



# ACME DATA CENTERS

## ACME DATA CENTERS VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES

Recommended Candidate Profile

### DUSTIN JOHNSON

Sales Vice President – Fore DCs

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/dustin-johnson-1>

EDUCATION	BS @ Coastal Carolina University
TOTAL YEARS EXP	24
EMPLOYERS	5
CURRENT EMPLOYER	Fore DCs - <a href="https://www.foredds.com/">https://www.foredds.com/</a>
HQ	Palm Beach Gardens, FL
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	1,499
REVENUE	\$289.9M

### ABOUT FORE DATA CENTERS

Fore DCs is a privately-owned technology company headquartered in Palm Beach Gardens, FL. The company consists of three business divisions – Fore DCs Wireless, Fore DCs Home, and Fore DCs Business. Fore DCs Wireless is one of the largest wireless carrier in the United States and the largest privately-held mobile communications company. Fore DCs operates more than 1,200 cell sites with our 9,000 route miles of buried fiber optic cable. Fore DCs owns and has access to low, mid and high-band wireless spectrum in its primary service areas. The unit offers 4G LTE mobile services and is investing for 5G, the next generation of cellular service. Fore DCs has customers in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and New Orleans.

Fore DCs Home, which launched one of the nation’s first Gigabit speed Fiber to the Home efforts in 2013, provides 1,000 Megabits per second internet access, live streaming TV and digital home phone services to thousands of consumers in more than 20 Mississippi markets. Fore DCs Business offers full-stack managed services data and information technology provider with over 500 service professionals, multiple data centers and operation of over 9,000 route miles of fiber optic infrastructure that offer world-class voice, data, cloud and managed services to small, medium and large businesses and enterprises.



## SITUATION & INTEREST

Dustin is familiar with ACME DATA CENTERS via his experience with Fore DCs and Fore DCs is aware of the VP Sales search, so he was not only prepared for the call but has followed up a couple times to demonstrate continued interest. Fore DCs and ACME DATA CENTERS operate similar services out of their 3 data centers in Birmingham, Starkville, and Hattiesburg. He's also aware of our conversations with Mike Girouard who was with Fore DCs for longer than Dustin, who has been there 4+ years. He's interested in the exploration to determine if he might be the right fit.

He has what he considers to be a "loose non-compete." Their employment letter includes a one-year noncompete, but he has worked through these in the past given he's been in tech sales in Birmingham since 1998 to include a tenure with Sungard Data Centers. When he left Sungard, Dustin joined a startup out of Cupertino, and I got a letter from an attorney which was about the extent of it. He had a noncompete, but they worked through it. Alabama is a right-to-work state.

Fore DCs is making some organizational changes that impact sales. Dustin currently has 15 reps to include all reps for the state of AL, outside of Huntsville. He was in a direct contributor role until joining TekLinks, which was acquired by Fore DCs. He's always been a player-coach in prior roles but now finds himself in pure sales management. Dustin was told going into 2020, neither he or his team is supposed to have any direct responsibilities for selling data center offerings, or monthly recurring revenue solutions. That job will be turned over to a commercial team. He believes this decision by Fore DCs would contribute strongly to any noncompete argument they might bring up, if in fact ACME DATA CENTERS is interested in him and it makes sense for all parties.

Fore DCs's acquisition of Dura Data last year has been an integration and cultural challenge. Fore DCs tends to decide, go for it, and then fix things on the backend. Switching from a legacy platform to Salesforce which has been interesting with integrations into professional services and billing and commissions that didn't get fixed up front. They're working through it but with this larger team, it would have been good to address the migration requirements at the onset vs disrupting our revenue growth charters.

The go to market has been a bit of a challenge as well. Dustin has a very senior staff, meaning many of them have been in their roles for a decade plus. They work well with the executives at the larger banks and healthcare companies, but the responsibility for selling colo and networking connectivity for data centers is not going to sit with a team that has historically done voice and connectivity in the SMB market. This leaves a team of tenures execs to suddenly pivot on what they sell and who they sell to. They also don't have comp plans yet. Dustin has already had a conversation with his general manager to say, "Look, these things are going to have to be fixed, or I'm going to have to look."

CFS Partners outreach was coincidental and timely. He has not yet been actively looking for opportunities but given the changes at Fore DCs and as his boys are getting older, he's now thinking about what the next chapter may bring.



