

# Guidance on What to Do with an Older UPS

## White Paper 214

Version 2

### Data Center Research & Strategy

by Urooj Abbasi, John Gray, and Patrick Donovan

#### Executive summary

“When should an older UPS be replaced with a new one?” is a question that virtually all data center owners will have to answer. The answer is not always self-evident and depends on several factors. This paper provides data center owners and managers a simple framework for answering the question in the context of their own circumstances and requirements. Three options are explained and compared: run to fail, up-grade, and buy new. Considerations for doing this yourself or through a qualified third-party vendor is also discussed.

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## Key takeaways

### Key takeaway 1

**Modernizing UPS systems goes beyond basic uptime and cost.** Today's data center challenges, including decarbonization, digitalization, and supporting AI-driven loads, necessitate a strategic approach to UPS modernization focused on sustainability, digital integration, and agility.

### Key takeaway 2

**Three primary options exist for older UPS systems.** Data center owners can choose to replace, upgrade, or "run-to-fail," with the best choice depending heavily on the current UPS condition, future requirements, and overall outsourcing strategy.

### Key takeaway 3

**Energy efficiency is a critical factor in UPS decisions.** Newer UPS technologies offer significant operational expenditure savings through higher internal design efficiency, better performance at lower utilization rates, and improved redundancy architectures.

### Key takeaway 4

**Future IT load demands and infrastructure compatibility are crucial.** Decisions about an older UPS must consider anticipated load growth or reduction, and whether the existing electrical infrastructure can support the chosen path. For example, supporting high-power AI workloads in the future likely steers the choice to new, higher capacity UPSs versus keeping what is installed.

### Key takeaway 5

**Third-party service providers offer significant value.** For data center teams lacking internal resources or specialized expertise, external vendors provide specialized knowledge, mitigate operational risks, ensure parts availability, and offer access to advanced digital tools for optimized UPS management.

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## Introduction

Today, facility owners face a complex set of challenges, including the urgent need to decarbonize operations, accelerate digitalization, and continuously optimize power infrastructure. These efforts are further complicated by the rapid growth of high-power density, AI-driven workloads, and the inherent volatility of energy markets.

Modernizing UPS systems is no longer just about maintaining uptime while minimizing cost; it's also about aligning power infrastructure with broader business and environmental objectives. This updated perspective centers around three goals that affect the approach to dealing with legacy uninterruptable power supply (UPS) assets:

- Being more sustainable
- Digitalizing equipment and operations
- Being flexible and right sized

First, the drive to be more sustainable has shifted focus towards extending the operational life of assets and reducing embodied carbon to ultimately help achieve carbon-neutral operations. This involves, in part, considering options that minimize waste and maximize resource efficiency throughout the lifecycle of the UPS.

Secondly, digitalization<sup>1</sup> helps to future-proof power infrastructure. Integrating connected sensors, leveraging remote analytics, and implementing AI-based predictive maintenance across the entire power chain enhances the reliability and proactive management of UPS systems, ensuring continuous operation. Newer UPSs are more likely to offer better digital experiences and network management functions with enhanced security.

Finally, agility & rightsizing enable dynamic adaptation to fluctuating demands. The ability to scale power capacity and energy storage technology in alignment with evolving IT loads and emerging grid-interactive market opportunities is well worth exploring when considering upgrades and replacements. Flexibility and modularity (to achieve rightsizing) ensures that infrastructure can efficiently support current needs while remaining flexible for future growth and changing market conditions. It also supports sustainability in that it minimizes power losses.

This paper provides guidance for deciding what to do with older three phase, uninterruptable power supplies (UPSs). The answer is not always self-evident and will depend on many factors. The primary factors are:

- Present UPS conditions/capabilities
- Future requirements/constraints

Once a UPS has been in service for 10 years or so, the following three options present themselves to the owner as potential options:

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<sup>1</sup> Digitalization in data center power distribution, power metering, UPS, and cooling systems, etc. means integrating smart sensors, management software, and advanced analytics to transform traditional infrastructure into interconnected, intelligent, and highly optimized systems for enhanced efficiency, resiliency, and automation. This allows for real-time remote monitoring, predictive maintenance, advanced services, and dynamic control, moving beyond simple hardware to a cohesive, data-driven ecosystem.

