



Sun Picks Up Momentum in Storage By Delivering to Its Customers' Needs

Analyst: Michael Fisch

Sun has been on the move in storage. Last year, it rolled out the *Sun StorEdge 9900* series, a line of high-end storage arrays for enterprise data centers. To bolster the mid-range, it then introduced the *Sun StorEdge 6900* and *3900* series. Last month, Sun announced *StorEdge Enterprise Storage Manager*, the first major CIM-compliant SAN management platform, to cap off a broad suite of storage software. And today, it announced the *Sun StorEdge 3300* series, a robust, NEBS-compliant line of “volume” or entry-level arrays. Sun *Solaris* customers, the focus of its storage sales efforts, are clearly pleased with this top-to-bottom refresh. **They have rewarded Sun with exceptionally fast growth in storage revenues lately.**

This momentum is notable in light of Sun's origins and the recent history of the storage industry. During the last half of the 1990s, storage took on increasing significance as a component of the IT infrastructure. **“Storage is strategic” became the belief.** Many factors contributed to its elevation, such as the Internet, but they all fundamentally point to the fast growth of information and its increasing importance to the modern enterprise.

Meanwhile, Sun's traditional bailiwick has been its servers, SPARC processors, and the Solaris operating environment – its crown jewels. Storage was a peripheral, albeit an important one. **But Sun too got religion and decided to make storage strategic. And the transformation continues.**

Sun's success in storage is attributable to a blend of pragmatism and farsightedness. Rather than succumb to the not-invented-here syndrome and try to do everything itself, it partnered with HDS and Dot Hill for its high-end and entry-level arrays, respectively. **This meant great products, rapid time-to-market, and a broad line to cover all enterprise needs.** At the same time, Sun sees inherent advantages in a modular architecture and focuses development on its own modular (and currently mid-range) storage arrays.

Sun looked hard into the future to see where the diverse and fast-changing storage industry is headed. **It pegged the end game as automatic and dynamic provisioning of storage (and other IT) resources according to service-level requirements, as encapsulated in its *NI* initiative. *IT as a utility*, if you will.** Sun appears to see *intelligent storage networking* as well as *management simplicity in heterogeneous environments* as key enablers or stepping-stones to that end. It has bolstered its *StorEdge* management software suite, and its recent agreement to acquire *Pirus* hints at more to come in the arena of intelligent, network-resident, and vendor-independent storage platforms.

This makes a lot of sense. And you can't argue with the results reflected in its storage sales. **For Sun customers, who often like the idea of buying an end-to-end IT infrastructure solution from one reputable vendor, this is all good news.** The allure as well as hassle of looking elsewhere for the storage component is diminished. **It's good for customers, and it's good for Sun.**



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