ascent

AT&T Business

Reliable, fast, secure connectivity for the data center— and beyond

Business needs

State-of-the-art tools to support data center construction and management

Networking solution

Ascent relies on a range of dedicated and shared AT&T Business connectivity solutions to facilitate operations and infrastructure management.

Business value

Reliable connectivity and redundancy protect clients' valuable data and support changing business needs.

Industry focus

Data center construction and management

Size

350 employees

About Ascent

Ascent delivers a smart approach to designing, building, and managing every aspect of clients' mission-critical operations and infrastructure. It offers data center services, critical facilities management, 24/7 support, engineering, and data center construction.

The situation

The growing company sought reliable connectivity, redundancy, and security to support its clients' data-intensive and demanding environments.

Solution

Ascent chose a range of AT&T Business services, including AT&T Dedicated Internet, AT&T Business Fiber, and AT&T Switched Ethernet with Network on Demand, to help support their clients' vital operations.

Support for clients' critical operations

Since 1998 Ascent has been a leading provider of solutions for clients' mission-critical environments. Through partnerships with one of the largest privately held businesses and one of the largest private equity firms, Ascent has expanded its approach to building services, providing clients with a wide range of technical support options.

Ascent IT Director Rick Steingruby said the company's mission statement, "Elevating Mission Critical," highlights the crucial role Ascent plays for its clients. "That would include critical operations, infrastructure, data center design and build, along with maintenance and support," he said. "We offer data center staffing, maintenance service contracts, and engineering, including design, design management, construction, and data center controls."

Ascent also provides Smart Hands, a responsive, hands-on service and support of technical issues that arise on-site at the customer's location, along with secure network management systems and other IT services for clients' data centers.

"Our data centers could house anything from small colocation customers that might be looking for cabinet space to very large companies that would take an entire data center or multiple data centers," Steingruby said.

Steingruby also noted the increasing demand for artificial intelligence services that Ascent fulfills to optimize outcomes and drive innovation. "AI is getting huge," he said. "We fill needs for customers in financial companies and the healthcare industry."

A commitment to sustainability

Data centers can use vast amounts of electricity to run the servers in their data farms and consume vast amounts of water for cooling operations. For Ascent, sustainability has always been important in its own operations and those it manages for clients.

Ascent President Robert Painter, in fact, recently contributed a chapter on making data centers greener for the book, *Green Data, Vol.2*. In his chapter, Painter explored the energy efficiency that can be gained by addressing easy-to-make changes in existing data center systems. Small but meaningful changes can make a significant impact.

Ascent practices what it preaches when it comes to making small but significant changes to support sustainability. "From a power usage standpoint, this could mean implementing servers or platforms that reduce the power load and draw less power," Steingruby said. "We're always trying to improve that as well as trying to make customers' systems last longer."

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Rick Steingruby
Ascent IT Director

Evolving to support changing needs

Ascent serves clients across multiple industries, design topologies, and property types. To support clients' continued success, it adheres to core values like safety and availability to maximize client uptime. Client focus is equally important. Ascent provides strategic business partnerships for comprehensive programs as well as turnkey solutions for project-based challenges.

Its legacy of innovation means Ascent is continually evolving to support clients' changing business needs, infrastructure conditions, and new technologies. At times, this means calling on AT&T Business. Ascent was already an AT&T Business customer when Steingruby joined the company. "We utilized AT&T Business at our home office, and we've upgraded that particular circuit a couple of times," he said. "AT&T has been very reliable, and that's why I like to stick with them."

Ascent also uses AT&T Business to address issues for its clients. For example, a few years ago, one client was interested in adding a secure private service. "AT&T Switched Ethernet with Network on Demand worked out well, and we've continued to use that," Steingruby said. The solution is an on-demand and highly secure private service that connects two or more business locations using the reliable, high-speed AT&T fiber network.

"One customer has a primary data center space that happens to be in our office, and we have a disaster recovery site at another one of our data centers," Steingruby said. "That [AT&T Switched Ethernet with Network on Demand] circuit provides a direct link between their primary site and the disaster recovery site. We have not had any issues with it, which is great."

Speedy dedicated internet access

Ascent uses AT&T Dedicated Internet to provide high speed, dedicated internet access for its larger customers. "Typically, we use it for customers that might take up half or in some cases the entire data center," Steingruby said. "I like the reliability of AT&T Dedicated Internet.

For other clients, AT&T Business Fiber fits the bill. The service offers customers a shared internet connection. "We have some smaller footprints in some data centers where we've used that service to set up our internal network," Steingruby said. "And in those cases, we might have a hybrid-type site where the customer has staff and Ascent might have staff to run the data center itself. The need isn't as big for dedicated fiber into those buildings, so AT&T Business Fiber works out better for us in those situations."

Responsive customer service

Steingruby is impressed with the AT&T Business services Ascent uses and with his AT&T Business account representative. "She's a great salesperson," he said. "She pays attention to her customers. She's very responsive."

Steingruby continued, "During a recent network upgrade we went through in St. Louis, she made everything easy for us and the transition was pretty seamless. I've been through several of them [with other providers] and sometimes they don't always go well, but the AT&T upgrades that I've been through have gone well."

The expertise of Steingruby's account representative—and others at AT&T Business—has made an impression. "I give them a very positive mark," Steingruby said. "I don't know of a time that I've asked our rep for anything that she either didn't have the answer for or got back to me within hours with an answer. I would highly recommend AT&T Business."

Invaluable reliability

Steingruby also remarked on the dependability of the AT&T Business services. "AT&T provides the primary circuit in our corporate office," he said. "We have not had any major outages. That's really key to our business. The reliability of that AT&T circuit has been invaluable. It's been great."

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>
> **Rick Steingruby**
> **Ascent IT Director**

As Ascent's business continues to grow, Steingruby expects to turn to AT&T Business for other solutions, especially as the company's new data centers will soon be populated. "I would see some of those locations as possible dedicated fiber opportunities for AT&T Business as well," he said.

The company may also consider AT&T cybersecurity services, including security information event management and penetration testing. "That's something that would be driven by our development operations that we could be looking for in the future," Steingruby said.