1. **Buy new** - Should the UPS be replaced with a new one?
2. **Upgrade** - Can it be revitalized in some way to extend the life and performance for several more years?
3. **Do nothing** - Or is it better to do nothing beyond the most basic maintenance and just let it, in effect, "run-to-fail"?

Surprisingly, each of these options has a set of circumstances that would make it a rational choice. Each has their own set of advantages and disadvantages. This paper will review these options in the context of the primary factors listed above. We provide:

- a simple step-by-step framework for making the decision.
- recommendations to help ensure data center managers make their decision based on a full accounting of their own requirements and constraints.
- reasons for relying on a third-party service vendor (versus doing it yourself).
- a short list of questions to help evaluate those vendors.

## Evaluate current situation and determine future needs

Before comparing the three options described above, the first thing to determine, is whether the existing legacy UPS is (or soon will be) unable to meet its performance requirements and cannot be feasibly serviced or upgraded to do so. **Table 1** shows a list of conditions that would typically indicate the UPS is at or near the end of its useful service life for the given application. Assuming the data center facility is not being consolidated or outsourced; replacement with a new UPS is the recommended option in this case.

Condition	Description
OEM support has ended	Typically occurs 10 years after model is phased out from production. Lack of support makes routine maintenance & recovery from failure impractical, if not, impossible.
Spare parts are unavailable	Once spare parts become unavailable from both the OEM and 3rd party sources, there is basically no option for maintaining/servicing the UPS.
Excessive maintenance	As equipment ages, the need for maintenance increases. It is possible for the maintenance costs and risks to exceed the costs and benefits (capacity, efficiency, and reliability) of installing a new UPS.
Cannot meet critical performance requirements	If the UPS cannot be made to meet the organization's present or future mission critical performance requirements (e.g., supporting the entire IT load at the required redundancy and runtime levels), then it is at "end of life", at least, for that application.

**Table 1**

*Conditions likely indicating the UPS must be replaced with a new one*

Assuming the UPS is meeting the load and runtime requirements, one could choose to leave the old UPS in service and let it run to failure. But this would be a highly risky path to take. Careful planning, close facilities/IT cooperation, and a well-trained operations team would be necessary to minimize the impact of the UPS's imminent and inevitable failure.

If the UPS is not at the end of its service life for the intended application, the next step is to evaluate the UPS across three factors, all which guide or outright determine the decision to keep, upgrade, or buy new.

- Outsource strategy
- Energy efficiency
- Future load requirements

## Outsource strategy

By the time the UPS has become older, owners may also be considering what to do with their facility's other aging systems. Consideration as to whether to upgrade existing equipment, build new, or outsource to the cloud or collocation vendor (or both) is an initial step in the process. For existing data centers with available power, cooling, and space capacity, the decision is often an obvious one, but when a data center is at or near full capacity, a decision must be made as to where to house the IT equipment. White Paper 171, [Considerations for Owning vs. Outsourcing Data Center Physical Infrastructure](#), describes the approaches for meeting new IT capacity requirements and discusses the factors that must be considered in making a fully informed decision. While the cost analysis may favor upgrading or building over outsourcing over a 10-year lifetime, sensitivity to cash flow, cash cross-over point, deployment timeframe, life expectancy of the data center, and other strategic factors play important roles in the decision. TradeOff Tool 13, [Data Center Build vs. Collocation TCO Calculator](#) allows you to input your own facility attributes and costs to determine a 10-year TCO estimation for building vs. collocating your IT in a retail collocation vendor.