## KEY QUALIFYING CRITERIA

### **Revenue Leadership**

This is where Dustin feels he really thrives. He exceeded quota every year since he joined Dura Data and every year he was an individual contributor at SunGard. In fact, one year, he was the top-performing salesman in all of SunGard, in all divisions. He was a player-coach bat that time. He loves being that engaged in his work. He loves his boys too, but he's at a point now where he's freer to be more engaged and wants his earnings to exceed and have more headroom than what he's had at Dura Data / Fore DCs .

### **Measurement Methodology**

We touched briefly on this and he referenced his own personal accountability and measurement as representative of what he expects from his team. He builds a plan. He shares the plan with his team. His team reviews each of their respective plans before committing. Once agreed to and committed, Dustin holds each person accountable to their benchmarks and expects over performance which means the agreed upon goal is the baseline for performance vs the measure of achievement.

### **Growth**

We did not address specifically. We spoke more about his organizational situation.

### **Solutions**

We did not spend a lot of time on this as Dustin's consulting career is evidence of his ability and interest to work through client's requirements before proposing a solution for a client. He's worked across multiple market verticals and industries which helps his leadership to direct the go to market strategy and communication for his team depending on the pursuit.

### **Credibility / Network**

Dustin's sales charter with Fore DCs has been fairly broad, perhaps best described as the enterprise space in terms of commercial accounts or the larger enterprise-level organizations in the Alabama market. He also has responsibility for the State of Alabama, which is a large client, and familiar with the players there. He does not really get into the small-to-medium-size businesses. That's a different division. When he was at SunGard, his other ventures in management consulting, and even with the startup, the focus was Fortune 500, Fortune 100. He's always represented companies in place to have those executive conversations at a strategic level. At the same time, when it gets down to selling solutions to those same organizations, he's also the guy who put together the proposals, done the presentations, sold the business, and built teams to do the same underneath him.

Player Development –

### **Thought Leadership**

We did not address separately but as noted elsewhere, Dustin is impressive in his knowledge of the market both due his role and employer but also on a much broader level that many other candidates given his consulting services sales and solutions history in other parts of the country.

### **Career – employment relevance, tenure, progression**

When Dustin started at SunGard, initially it was just him out of Birmingham. He went from an individual contributor to building a team of 8 reps and a few account managers over the course of a few years. He's always enjoyed the growth and building of teams and businesses.



Dustin graduated college in '94 and then attended the London School of Economics and earned a Masters degree. He started doing some management consulting for an engineering firm in South Florida for a few years before getting into tech. In 1998 he moved to Birmingham with Sungard and focused on financial services, specifically selling into retirement services space and mutual fund transfer agents. One of his clients was an executive with InvestCap, which became Invesco. She later ran IT operations for ING and then for Fidelity in Boston and then opened BridgePoint, a 45 person management consulting firm where she recruited Dustin to help grown tech practice. He did that for a little less than a year which he quite enjoyed. He was one of 3 men in the firm which made for an interesting experience.

The reason he stopped working with her and started with Dura Data was due to a divorce. He now has sole custody of his 4 sons, so he needed to get off airplanes and be in a local market. Over the past 4 years he's adjusted to successfully managing career and home. He has a middle schooler, two high schoolers, and one at Jacksonville State, an hour-and-a-half away.

Addressing travel requirements for ACME DATA CENTERS Dustin noted he expected that and is comfortable with the responsibilities and support he has at home. Grandparents are local and he's also close to engagement with a girlfriend who is very much part of the family at this point. He's very accustomed to day trips to Montgomery, Auburn, Tuscaloosa, Huntsville, etc. Getting to Memphis is easier since I22 was built which takes you through Tupelo, MS.

### **Interpersonal – evident gravitas, energy, and charisma**

Dustin is as his profile presents. He's a lean forward, confident, and clearly articulate professional. He's been incredibly transparent and candid in his communications regarding his current situation and continued interests despite the threat of a potentially challenging non-compete. He presents as an experienced, enduring executive who understands the market, understands ACME Data Centers, understands the value he can bring, and how he can benefit professionally and financially.

## **IMPRESSIONS**

Dustin is likely the most appropriate from an experience, chapter in life, and ambition standpoint. He's the lesser encumbered of the 2 Fore DCs candidates. His consulting background is interesting in terms of sales engagement at a high solutions sale standpoint. He's cognizant and aware of ACME DATA CENTERS business value proposition to the market and is excited about the growth prospects simply related to the geographic growth ambitions of the company.

Obviously, we need to address the non-compete ... or potentially co-opetition partnering opportunity that exists. He's very open to the possibility and prospect of both outcomes.