

From The Top -- Nexsan

Written by Pam Baker

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Nexan's Senior Vice President of Marketing, Bob Woolery talks with NP TechNews

NP Tech News: What is the current focus of your business?

Woolery: Non-profits have a tremendous need for archival and ensuring compliance, which means a need for robust storage and archiving solutions like what Nexsan offers. Our goal is to be the leading supplier of disk-based storage solutions for fixed content. This means leveraging our successful technologies to drive growth. Our Assureon solution features a sophisticated suite of software typically integrated with our SATA RAID and AutoMAID technology to produce an intelligent archival system. We intend to continue to integrate new products with intelligent feature sets that we develop or acquire into our storage solutions to increase our long term storage offerings.

We intend to continue to leverage our high capacity / low cost storage leadership to enable new customers in the market to have reliable enterprise class storage solutions.

We plan on continuing to pioneer green technology for storage and take a leadership role in developing and integrating such technologies into our solutions as they become available.

NP Tech News: How has this focus changed in the last 2 years?

Woolery: Two years ago we were focusing on the delivery of brand new technologies that increased capacity and reliability with our ATA and then SATA products. In that timeframe we delivered one of the first energy efficient disk storage systems with our Automatic Massive Array of Idle Disks, or AutoMAID, technology which we incorporated into our SATA storage systems. This technology differs from other 'green' technologies in that it reduces power consumption without sacrificing performance, a unique capability. In the same period, Nexsan introduced one of the first storage systems focused on the long term storage of data with Assureon. Assureon leverages the SATA Beast's high density and energy efficiency technologies and incorporates innovative Content Addressable Storage (CAS) software allowing customers to easily search, manage, protect and access their data long term.

We were also building out our channel worldwide. We are now focused on enhancing these products further, optimizing price/performance and meeting the needs of current and future customers through long term relationships with our channel partners.

NP Tech News: What are your current initiatives?

Woolery: We just introduced January 9th our SATA Beast Xi, which is the first high-density, energy efficient storage solution optimized for the Apple Xserve and MacPro markets. We have an aggressive trade-in program in our channel right now for organizations that have earlier model ATA products to upgrade to newer versions. That goes through the end of Q1. We are also working on a number of channel partnerships with leading companies that will be announced shortly. We have planned a number of new products, product enhancements and feature enhancements for Q1 and Q2 that continue to push us forward in fixed content storage leadership.

NP Tech News: How has your market segment changed over the last year?

Woolery: There have been a number of acquisitions in the storage sector over the last year. That has put a spotlight on this market. We have also seen a greater demand for energy efficiency as part of the initial customer bid. Finally, we have seen the price/performance of drives continue to come down, which is why we are able to offer highly reliable, 1TB drives at our price point.

NP Tech News: What are the greatest challenges for your customers in adopting and implementing technology?

Wooley: Having people within the organization that have the technical expertise to install and manage IT systems. This is where Nexsan products really help. Nexsan has a “set and forget” philosophy designed into our products from the ground up making it easy to install and maintain. No expensive professional service required.

The next greatest challenge is the cost of storage. As organizations create larger and ever growing amounts of information such as email, office documents, medical images, research data, and digital voice or video, non-profits are looking for solutions to overcome the challenges they face in storing and accessing growing amounts of information cost effectively over longer periods of time. Nexsan with its cost effective design for long term storage of information has made it possible for many organizations to now afford disk based storage.

NP Tech News: How are you helping your customers address these challenges?

Wooley: Because we sell exclusively through the VAR and system integrator channel, we rely on these partners to service customer needs directly. Our partners typically aim to build long term customer relationships that encompass more than just storage and archiving.

NP Tech News: Describe your company's position in the industry with regard to the solutions you deliver.

Wooley: We delivered the first ATA RAID controller on the market back in 2001, and we have continued to drive innovation ever since. At a company level, we are the only company created and solely focused on solving the problems of long storage of information. While other companies, primary storage and tape companies, are trying to move into this market, they are doing so while protecting their primary businesses. As a consequence, their solutions are either too expensive, e.g. primary disk companies, or too slow, e.g. tape-based solutions, to address the needs of this market.

New storage companies are also targeting our market; however, they're trying to morph their Virtual Tape Library (VTL) or de-duplication products into long term storage solutions. The challenge they face is their products were designed for short term recovery of data, or as backup solutions. Nexsan products are designed from the ground up as disk-based long term archive solutions where the focus is the long term use of data. We bring innovative archive technology, customer experience and price leadership to the market.

While our SATABeast and SATABoy products are uniquely capable and extensively used in disk-to-disk backup and VTL solutions, Nexsan products were designed to solve the unique challenges of long term data use. Some of these unique needs are:

- Store more data in a smaller footprint reducing the need to build more data centers;
- Reduce the power and cooling needs of storage systems;
- Quickly and easily find a file from large data pool;
- Insure that the data you stored on a disk system is the same data you get back even decades later;
- And, dramatically lower the cost of storing fixed content data.