These strategic choices about where or whether to house IT can have a large impact on what should be done with the existing UPS system. Obviously a decision to move everything to a retail collocation vendor, where the UPS system is maintained and managed by the vendor, would make this choice clear. It would really only be a matter of when the move would take place. The longer it takes to make the move, the greater the risk that the aging UPS will exhibit problems. Moving only some applications to the cloud might mean the new UPS could be much smaller making replacement with a new one a more affordable option. Mirroring workloads at another site or in the cloud could also reduce the level of redundancy required which might further reduce the investment needed to replace the older system with a new one at the existing facility. The point is, the outsource strategy should be understood when evaluating what to do with the older UPS. It should also be noted that the staff making the decisions about the UPS may not be the same people who determine the larger outsource plan. Therefore, communication and coordination between management & staff, and facilities & IT is important.

## Energy efficiency

The efficiency of the UPS system largely determines the operating cost. So, it is important to understand how efficient the UPS system is today and how it can be improved through upgrades, changed load requirements, or by replacing with new UPS(s). These energy savings should be accounted for in the decision process.

The efficiency of the UPS system is largely determined by three things as shown in **Table 2**. Note, all of the Tables and data are based on Schneider Electric knowledge and experience except where footnoted.

**Table 2**

*Three main drivers of UPS system efficiency*

Efficiency Driver	Description
Internal design efficiency	The internal losses of the UPS itself. Modern UPS systems operate in the 94%-99% range while older legacy UPSs are at 85% -92% across the same load range.
Utilization rate	The amount of load on the UPS relative to the UPS's power capacity. The efficiency of a UPS will vary based on the load. Generally speaking, efficiency is better at higher loads than lower. Modern UPSs typically maintain high efficiency levels even at loads as low as 50% or lower.
Redundancy architecture	The facility's design redundancy has a direct impact on the UPS's utilization rate. A 2N design implies that each UPS would not be more than 40-50% loaded. If either UPS failed or went offline, the other "backup" UPS would be capable of carrying the rest of the load. This low utilization rate negatively impacts the facility's power usage effectiveness (PUE). Particularly for an older transformer-based UPS, efficiency is significantly less at half load than at 90%, for example. Older transformer-based UPSs can have efficiencies in the 85% range when loaded at half load.

The following example illustrates the potential for savings based solely on the difference in UPS internal power losses. A modern 500 kW UPS is supporting 400 kW of IT load 7x24 with an efficiency rating of 96%. A legacy UPS is used in the same scenario except that its efficiency rating is 88%. **Table 3** shows the ten-year cost differences of these two systems. See footnote for assumptions.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 3**

*Comparison of two UPSs' cost of electrical losses over 10 years*

UPS System	Annual internal UPS loss cost	Annual cooling cost for losses	Total 10yr cost of losses
Modern UPS at 96% efficiency	\$14,016	\$5,606	\$196,220
Legacy UPS at 88% efficiency	\$42,048	\$16,819	\$588,670
OPEX savings of modern UPS	\$28,032	\$11,213	\$392,450

To understand how efficiency will impact the decision, start with an efficiency curve for the existing UPS that shows the percent efficiency as a function of percent load. Compare that to the new UPS being considered as a replacement. Many newer UPSs offer more advanced control systems that improve efficiencies by one or more methods such as "ECO Mode" operation (bypasses inverter) or hibernation of unloaded power modules. White Paper 157, [Eco-mode: Benefits and Risks of Energy-saving Modes of UPS Operation](#), details the energy consumption savings and limitations of Eco-mode operation. These newer operating schemes reduce power losses and, therefore, reduce OPEX. Find out from the manufacturer if the power modules for the existing UPS can be upgraded with newer more efficient modules.

<sup>2</sup> 8,760 hours per year for "7x24" operation, \$0.10 per kW/hr cost of energy, energy to remove 1kW of heat is 0.4kW

See White Paper 108, [Making Large UPS Systems More Efficient](#), for a detailed explanation of efficiency curves, how to compare them, as well as to see their cost implications quantified.

Note that government and utility-based energy efficiency improvement incentives, where available, can significantly influence the financial UPS replacement business case. Data center owners should consult with their local utility, national, state/provincial, and municipal governments to learn what programs and incentives exist for improving the energy efficiency of their facility. These incentives come in several forms including:

- Corporate & property tax rate reduction
- Utility & govt. rebates
- Utility & govt. funded grants /loans for CAPEX projects
- Government bonds

For U.S. located facilities, <http://www.dsireusa.org/> offers a free comprehensive source of information on both utility and government-based incentives and programs related to energy efficiency. There may also be corporate “green” initiatives that would further favor replacement with a new UPS.

