organizations connect and offer services other businesses may need."

The sheer size of QTS' facilities provides an expansive foundation for this ecosystem. *"The bigger and better the data center is, the more options businesses will have,"* said Schutz. *"The right data center ecosystem will provide opportunities you don't even know you need today."*

Businesses within the ecosystem may also inherently bring customers or tangent businesses with them. Abacus' AS/400 workloads have complimentary applications that operate more efficiently and with lower latency when close to Abacus' environment. The businesses that run these applications will follow Abacus into the QTS environment, further expanding the network of organizations and building QTS' business.

"Businesses want to be part of a dynamic ecosystem like the one QTS and Abacus are building," said Darryl Cox, Director of Sales, Southeast at QTS. *"This environment will provide options that allow businesses to pivot in a cost-effective way when and how they need to, without obstacles."*

This ecosystem has already built some impactful partnerships for Abacus, including one with a leading insurance provider in the aviation space. *"That's the silver lining,"* said Schutz. *"We're now seeing the fruits of that labor and the choices we've made."*

As the ecosystem continues to mature, Abacus and QTS would like to see it evolve into a more formalized marketplace where businesses can readily identify who is in the environment and their area of expertise.

"We're on the tip of the iceberg with this," said Schutz. *"There is a lot of opportunity to share."*

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About QTS

QTS Realty Trust, Inc. (NYSE: QTS) is a leading provider of data center solutions across a diverse footprint spanning more than 7 million square feet of owned mega scale data center space within North America and Europe. Through its software-defined technology platform, QTS is able to deliver secure, compliant infrastructure solutions, robust connectivity and premium customer service to leading hyperscale technology companies, enterprises, and government entities. Visit QTS at www.qtsdatacenters.com, call toll-free 877.QTS.DATA or follow on Twitter @DataCenters_QTS.