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Front Page » Business & Finance

WEEK OF THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2015 · **COMMERCIAL & OFFICE SPACE** · MIAMI TODAY 15

Involving IT team early can save thousands in leasing costs

BY CARLA VIANNA

Involving the information technology team of a business early on in the lease-signing process can save a client thousands of dollars, five tech-savvy panelists advised a room full of local office brokers in Coral Gables last week.

The event, co-hosted by Avison Young, the Beacon Council and Florida East Coast Realty, aimed to educate brokers on the basic needs technology companies have when moving, expanding or setting up shop for the first time.

"It's not restricted to tech companies," said Larry Williams, CEO and president of the Beacon Council. "Today, we're all IT companies."

The discussion at 2020 Ponce catered not only to finding the right fit for the Googles of the world, but also any company that relies on connectivity on a day-to-day basis. Whether a real estate agent is working with Burger King Corp. or Joe's Hardware, said moderator Kevin Levy, they all need technology.

"The biggest favor to do to your client is ask to speak to their IT team," said Jeff Marder, CIO of business law firm Greenspoon Marder. "It's something that doesn't happen usually until the very last step [during] site selection, which is too late."

Larry Williams, Kevin Levy and Nelson Fonseca at the panel discussion.

ting to any space in today's market, the panelists warned:

With what network provider is the company under contract? What level of connectivity does the business function on – DSL, regular business line or fiber-optic? Will the data servers be on-site or at a remote data center? What's the company's disaster plan? Will the company need a generator?

These are questions an IT team can answer.

"We find folks that move and their lease may not necessarily coincide with their contract with their [network] carrier," said Rick Mancinelli, founder and CEO of Cloud Computing Concepts. And not every carrier can get to every building.

overall cost [of] being in that space," Mr. Mancinelli said.

The panelists chimed in, listing examples of companies moving into a space where their network providers weren't operating and forcing them to work with a lower-tier carrier until a solution was found – a process that has taken up to two to three months.

"If you don't have a network, you don't have a business," Mr. Marder said. "If you don't have a good network, your product suffers."

The takeaway? Brokers, ask for a building's network provider list.

The third question – Will the data servers be located on-site or at a remote data center? –

Photos by Brett Hufziger

Rick Mancinelli, CEO of Cloud Computing Concepts, speaks to the panel as Scott Haugland, the founder of Miami Data Vault, left, listens.

lean toward pulling servers off the shelves and connecting via remote data centers.

As an example, Mr. Mancinelli explained how a cardiology group got rid of its "giant room dedicated to servers" and, in turn, was able to hire another cardiologist.

It can be a money-saving tactic.

These questions will become increasingly important as

hit-list. Tech companies like clusters, he said, and a few of them are sprouting in Miami. Entrepreneurs are already cozying up in Wynwood and the Design District and filing into the local co-working spaces.

A company might start off at a co-working space, but once business takes off, it might be looking for its own space. Brokers who want to aid in those office tenants, the experts