Schneider Electric UPS efficiency ratings and their impact on energy costs and carbon footprint can be quickly and easily evaluated using our TradeOff Tool, [UPS Efficiency Comparison Calculator](#).

## Future load requirements

How the IT load is expected to change over time should also influence the decision to keep, upgrade, or buy new. If the existing UPS system is at or near full load and future load growth is anticipated, options to add capacity must be explored, such as adding more power modules or another UPS unit in a parallel system configuration, assuming the existing UPS system allows for it. Obviously, if the existing UPS capacity cannot be changed to meet the future requirements, then buying new is the only option.

The capacity of the UPS itself is not the only consideration to be made. Handling future load growth also depends on the larger electrical distribution infrastructure network that had been provisioned for the existing UPS. The capacity of the input and output wiring, breakers, panels, switchgear, transfer switches, and the genset all need to be evaluated. This information will determine associated costs and risk exposure in order to reach the UPSs’ future capacity requirements. Supporting AI training or agentic AI inference workloads will very likely mean the current UPS systems and electrical distribution will be insufficient. White Paper 126, [Retrofitting Existing Power Systems for AI Clusters](#), provides detailed information on how to address the challenges in power high-density AI applications.

On the other hand, if the existing units are lightly loaded, then buying new or performing upgrades may not be necessary. However, keep in mind that if the load is expected to continue to be a small percentage of the rated capacity, then it is possible to replace with smaller units. Downsizing the UPS would improve efficiency, reduce the number of batteries needed, and likely lower service costs. These gains should be noted in the financial analysis. The point is to be careful not to simply assume that a new UPS necessarily needs to be a similar size as to what is currently installed.

Determining the future UPS load is an essential step in evaluating the options to keep, upgrade, or buy new. Having a reasonable estimation of future needs will determine, in part, whether or not the current UPS system can meet load requirements. White Paper 143, [Data Center Projects: Growth Model](#), shows a simple and effective way to develop a capacity plan for a data center or network room.

Redundancy requirements may have also changed from the original design. Newer architectures exist that enable higher electrical power utilization rates. For example, so called “catcher” systems use multiple smaller primary UPSs in a “3 to 1” or “4 to 1” ratio with only one UPS as a backup versus a “1 to 1” ratio traditionally found in 2N systems. The possibility for implementing less UPS redundancy should be considered when evaluating the potential cost of replacing old UPS systems with new. Redundancy considerations can affect both CAPEX and OPEX costs. See White Paper 75, [Comparing UPS System Design Configurations](#) for more information regarding UPS redundancy options.

## Comparison of options

With the current status and future requirements of the UPS system in mind, three options for what to do with the old UPS system should be compared. Each one has its own advantages and disadvantages. The three options are: do nothing (“run to fail”), proactive maintenance (up-grade), and buy new. **Table 5** at the end of this section shows the conditions that tend to favor each of the options.

### Do nothing (“run to fail” with minimal maintenance)

“Do nothing” is not meant to mean literally doing nothing to maintain the UPS. Rather, it means to keep the older UPS in service until “end of life” is reached without any significant capital expenditures to maintain or upgrade the UPS to newer condition, such as by replacing batteries or other major sub-systems and parts like capacitors, power modules, fans, etc. Even in a “run-to-fail” mode, UPS systems should still be regularly monitored for health and status changes that might indicate the presence of a problem. Assuming the UPS does not unexpectedly fail or drop the load, it is the lowest cost option with the least amount of disruption to day-to-day operations. However, the risk of sudden failure and impacting the load is higher. As a UPS ages, more reactive maintenance should be expected. Experience has shown that the instances of “time & material” type service more than doubles once the UPS has reached 10 years in service. However, the amount of risk from such a sudden failure can be mitigated by several factors:

- UPS design redundancy employed
  - If one UPS fails, will the loads remain powered without interruption?
  - Is concurrent maintenance possible?
- Maturity of the operations & maintenance program
  - Is staff trained and available to respond quickly to problems?
  - Are methods of procedures in place detailing steps to mitigate common problems?
  - Are spare parts on hand to deal with common problems?
- Service contract terms and status
  - Is break/fix service still provided and are response times within required timeframes
  - Does technical support service meet requirements and operating schedule?
- Disaster recovery/fail-over scheme
  - Does the load require 7x24 power without interruption?

