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## Disk-Based Backup - The Perfect Complement To Tape

**Your tape customers are potential disk-based backup customers, if you know how to sell the value propositions of the solution.**

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Written by Ed Miseta

It's no secret that the primary use of disk-based solutions is in backup and disaster recovery. Disaster recovery, of course, is about risk versus control. To determine how susceptible a company is to downtime, Randy Settergren, manager of business development for reseller channel at StorageTek (Louisville, CO), recommends end users perform a business impact analysis. "The analysis looks at the business impact of an outage, which always leads back to a storage analysis," he says. "The analysis looks at an end user and determines what is really critical and at risk."

According to Settergren, what is and is not critical has changed over the years. Payroll used to be a top application, but from an IT perspective, there are other places where companies can perform recovery of payroll information. "The payroll processor can pull payroll from the last time it was run and get by," he says. "The storage assessment, or what we call information life cycle management, helps customers ensure they have the right information, on the right devices, for the right cost."

A few years ago, only a few companies were using disk to perform backup. These were companies that had either huge regulatory requirements or extremely deep pockets. "Storing everything on disk is a lot more expensive than other kinds of storage media out there," says Settergren. "Therefore, only financial institutions and Wall Street firms used it. Those companies required instantaneous recovery time." Since most applications do not require instantaneous recovery times, customers need to make sure they have the right information stored on the right device. Most companies cannot store everything on disk, and they need to determine what information needs to be accessed with a sub-second response time.

### Disk Solutions Speed Up The Backup Process

Jim Simon, director of channel marketing for Quantum Corp. (Milpitas, CA), believes VARs need to sell customers on the value propositions for disk-based backup. The first challenge the typical IT manager has is a shrinking backup window. "Customers can do an initial backup to disk-based solutions very quickly," he says. "Once data has been moved to a disk solution, it can be migrated to tape. This is much quicker than going straight to tape." Although the data is backed up on disk, Simon notes it still needs to be stored on tape for archival purposes and for disaster recovery.

Simon believes Exchange servers are a popular application for disk-based backup. A user might delete an e-mail and two days later realize he still needs it. "When a restore is needed, it is usually within 30 days of the original backup," he states. "IT managers can set retention policies for how long the data stays on the disk solution. Therefore, when a file is needed, it can be restored from the disk solution without having to hunt for a tape."

Simon stresses the reliability of tape is still very good, but backing up first to disk increases the reliability. Users can ensure a complete backup has been performed to disk before migrating the data to tape.

### Eliminate The Misinformation

Diamond Lauffin, senior executive VP for Nexsan (Woodland Hills, CA),

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believes VARs can profit on disk-based solutions by learning how to position the products. Part of that positioning involves eliminating misinformation that exists in the market. "The first perception is that disk-based backup is difficult," he says. "One of the great barriers to the technology is that end users perceive they are going to have to go through a radical rebirth. There is a huge amount of misinformation swirling around these solutions."

Lauffin believes much of the misinformation VARs are getting comes from some of the manufacturers. "VARs are being told customers still need to install a complicated solution to do disk-based backup," he says. "We are telling our partners there is no complication. A lot of vendors in this market are pushing their own proprietary systems. We are telling VARs this will tie the hands of end users. I think that is the basic root of the misinformation."

Lauffin has also seen a lot of misinformation relating to cost. Some disk-based systems are expensive, but customers can install a disk-based backup system for a very reasonable cost. "We can put a customer into a disk system for under \$30,000," he says.

#### **The Advantage Is Reliability - Not Speed**

The primary reason customers should go to a RAID (redundant array of independent disks)-based system is reliability, not speed. Speed should always be the secondary reason. Lauffin stresses that integrators have to convince end users this is a good technology, to get them to spend money. And the reason it is good is that customers eliminate the need to perform a restore under fire drill conditions. "There is not an end user I have ever talked to who, when this is explained correctly, does not wholeheartedly agree the solution is what they want," he says.

"I don't think the real issue is convincing end users of the benefits of the technology," says Quantum's Simon. "Customers are the ones that are excited about the technology. That excitement is making VARs aware of this emerging market." For VARs, this opportunity is quite large because of all of the tape libraries that have been sold. Simon believes every customer with a tape library could use a disk-based solution to shrink the backup and restore windows and increase the reliability of the backups. VARs can go back to every existing customer and sell the solution. "There is a huge installed base of tape libraries which equates to a big opportunity for VARs," he adds.