



## Broad *and* Focused — Dell as a Provider of Enterprise Storage

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### Dell a Storage Player

Dell is well known for its direct relationship with customers, competitive pricing on standards-based technologies, and quick, build-to-order fulfillment. When thinking of Dell, the products that first come to mind are probably Intel x86 servers and PCs, though its lineup also encompasses networking, storage, printers, peripherals, software, and services. **Storage, in particular, has become a major business.** Boosted by its partnerships with EMC and other vendors, Dell has built up a broad enterprise storage offering. It includes:

- Modular storage arrays from entry level through upper midrange,
- Storage networking (SAN and NAS),
- Tape and optical storage systems,
- Object storage or CAS for online archiving,
- Storage management software,
- Data protection (backup, replication, copying) and archiving solutions, and
- Services around its products like installation, migration, training, and support.

### Is Dell Storage for You?

This covers many enterprise requirements. *So, if you are in the market for an information storage solution, should Dell be on your list of potential providers?* As you may know, Dell focuses on high-volume, standardized products and excels at efficiency and lowering costs. It does not try to be all things to all people, but rather chooses large opportunities of defined scope. So, would Dell be an appropriate storage provider for your enterprise requirements? Here are some criteria to help answer this question.

#### *Does your enterprise provide and manage its own IT infrastructure?*

An enterprise that retains IT as an in-house function, as opposed to outsourcing, would be a fit. Dell provides hardware and software components for IT infrastructure, plus *close-to-the-hardware* services. It is not an outsourcer with armies of consultants, ready to take over your data center. Dell is more suitable for an enterprise that keeps primary responsibility for buying and managing its IT assets, even if it employs some outside assistance.

### IN THIS ISSUE

➤ Dell a Storage Player .....	1
➤ Is Dell Storage for You? .....	1
➤ Conclusion .....	2

***Do you have in mind particular information storage challenge(s) to address?***

Dell can bring to the table integrated solutions for common information storage challenges, such as:

- Consolidation and networked storage (SAN and NAS),
- Storage management,
- Data archiving and regulatory compliance,
- Backup and restore,
- Data protection and disaster recovery, and
- Oracle databases.

Many enterprises want integrated, tested solutions, not just point products. They are easier, faster, and more economical than a do-it-yourself approach. While Dell can deliver individual products, if that is what you want, it would be a particular fit if your information storage challenge matches one of its solution areas.

***Do you want modular storage?***

The market for storage arrays roughly divides into two categories: *modular storage* at the entry level through midrange and *monolithic storage* at the high end. Modular has great price/performance, scales in an incremental, pay-as-you-grow fashion, and is useful for both primary and secondary storage tiers. Monolithic performs the best across a broad range of workloads and has the most advanced functionality. It also costs the most, both in terms of per-unit capacity and in the size of upfront and ongoing investments. Dell sells modular storage, the majority of which it sources from the partnership with EMC.<sup>1</sup>

***Do you need to support a heterogeneous, open systems environment?***

Dell storage supports servers and operating systems beyond its own line of

Intel x86 platforms running *Windows* or *Linux*. Its support also includes Novell's *NetWare*, Sun *Solaris*, *HP-UX*, IBM *AIX*, *SGI Irix*, and *TRU-64*.

***Are you sensitive to cost?***

Everyone is price-sensitive to one degree or another, because no one has an infinite IT budget. Moreover, the value of a solution is not determined by acquisition price alone, but by a holistic view of functionality, total cost of ownership, and impact on the business. That said, if price sensitivity is a dominant criteria, Dell tends to have competitive pricing.

**Conclusion**

Dell's storage offering is broad and focused at the same time. It serves a broad swath of the market by focusing on key, high-demand products and solutions. In particular, it makes enterprise technologies available to a larger number of customers through simplification and scaling down entry size and price.

Dell does not intend to be an EMC by doing everything storage-related for even the most complex and sizable operations. Nor does it intend to be IBM Global Services by providing outsourcing and high-level business and IT services. **Nevertheless, it does meet a large number of enterprise storage requirements with solid, competitive solutions. Dell storage is worth considering.**



<sup>1</sup> Dell has the ability to fulfill any EMC product, including high-end *Symmetrix DMX* and *Celerra* platforms, though these are not a focus.

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