- Are workloads mirrored in disaster recovery (DR) site or in other sites?
- Can workloads be migrated to other sites or other unaffected areas of the facility if one UPS fails? Can this be done with minimal impact to required service levels?

## Upgrade

UPS manufacturers and third-party service providers often offer services to revitalize or modernize an older UPS which will extend the service life by several years. These services typically come with a warranty (1 year is typical) and service terms that further reduce risk of extending the life of the legacy UPS. What can be upgraded or replaced in a UPS varies depending on the manufacturer and model. **Generally speaking, the more standardized and modular a UPS is in its design, the greater the number of upgrade options that will be available and the easier or less disruptive it will be to implement these improvements.** Table 4 lists the types of components and sub-systems that can often be replaced or upgraded with new, over the service life of the UPS.

Replaceable parts & sub-systems	Typical service life
Battery strings	3 to 5 yrs
DC Capacitors	5 yrs
Fan assemblies	5-7 yrs
AC Capacitors	7 yrs
Power Supply Units (PSUs)	10 yrs
Intelligence modules & controller boards	10 - 15 yrs
Inverter assemblies	10 - 15 yrs
Static Switch	10 - 15 yrs
Rectifier SCR	10 - 15 yrs
IGBTs	10 - 15 yrs

**Table 4**

*A list of common parts and sub-assemblies that can be replaced with new without replacing the whole UPS*

Note that some vendors offer bundled upgrade packages that include replacement of some or all the items in **Table 4** at a significant discount compared to performing the upgrades in a piecemeal, one-at-a-time fashion. Some upgrades (i.e. inverter blocks and fan assemblies) may also offer enhanced power efficiency. Along with the reduction in downtime risk, this benefit, if it exists, should be factored into the decision as well.

Even for highly modular UPS systems, there are still components that are generally not service-able or replaceable from a cost effectiveness perspective at least. For example, the UPS backplane and bus bars that the modular inverter assemblies and control boards connect to inside the UPS fall into this category. So, while these types of revitalization services can dramatically reduce reactive maintenance, they do not necessarily reduce it as much as replacing with a new UPS.

Ease of implementation is another factor to consider when evaluating the option of upgrading an existing UPS. Performing these upgrades is certainly more interruptive and/or risky to on-going operations compared to the first option of “do nothing” or “run-to-fail”. But compared to replacing with a completely new system, an upgrade would take much less time and be less risky to the load. Upgrade tasks can typically be performed in a few hours within an approved maintenance window with the UPS in maintenance bypass while the critical load is powered by a generator and or redundant power source. How easy or difficult implementing the upgrade is depends mainly on two factors:

- The degree of modularity that is designed into the UPS
- The expertise and training of the team performing the service

### Buy new

Compared to the first two options above, replacing an older legacy UPS with new offers high short duration risk during the changeover, but the lowest long-term risk profile as associated new equipment. Initial capital expenditures will be higher than performing an upgrade, but this needs to be balanced against the lower operating expenses that are due to many possible reasons summarized below and described in previous sections:

- Reduced power losses
- Smaller UPS due to smaller load
- Modular, pay-as-you-grow design (right-sized)
- More efficient system or UPS internal redundancy employed
- Reduced redundancy requirements
- Lower service costs vs. old UPS
- Rebates, tax relief, grants, etc. due to improved efficiency

Replacing an older UPS system with a new one may be more complex and time consuming than upgrading especially if the UPS to be upgraded is already modular in design. But particularly when supporting high-density AI loads, it may be absolutely necessary to buy new. Careful planning and execution are required to minimize UPS downtime during the swap. Some vendors offer a service to do this work as a turnkey project. If the owner’s operations team does not have the availability or expertise, ask the UPS OEM vendor if they can perform every task associated with this effort including remove/dispose the old system, install the new, startup and commission the system, as well as transition an existing service contract (if one exists) all under one order.

