

St. Croix Solutions Partners with EMC

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Abstract: A complete offering of products, ranging from servers to information management software and professional services, has propelled St. Croix Solutions into becoming a key solution provider in the Midwest.

St. Croix Value Add

The company has been providing customers Information Architecture hardware, software and services solutions for 5 years. These offerings cover a wide range of areas, including networking, data management, servers and storage. St. Croix Solutions's services expertise, ranging from assessments to implementations, makes the company stand out in the eyes of the customer. Unlike many solution providers, the same St. Croix staff members typically work with the client from start to finish on a particular services project—creating an environment of customer/provider familiarity. There is a lot to be said for continuity of care, which many solution providers are unwilling to provide because of training costs associated with this methodology.

In addition, St. Croix engineers have in excess of 15 years experience covering the different solutions they offer. Combining experience and cross training with visibility into multiple client environments elevates the level of support that St. Croix clients obtain.

The Company has taken the time to build key relationships with top tier hardware and software vendors like IBM, Cisco and Symantec. On the data management and storage front, it has invested in a relationship with EMC and customers like the results.

St. Croix and EMC

A key success factor for a solution provider is partnering with the right technology vendor for products and services. Vendor offerings need to map to the solution provider's strengths, while offering a solid foundation from which the solution provider can excel and provide solutions to meet customer objectives.

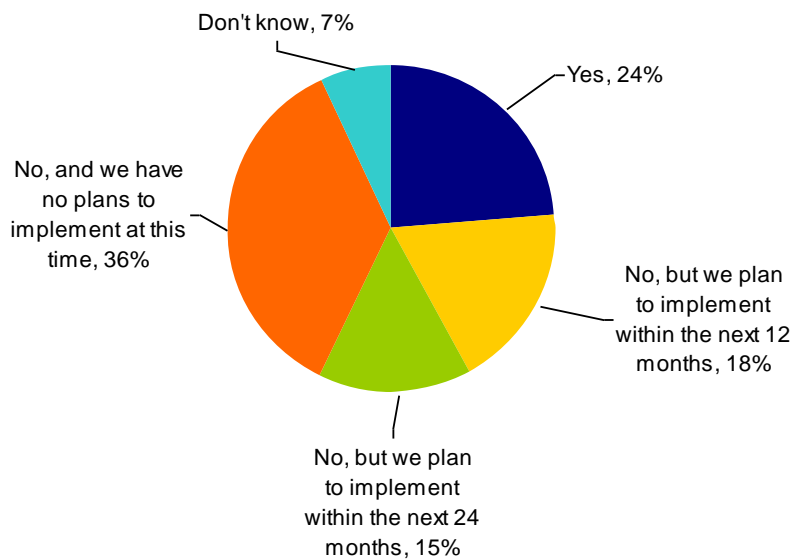
In addition, the vendor and solution provider must share common goals. If success is defined differently, the partnership is destined to fail. For St. Croix and EMC, these common goals are led by their services methodologies. Each looks to assess, deploy and implement data management solutions that enable customers to scale their information management requirements, while protecting their data.

Focus is another key success criterion for a partnership—and strength for this particular pair. The majority (57%) of respondents to a recent ESG research survey¹ stated that they currently run or plan to deploy a storage virtualization solution in conjunction with their virtual server environment within the next two years (see Figure 1). Both EMC and St. Croix solutions anticipated this trend and built supporting infrastructure to address customer needs. St. Croix can extend EMC's value through knowledge transfer of applications such as IBM's TSM since it is no longer enough to know that things work; one should know why they work together in order to be an effective solution provider.

