



Case Study

ADC Systems Integration

Storage System Targets Solution Providers

Affordable Storage Solution Fills SMB Niche

Case Summary

As more and more business assets are tied to data, resellers are looking for ways to serve their customers' growing storage needs, while earning higher margins. For many small-medium businesses (SMBs), data is their most important business asset, and it is the asset least likely to be adequately protected. They have insurance on their building, furniture, office equipment, etc., but are they safeguarding their businesses? Now there are solutions that fill the SMB market niche, giving resellers new sales opportunities and revenue streams.

SMBs are looking for storage solutions that protect both their data and their pocket books. Until recently, few vendors offered disk-based storage systems specifically designed for SMBs. Systems are either derived from enterprise products, burdened by high cost and complexity, or they come from low-end data backup products that lack key features such as RAID and remote management.

With the complexities of today's hardware and software solutions, VARs add value by steering customers to solutions that sidestep undue disruption and cost. They recommend systems that better protect their customers through compatibility, reliability and scalability. At the same time VARs are constantly on the lookout for solutions that are easy to integrate, saving them from time sinks and frustration.

VARs are also looking for ways to boost their bottom line. Reseller programs that provide pre- and post-sales support can help increase margins and lower the cost of doing business. Access to product roadmaps, demo units, co-marketing opportunities and rebates can give a leg up on competition and help ink the deal. Regular training and e-mail notifications, with links to new drivers and firmware, make it easier to offer on-going customer support.

This case study explains how ADC Systems Integration took advantage of the Intel® Entry Storage System SS4000-E and the Intel® Channel Partner Program to support its clients, independent insurance agencies, while creating a profitable revenue stream.

“Do the number crunching—you can save them (your clients) money and give them a more reliable self-maintaining system that basically runs by itself.”

—Jim Considine
ADC Systems Integration

Compatibility, Reliability and Scalability

The Intel Entry Storage System SS4000-E is ideal for SMBs, meeting their current and future storage needs. This system is compatible with industry-standard hardware and software. It features two Gigabit Ethernet ports to support two independent LAN networks, and integrates two USB 2.0 ports to allow connection to external hard disks and flash disks. The SS4000-E manages data file sharing among Windows*, Linux* OS, and Macintosh* users, with user password protection and local work-group administration.

The SS4000-E provides reliable data protection by supporting RAID levels 0, 1, 5, and 10. It ships with application software that supports system backup, remote boot and recovery for Windows* clients. VARs and customers can replace faulty disks without interrupting services, since the RAID-configured hard drives are hot swappable.

Storage capacity is scalable, housing one to four 3.5" Serial Advanced Technology Attachment (SATA) hard disk drives that range from 80 gigabytes to 750 gigabytes. The SS4000-E can be configured with different storage capacities depending on the application and upgraded to its maximum capacity of 3 terabytes down the road. Some competitive solutions come fully loaded with the maximum number of hard drives, which makes it difficult to expand capacity and increases the cost for clients who don't initially require a high amount of storage. With the SS4000-E, customers can start with just a couple drives and add more when storage needs increase.

"Low cost, customizability and Intel's friendly channel program earned the SS4000-E the (2006) Product of the Year recognition for storage," says Marc Spiwak of CRN publications.

Selling Scenario: Insurance Agency

ADC Systems Integration is a solutions provider offering an array of hardware, software and networking services. They cater to several industries in Massachusetts, such as insurance and health care. Founded in 1990, ADC has a long history of helping companies manage their networks and industry specific software, establishing a reputation for technical expertise and client loyalty.

Typical ADC clients include independent insurance agencies that are relatively small outfits using PCs, workstation, servers, and of

course, data storage. Insurance agents run insurance management software that manages customer policies and records. They work with documents specific to their insurance software, as well as PDF and Microsoft Word* documents. Electronic document management—scanning and storing photos of their customers' property—is increasing storage requirements. This trend is forcing SMBs to decide whether to hold onto older tape systems and manage more tapes or move to high capacity disk systems.

Many insurance agencies aren't large enough to have dedicated IT personnel. Instead, there's often an office 'champion' who is in charge of backing up the data. Since understanding storage technology isn't a core competency of insurance professionals, these SMBs rely on the likes of ADC for direction on technical decisions, like RAID, mirroring and other intricacies. Ease of use is important to the champion who is looking for an automated system that doesn't need babysitting.

Selling the Intel Entry Storage System SS4000-E

Many of ADC's insurance clients use tape backup. Prior to cost effective hard drive solutions, tape was the norm. When selling the SS4000-E, ADC stresses its cost per gigabyte advantage over tape, as well as the option to start with only two drives and add more later if needed. In fact, an SS4000-E solution is less expensive than a server or a PC solution, with lower acquisition and TCO cost.

"It's a system designed to meet your needs today and to grow with your business into the future," says Jim Considine, ADC Systems Integration salesperson.

Total Cost of Ownership

ADC specialists help their clients quantify the total cost of ownership (TCO) savings of disk systems versus tape systems. Searching the Internet, a state-of-the art, yet cost effective eight slot 3.2 gigabyte tape backup system can run about fifty-four hundred dollars. This includes a five thousand dollar autoloader, a device that automatically loads tape cartridges using a robotic mechanism, and eight 400 gigabyte tape cartridges at about fifty dollars each. A comparable SS4000-E system with four 750 gigabyte hard drives costs half as much, while supplying about five times the data throughput. Hard drives also last about four times longer than tape cartridges that wear out. They should be replaced every twelve to fifteen months, whereas many hard drives have five year warranties.