**Table 5** lists typical conditions that make a given option a sound choice.

**Table 5**

General “rules of thumb” that tend to favor each of the three options

Options	Conditions that favor option
Run-to-fail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No budget.</li> <li>• Moving everything soon to cloud/colo or consolidating into another facility.</li> <li>• High degree of redundancy installed with mature operations &amp; maintenance program (spare parts available, well-trained, established methods and procedures).</li> <li>• Existing service contract to handle sudden failures.</li> <li>• UPS meets current and near-term future requirements (capacity, runtime, redundancy, and efficiency).</li> </ul>
Upgrade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPS is modular allowing for replacement of key parts prone to failure (batteries, capacitors, fans, PSUs, etc.).</li> <li>• UPS is modular with batteries that are &gt;5 yrs old; power modules &gt;10 yrs old.</li> <li>• Non-modular UPS where future requirements are stable and match current UPS capabilities and UPS is &lt;15 yrs old.</li> </ul>
Buy new	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vendor no longer supports UPS &amp; spare parts are unavailable.</li> <li>• Non-modular UPS that is 15 yrs old or older.</li> <li>• Capacity and efficiency ratings do not meet current or future needs.</li> <li>• Strong Utility rate or govt. tax discounts exists for efficiency improvements that can be taken advantage of with a new UPS.</li> <li>• Unserviceable parts have failed or are likely to fail.</li> </ul>

### Additional key considerations for replacing with a new UPS

If the conditions are such that replacement with a new UPS appears to be the best option, several other key items which could impact the decision-making process should be evaluated. These items will also affect the suitability of a given UPS, as well as the UPS replacement project’s scope of work (SoW).

White Paper 61, [Electrical Distribution Equipment in Data Center Environments](#) describes in general the subsystems that comprise the electrical distribution system for a data center.

At the electrical input of the UPS, verification that the feeder breakers and conductors powering the UPS will support a specific replacement UPS is essential. This verification should be performed by a professional engineer with expertise in electrical distribution system studies and knowledge of applicable code requirements. Verification at a minimum includes visual inspection of breakers and conductors, confirmation of breaker maintenance, as well as a review of electrical system studies (load flow, short circuit analysis, protection coordination, and arc flash) using electrical characteristics of the replacement UPS as a basis for the study. Operational interaction of the replacement UPS with standby generator(s) should also be included in this analysis.

Five characteristics of the existing power distribution system can significantly impact the replacement UPS selection. Each of these factors is briefly explained below:

#### 1. Input & distribution voltages

Input voltages may constrain the number of replacement UPS options with 400 VAC being the most prevalent IEC voltage and 480 VAC being the most

common used in North America. Other North American voltages include 208 VAC, 415 VAC, 575 VAC and 600 VAC. To minimize site work, the new UPS should match what has already been provisioned for the existing legacy UPS, if possible. White Paper 129, [Comparing Data Center Power Distribution Architectures](#) provides more information about common distribution approaches to IT equipment in the white space.

## 2. Generator compatibility

Although most of the latest generation of UPS units are designed and built to be highly compatible with standby generators; if the replacement UPS has more capacity, it is extremely important to validate that the existing generator can support this increased kW capacity in concert with all other generator loads. In addition, the generator's starting load profile/load sequencing should be carefully evaluated to ensure continuity of power delivery throughout the facility when standby generator power is required. When an IGBT-based UPS is replacing a SCR-based UPS (6 pulse or 12 pulse) the overall generator load profile is improved assuming no other changes to the load.

Several White Papers on generators for IT and Data Center service are available including: White Paper 52, [Four Steps to Determining When a Standby Generator is Needed for Small Data Centers](#), White Paper 90, [Essential Standby Generator System Requirements for next Generation Data Centers](#), White Paper 93, [Fundamental Principles of Generators for Information Technology](#) and White Paper 200, [Impact of Leading Power Factor on Data Center Generator Systems](#).

