



# SUCCESS STORY

## ThinkBright

### COMPANY OVERVIEW

Headquartered in New York City, ThinkBright is a telecommunications carrier with a difference. The company functions as a traditional local/long-distance telephone company, but also as a cutting-edge VOIP carrier serving small to mid-sized business clients across North America. ThinkBright has its own switching facilities and fibre network, and currently originates, transports and terminates four billion domestic and international minutes annually. The company also operates its own network connecting several switches located throughout the United States and runs OC3's through OC48 interconnection RBOCs. In 2016, ThinkBright achieved 99.9% uptime and 0% packet loss. The company's servers are located in two Tier 1 data centers, made available through a colocation agreement with Cogeco Peer 1.

### BUSINESS CHALLENGE

#### From a nightmare to a hurricane

ThinkBright's mission is to provide its customers with low-cost business grade phone service, backed by white-glove service and a willingness to go the extra mile to completely customize solutions to meet a customer's needs. "We always tell our customers, you focus on what you do best, growing your business, and we'll focus on what we do best," says ThinkBright founder, David Merel. "Particularly with customers making the transition to VOIP or between VOIP providers there's a lot of technical

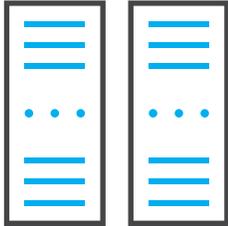


**LOCATION**  
New York, NY

**INDUSTRY**  
Telecommunications

**WEBSITE**  
[www.thinkbright.net](http://www.thinkbright.net)

**SOLUTION:**  
Colocation



### Colocation

Your technology, supercharged. Install your hardware in our global data centers. Reap the benefits of fast, reliable bandwidth and power. Maintain your hardware and software from your offices, or contract our experienced Network Operations Center personnel to do so.

responsibility that lands on their doorstep. They get uncomfortable and scared. So we hold their hands. Our entire contract is built around quality of service, trust and transparency. As a result our customer retention rate is well into the 90% range. Honestly, we don't lose a client unless they go out of business.

ThinkBright opted for a colocation strategy right out of the gate for the reliability a Tier 1 data center offers its clients. "VOIP is the most sensitive kind of traffic," David explains. "It works in real-time and with UDP (vs TCP) web traffic, there is no confirmation whether a packet is delivered. So if you are having a conversation and it breaks up or a word is dropped, it is gone forever. We knew with the quality of service we wanted to provide that it would require hands-on capability provided by a Tier 1 partner. We didn't want to be mixed in with other environments.

David's first experience with colocation was a nightmare. He originally used a data center located in Brooklyn, NY, but the facility -- to be kind -- was rough around the edges. "It was just this guy in a secure facility with a cage," recalls David. "It was very ragtag. One time, someone touched an exposed wire and took our entire network down."

David was introduced to Cogeco Peer 1 at a VOIP conference back in 2002 and was immediately impressed with the team and the firm's colocation offering. "They showed me the options available, and gave me everything I needed and they wanted to work with small businesses like ours where we could grow with them. That was not at all standard in the industry at that point."

And grow is exactly what ThinkBright proceeded to do. The company bought initial cabinet space within Cogeco Peer 1's New York data center, then more. Eventually it moved to a full cabinet.

In parallel, David and his team also set up a second data center location for another business venture and disaster recovery with a second colocation vendor.

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- David Merel, ThinkBright founder

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Then in 2012, Hurricane Sandy arrived. The deadliest and most destructive storm of the 2012 Atlantic hurricane season, Sandy hit New York City with a vengeance. The storm flooded the New York City Subway system, many of its suburban communities and all of the road tunnels entering Manhattan, with the exception of the Lincoln Tunnel.

The relationship with the second data center provider was already showing some cracks, but during Hurricane Sandy, it broke apart completely. "We were always worried about this relationship. There was no team on site to speak of, and we used to think, 'God forbid something bad happens because all hell would break loose,'" says David. During Hurricane Sandy, that's exactly what happened. "Our second data center was completely down and flooded. There was no one there. No one was doing anything. It turns out the company didn't have a good relationship with the building landlord and they just sat back, apathetic. There is another data center in the building and we could see them live tweeting updates, reaching out to pumping stations. Our provider was nowhere to be found."

## SOLUTION

### **In the midst of storm devastation, Cogeco Peer 1's data center (and its team) kept running**

Amazingly and in the midst of devastation, the Cogeco Peer 1 data center in New York City was still up and running.

David began virtually migrating his clients from the downed data center location over to the Cogeco Peer 1 facility. Curious to see how the team was managing to keep the 'lights on' he headed downtown. "I had a car and so I managed to get into Manhattan. The streets are flooded. There are ConEd trucks everywhere. I thought to myself, 'how on earth are they still operational?'"

David had brought pizza to the Cogeco Peer 1 team - guessing (correctly) that the engineers were likely running off their feet to keep ahead of the storm. "I get to the data center. The elevators are not working and the whole building is dark. And I see the Cogeco Peer 1 guys running up and down the stairs. They were all carrying flashlights. The air conditioning had failed and it's incredibly hot. But the battery backups, the generators were still working. They were still up and running."

The next day, David put a call into Cogeco Peer 1's data center manager Mike to see how he and the team were making out. "He said to me, we have other clients who are moving into a phased shutdown, but if you want to try to keep running, we'll be there for you."

## BUSINESS BENEFITS

### **The only VOIP business in Manhattan to weather the storm**

Cogeco Peer 1's New York City data center remained running throughout the storm and its aftermath. As a result, David was the only VOIP provider based in Manhattan to remain up and running through Hurricane Sandy. "We never lost service during the entire storm. If you called a number in New York City, it might go to voicemail or be forwarded to a cell, but for our customers in California, in Texas, in Georgia, everything was working without a hitch.

For the next 30 days after the storm, David continued to struggle with his second data center provider. Over the next month, the facility continued to go up and down like a yo-yo, unable to provide a stable connection. "At this point, reality had sunk in," says David. "I knew we couldn't be there anymore. I simply upgraded with Cogeco Peer 1 adding more power and bandwidth. Within a year, David and his ThinkBright team had moved over to a second Cogeco Peer 1 data center for true disaster recovery. They are also now looking to expand to a third location and an octal or quarter cabinet in Los Angeles in the near future.

When you build your business on the quality of service, transparency and trust you hope for the same from your partners. During Hurricane Sandy, David Merel from ThinkBright saw that when put to the very worst test, he could count on Cogeco Peer 1 to rise to the challenge. "I like to say it is about seeing shades of grey," says David. "Some people -- some businesses -- only deal in black and white. When a customer comes to me with a problem, I want my team to see the grey, to try and figure it out and find a solution to their problem. With Cogeco Peer 1, it's never a hard no. They see the grey and will work hard to find answers to any challenge we bring their way."



## WHY NOT PUT COGECO PEER 1 TO WORK FOR YOU?

[info@cogecopeer1.com](mailto:info@cogecopeer1.com)

[www.cogecopeer1.com](http://www.cogecopeer1.com)

## ABOUT COGECO PEER 1

Cogeco Peer 1 is a wholly owned subsidiary of Cogeco Communications Inc. (TSX:CCA) and is a global provider of essential business-to-business products and services, such as colocation, network connectivity, hosting, cloud and managed services that allow customers across Canada, Mexico, the United States and Western Europe to focus on their core business. With 16 data centers, extensive [FastFiber Network®](#) and more than 50 points of presence in North America and Europe combined, Cogeco Peer 1 is a trusted partner to businesses small, medium and large, providing the ability to access, move, manage and store mission-critical data worldwide, backed by superior customer support.