Some clients will compare the SS4000-E to their current tape backup system. It may have cost less, but it might lack an autoloader which requires someone to manually load tapes. These administrative tasks can be tedious, complex and prone to mishaps; the time devoted to switching tapes, overseeing lengthy backup and waiting for tapes to rewind isn't particularly productive. Some tape systems also require the purchase of application software and a maintenance contract, which can cost hundreds of dollars per year.

Reliability, Functionality and Management

ADC asks customers about their experiences with their tape systems. "The real problem with tapes is most apparent when you desperately need them for restoring data. In major and minor catastrophes over the years, my clients find tapes working only about 50% of the time," says Jim Considine. Some clients spend a lot of time modifying backup scripts to work around exceptions and errors, but they are still left wondering if their backup was reliable.

Using the SS4000-E, customers can implement several layers of reliability. First and foremost, there are various levels of RAID from which to choose. Second, customers who have 1.5 terabytes of data or less can use two drives to store data and create a backup "mirrored" copy on the other two drives residing in the box. Third, data can be backed-up onto spare disks using the hot-swap capability. Last, customers can backup data to remote SS4000-E systems located offsite.

When customers store data on two disks and create a mirrored copy on the other two disks, the SS4000-E is essentially supporting two functions: storage and backup. This saves customers money and avoids the complexity of managing both functions on different systems with different application software. Customers also comment that they like the compact size of the SS4000-E, which can be placed on a book shelf.

Sales Support

The Intel Entry Storage System SS4000-E was developed with resellers in mind. This storage is only available through an authorized Intel® Distributor, Intel® Resellers and Intel® Solution Providers, providing exclusivity over retail channels. ADC finds this exclusivity is a big advantage in the sales process. They don't have to compete with the retail channel on cost alone

and benefit from the Intel brand name and quality reputation. Solution providers, like ADC, also gain product experience from training that is available at the time of product launch.

"We've found that our customers' service needs go down as they buy more Intel (manufactured) systems, servers, whitebox PCs and storage, we tell clients they pay for themselves. Our credibility is better because we're not spending hours fixing the same machine, and we can get to the next service call more quickly," says Jim Considine. Jim has installed over a dozen SS4000-E systems and once encountered a problem backing up a secondary file system. He called Intel support, which quickly detected a software version issue and sent an updated version.

As a member of the Intel® Channel Partner Program, ADC has access to exclusive online content and valuable tools, helping them to stay competitive and informed. The Intel® Reseller Center Web site makes it easy, with round-the-clock access to product and platform roadmaps and technical information; training opportunities; sales and marketing tools and promotions and more. Members can subscribe to Intel® Technical Notifications, a service providing automatic email notifications of updates for drivers, BIOS, utilities, and firmware as they become available.

Channel partners can access information on Intel®-based solutions from the Intel Reseller Web site. They can also get email and telephone support to help resolve technical issues and be more responsive to customers' requests. In addition, Intel's Channel Warranty Program is designed to offer consistent, fast and easy-to-use warranty replacement support worldwide

Filling the SMB Storage Niche

Many solution providers have been locked out of the highly competitive storage segment. The SS4000-E targets SMBs and gives resellers new sales opportunities in a growing market segment.

The scalability of the SS4000-E also opens doors to upgrading storage capacity. Over time customers may need additional drives and perhaps additional systems. If customers outgrow their systems entirely, they can migrate to other storage systems like the Intel® Storage Server SSR212MC2 which supports up to nine terabytes.

Intel resellers may find the flexibility and affordability of the SS4000-E appeals to embedded system developers, like suppliers of medical imaging and aircraft equipment. It allows developers

to control system cost and capability by varying storage capacity. Using the flexibility to dictate the number and size of the hard drives, as well as the RAID level, they can create various product SKUs to meet different price-performance requirements. In addition, the end-user can manage the SS4000-E through Web-based services, saving embedded developers from creating these capabilities themselves. This storage system is unbranded, so system vendors can affix their own logo.

Solution providers may consider using SS4000-E systems to provide remote backup services for their clients. This provides another layer of protection for clients as well as another service to sell.

About the Intel® Channel Partner Program

The Intel® Channel Partner Program provides members with access to an exclusive suite of benefits that support the entire business cycle. For solution providers, membership in the program provides a wealth of resources to help successfully build, promote, sell and service Intel® products.

About ADC Systems Integration

American Distributed Computing (ADC) is a solutions provider known for its hardware, software and networking expertise. Located in Georgetown, Massachusetts, ADC serves clients in various industries including Insurance Offices, Physical Therapy Centers, and Print Shops in the greater Boston metropolitan area.

ADC helps SMBs manage Windows-based servers and workstations, as well as Macintosh platforms. They install industry specific software packages, hardware and software upgrades, and virus, spyware and spam security applications. ADC also offers server maintenance, software training, office wiring and remote data backup/remote office access services.

For More Information

For more information on the Intel® Entry Storage System, visit http://www3.intel.com/cd/channel/reseller/asm-na/eng/products/server/storage_systems/ss4000-e/feature/index.htm



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