## 3. Synchronization with static transfer switches (STSS)

If STSSs are part of the conditioned power distribution system, ensure that UPS-STSS synchronization criteria meet operating intent.

## 4. Existing feeder breaker(s) and conductors

The existing feeder breaker and conductors must be inspected (electrically and mechanically) for suitability of reuse with a replacement UPS and compliance with all applicable codes. The feeder breaker(s) should have been properly maintained and in good operating condition. Verification that the feeder breaker provides proper electrical protection is a requirement. The length of conductors and whether or not the UPS cable entry point is top, or bottom will determine I/O cabinetry and suitability for re-use. The best scenario is that the existing breakers and conductors are a perfect fit. However, it is likely that some customization of the replacement UPS input and output bus is required, which is typically easily accommodated for such projects.

## 5. Physical footprint and floor loading

The footprint of a new generation UPS is most likely going to have a smaller footprint than a legacy UPS of the same capacity. Even though a replacement UPS may have a smaller footprint on a square footage basis, there should be verification that all physical clearances are following applicable electrical and building codes. Typically, most legacy UPSs will also weigh more than the latest generation UPS; but weight loading should still be evaluated in every case.

## Considerations for outsourcing service to a qualified vendor

Some data center operations & maintenance (O&M) teams perform all aspects of UPS system monitoring and maintenance themselves. An effective facility monitoring, and maintenance program helps ensure power and cooling systems continuously perform as expected throughout the life cycle of the data center. Good asset intelligence combined with a proactive preventive and predictive maintenance plan boosts equipment reliability and system availability. As a result, maintenance budget forecasts become more accurate, while total cost of ownership and downtime are both minimized. A poorly managed program, on the other hand, increases operating costs due to higher failure rates that can result in costly repairs and extended periods of downtime. Maintenance management encompasses three key tasks: asset management, work order management, and spare parts management.

Doing all this well requires time, sufficient staffing, on-going and persistent staff training, well-documented and practiced methods of procedure (MOPs), and the disciplined use of infrastructure software management tools. For those lacking the time and bandwidth to do this well themselves, many choose to go with a third-party service vendor. Often, that vendor is also the manufacturer of the equipment. Effective service providers are more likely to offer:

1. **Specialized Expertise:** Effective service providers possess extensive knowledge and experience of UPS technologies, better ensuring precise, efficient, and error-free execution.
2. **Operational Risk Mitigation:** Experienced professionals reduce operational risks and downtime during upgrades, replacements, or maintenance, protecting mission-critical loads.
3. **Comprehensive Support and Parts Availability:** Good service vendors ensure rapid availability of authentic spare parts and offers comprehensive support, extending equipment lifespan and minimizing unforeseen failures.
4. **Compliance and Safety:** Professional service providers are trained to strictly adhere to industry safety standards, ensuring compliance with local codes, electrical standards, and corporate sustainability initiatives.
5. **Access to Digital Tools and Predictive Analytics:** Effective service teams will use advanced digital tools and analytics to proactively predict issues, optimize performance, and reduce energy costs, aligning with sustainability and digital transformation objectives.

## Evaluating a service provider

Selecting an effective (cost and capability) third-party service provider for your data center's UPS systems is a critical decision that directly impacts uptime, operational efficiency, and long-term sustainability. To ensure you partner with a provider capable of meeting your specific needs and contributing to your strategic objectives, it is essential to conduct a thorough evaluation. The following ten questions are designed to help you assess potential partners across key areas, from their foundational experience to their commitment to digital innovation and risk management.

1. Experience and Expertise
  - a. What is your experience with UPS systems like ours?
  - b. Can you provide references or case studies of similar modernization projects?
2. Comprehensive Capabilities
  - a. Do you offer end-to-end project management, including decommissioning, installation, commissioning, and ongoing maintenance?
  - b. What is your availability of spare parts and components?