Nexsan products uniquely solve these challenges with:

- Capacity optimized storage that can store 42TB in only 4U;
- Energy efficient storage with AutoMAID technology that can power down disk drives to conserve energy yet provide near-instantaneous access to data. For example, conventional Fibre Channel storage consumes 187KW of energy per petabyte. In contrast, a SATABeast or Assureon system (with SATABeast storage) in Level 3 AutoMAID idle mode consumes just 6KW;
- Assureon with its Goggle-like search capability can easily and quickly search 20 million documents in just seconds;
- Assureon WORM technology insures that data stored on a disk drive is repaired if corrupted, corrected if tampered with, found if lost, and restored if deleted by malicious intent or accident;
- Assureon also secures data with the strongest encryption technology commercially available;
- All this functionality is delivered as one solution for one price;

- No more low priced storage only to have to pay extra for each software function;
- No more low priced storage only to pay for expensive professional services to integrate, deliver and manage the solution;
- No additional software licenses or capacity license when you add storage;
- And when you add storage, you only pay for low-priced storage.

NP Tech News: What do you believe to be the state of the industry in terms of growth, maturity, and availability of viable products to address the technology needs of the nonprofit community?

Woolery: The cost of disc storage is coming down dramatically, making it more accessible to organizations of all sizes and budgets. Non-profits have a tremendous need for archival and ensuring compliance, which means a need for robust storage and archiving solutions like what Nexsan offers. The non-profit sector also needs, perhaps more so than profit-based companies, solutions which do not require a lot of professional services to use and maintain. Nexsan has a “set and forget” philosophy on its archival products which allow even modestly sized IT departments and administrative staff to easily implement long term storage and archiving in their organization. Our price for the level of capacity and performance is just a fraction of other enterprise-level solutions, making it very attractive for budget conscious organizations.

As a pioneer of disk-based storage technologies that are optimized for capacity and cost, our ATA and later SATA RAID technology have dramatically reshaped the economics of disk-based storage, offering reliable enterprise class solutions at price points up to 1/10th the cost of traditional disk-based storage solutions. These efforts have brought the benefits of disk-based storage solutions within reach for a larger number of organizations and a wider range of applications. In addition, our disk-based storage products are among the first to offer “green” energy saving technology such as AutoMAID.

NP Tech News: What advice would you offer to organizations attempting to implement any technology projects?

Woolery: Look to get the most for your money. Make sure the price you are quoted includes all licensing fees, set up fees, software, etc. Often, storage vendors quote a price that does not include all the things an organization needs to run the product.

Make sure you look at power usage. Storage is a long-term commitment and energy costs are only going to rise. Future-proof your organization by investing in technologies that will save money over the long term through reduced power consumption. However, don’t feel you have to compromise performance to get reduced power consumption.

Consider your long-term needs when you buy technology. Make sure it is easily and cost-effectively upgraded. Our products are designed to easily add additional drives and units as capacity needs increase. Other systems charge a lot of money to build on top of their system. Make sure your system also meets your long term business needs in terms of compliance and litigation support, advanced security features and low maintenance/support fees. These are all areas Nexsan has given a lot of thought to in its products.

Bob Woolery is Senior Vice President of Marketing for Nexsan Technologies. Mr. Woolery brings to Nexsan more than two decades’ of experience as a senior executive in marketing, product management and business development working with a range of storage and software companies. In his new position, Mr. Woolery is responsible for the overall marketing strategy and direction of Nexsan as the company enters a new phase of growth.



Mr. Woolery most recently served as Executive Vice President of Market Development at Valuation Software, a subsidiary of Imperial Technology. He previously served as Vice President of Product Marketing at DataDirect Networks and Vice President of Product Marketing at Xiotech Corporation. In those positions he gained deep domain expertise in storage and related technologies and associated customer needs. He has devoted particular attention to addressing the unique challenges managing the rising tide of unstructured data within regulated environments where companies must meet ever changing compliance rules.



Pam Baker

About the author:

Pam Baker, an American writer, is the author of six books and numerous analytical studies on various technologies for VisionGain Research, headquartered in London. Her published credits also include hundreds of articles for national and international media such as Wireless IQ, Telematics Journal, IT Business Insider, Institutional Investor Magazine (covering the U.S., UK, Belgium, Ireland, Brazil and Turkey), Success Magazine, E-Commerce Times, I Six Sigma Magazine, CIO Today, NewsFactor.com, Enterprise I.T., BPM Today, MacNewsWorld, LinuxInsider, CRM Buyer, CRM Daily, SCI-Tech Today, TechNewsWorld, Georgia Trend Magazine, Economos International Business Magazine, and Knight-Ridder/McClasky newspapers.

Baker was nominated for the 2004 Templeton-Cambridge Journalism Fellowship in Science and Religion in the UK, and is a member of the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

She lives with her family in Georgia, USA and is working on her first fiction novel: a technological thriller.

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