¹ Source: ESG Research Report, *The Impact of Server Virtualization on Storage*, December 2007

FIGURE 1. STORAGE VIRTUALIZATION USE IN CONJUNCTION WITH VIRTUAL SERVER ENVIRONMENTS

**Has your organization deployed a storage virtualization solution in conjunction with its virtual server environment?
(Percent of respondents, N = 332)**

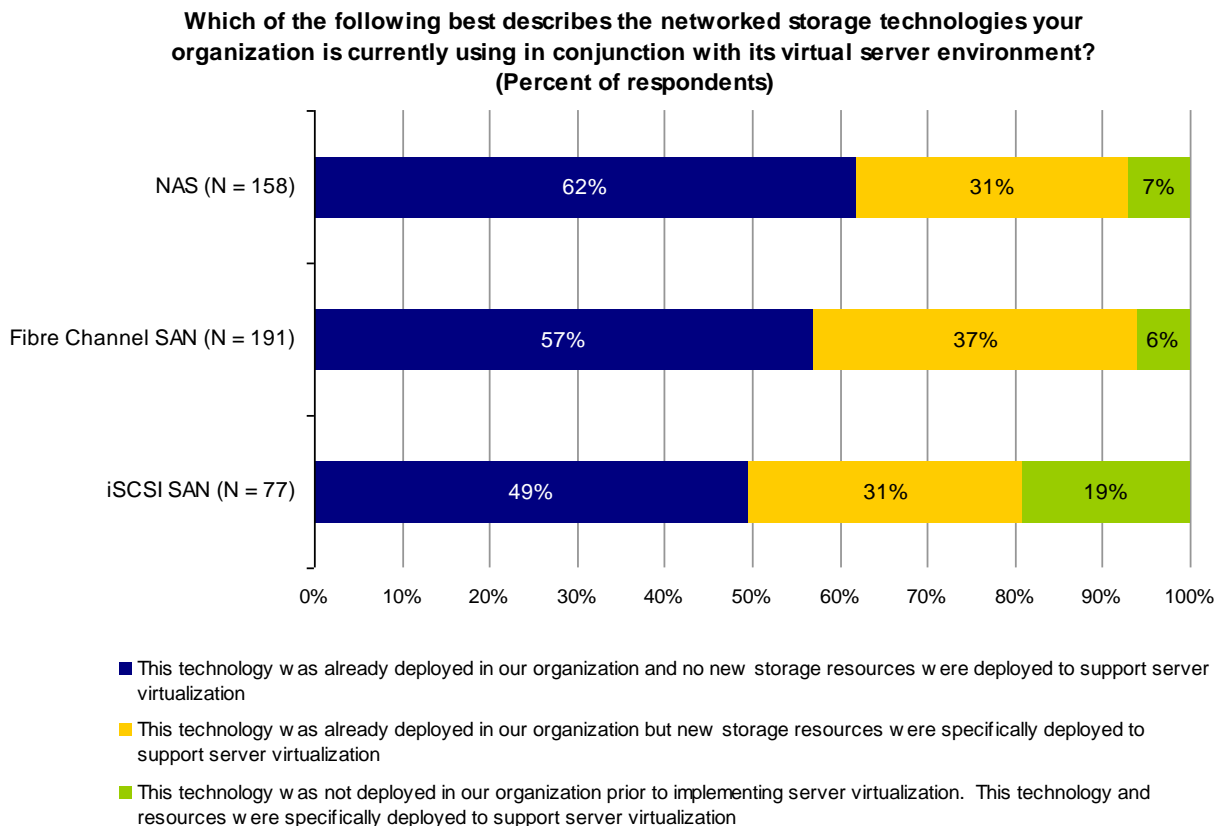


Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, 2008

Customers Look to St. Croix Solutions for Their Storage Virtualization Environments

With physical servers running virtualization software expected to double over the next 2 years and the number of virtual machines growing at 150% during the same period, users should expect to see change in their storage environments. For example, ESG research findings show that with regard to iSCSI, 19% of end-users deployed an iSCSI solution specifically for a virtual server project, and 31% of iSCSI users purchased new storage systems specifically to support virtual servers (see Figure 2). These types of upgrades require expertise for a smooth deployment. In most mid-market accounts, this specialization is not available and one must look outside for assistance. St. Croix's training and certification in these areas, along with its ongoing experience, should put it on your short list of solution providers to speak with.

FIGURE 2. USAGE OF NEW VS. EXISTING STORAGE TO SUPPORT SERVER VIRTUALIZATION



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, 2008

The Bottom Line

Considering staffing pressures, IT is relying on solution providers more than ever before. Look for the ones with a vendor partner strategy that works—where the solution provider is an extension of the vendor’s services offering. St. Croix fits the criteria and should be one of the solution providers you interview if you are blending outside expertise into your IT environment.

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