3. Sustainability and Efficiency Initiatives
  - a. How does your approach contribute to our sustainability goals?
  - b. Can you demonstrate potential energy efficiency improvements and associated cost savings?
4. Digital Tools and Remote Monitoring
  - a. What digital tools do you utilize for monitoring, analytics, and predictive maintenance?
  - b. How can your digital solutions integrate with our existing infrastructure management systems?
5. Risk Management and Compliance
  - a. How do you ensure operational continuity during modernization?
  - b. What measures do you have in place for compliance with regulatory, safety, cybersecurity, and environmental standards?

## Conclusion

What to do with an aging UPS is not always obvious and there are more options today than many might expect. There is no one right answer, but rather a range of right answers depending upon various factors including what the current and future capacity, redundancy and efficiency requirements are, what the outsourcing strategy is, and what has already been provisioned for in the electrical and physical infrastructure supporting the existing UPS. Understanding the current situation and future requirements will largely determine whether it makes more sense to “run to fail”, upgrade, or buy new.

However, regardless of the chosen path, effective UPS system monitoring and maintenance are crucial for ensuring continuous performance, minimizing downtime, and optimizing total cost of ownership. For those operations and maintenance teams lacking the internal resources or specialized expertise to manage these complex systems effectively, engaging with a third-party service provider can offer significant advantages in terms of risk mitigation, access to advanced digital tools, and comprehensive support.



## About the authors

**John Gray** is the Power Systems Manager at the Schneider Electric Technology Center where he is responsible for 3 phase power in the facility's Critical Power Performance Center. He has been an engineer for over 25 years serving in varying roles including electrical system design, construction, project management, integrated systems testing, systems commissioning, troubleshooting, maintenance and facility operations. A graduate of the University of Missouri at Columbia earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering; he is a licensed professional engineer with multiple data center certifications including RCDD and DCCA.

**Patrick Donovan** is a Senior Research Analyst for the Data Center Science Center at Schneider Electric. He has over 30 years of experience developing and supporting critical power and cooling systems for Schneider Electric's IT Business unit including several award-winning power protection, efficiency and availability solutions. An author of numerous white papers, industry articles, and technology assessments, Patrick's research on data center physical infrastructure technologies and markets offers guidance and advice on best practices for planning, designing, and operation of data center facilities.

**Urooj Abbassi** is a seasoned Mechanical Engineer with over 17 years of experience at Schneider Electric, specializing in Techno-Commercial roles within the Secure Power and Services domain. Throughout his career, he has held diverse positions across India, the Asia-Pacific region, and global teams, contributing to strategic initiatives and customer-centric solutions. Currently based in Singapore, he brings a deep understanding of critical infrastructure, energy management, and service delivery. Prior to joining Schneider Electric, he held key roles at General Electric, Whirlpool Corporation, and American Power Conversion (APC), where he developed a strong foundation in engineering, operations, and business development. His cross-functional expertise and international exposure have enabled him to drive innovation, foster collaboration, and deliver value across complex markets and customer segments.

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## Resources

-  [Considerations for Owning vs. Outsourcing Data Center Physical Infrastructure](#)  
White Paper 171
-  [Eco-mode: Benefits and Risks of Energy-saving Modes of UPS Operation](#)  
White Paper 157
-  [Making Large UPS Systems More Efficient](#)  
White Paper 108
-  [Data Center Projects: Growth Model](#)  
White Paper 143
-  [Comparing UPS System Design Configurations](#)  
White Paper 75
-  [Electrical Distribution Equipment in Data Center Environments](#)  
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-  [Four Steps to Determining When a Standby Generator is Needed for Small Data Centers](#)  
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-  [Essential Standby Generator System Requirements for next Generation Data Centers](#)  
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White Paper 200
-  [Retrofitting Existing Power Systems for AI Clusters](#)  
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## Contact us

For feedback and comments about the content of this white paper:

Schneider Electric Data Center Research & Strategy  
[dcsc@se.com](mailto:dcsc@se.com)

If you are a customer and have questions specific to your data center project:

Contact your Schneider Electric representative at  
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