

A Strong Commitment to Competency

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Years ago, when IBM finally got into the game with high-end enterprise class storage offerings, led by the flagship Enterprise Storage Server (ESS, or "Shark"), Datatrend saw a need to develop a test, evaluation, and benchmarking facility that clients and ISVs could leverage. About the same time, Storage Area Networks were just becoming of value and of meaningful marketplace interest. IBM was having the same thoughts and developed a program for select partners known as the SAN Competency Center initiative. Datatrend became the first facility in the world for IBM, and other partners followed suit. Datatrend's center was equipped with a variety of switch fabric solutions, the ESS, and a myriad of typical SAN environment servers, tape, and other devices.

Steering storage traffic off of traditional Ethernet LANs to a dedicated paradigm (the SAN) caught on like wildfire with obvious performance and manageability benefits. Having the SAN Competency Centers in place to assist end user clients and allow ISVs to test validate applications and solution stacks was a concept that worked and delivered real value. However, in practical application of SAN solutions, such as implementing SANs in the given enterprise, a need to determine, develop and administer best practices became an obvious marketplace need. SAN technology was only as good as client comprehension and use of best practices to derive maximum benefit. Tailoring the best SAN solution along with best practices and client training yielded the best successes.

As storage solutions matured further, other departmental and enterprise offerings supplemented traditional SAN approaches, and IBM modified the initiative which evolved to TotalStorage Solution Centers. The TOTAL STORAGE moniker mirrored IBM's product line ... from departmental to enterprise class solutions.

With respect to the subject of data retention, IBM has been studying the marketplace and the competition and has leveraged its superior science labs to combine best of breed technologies, and modify some of these technologies, to form the IBM TotalStorage DR550. Elsewhere in this newsletter is a comprehensive review of the DR550; investigating the total solution content should provide certain industry profile readers with a compelling reason to look into this solution further. While diving into IBM's bag of tricks and best of breed technologies to form the basis for the DR550, particular solution components have had certain features turned off or enhanced to prevent data over-write, modification, or manipulation. IBM seems to be on to something quite powerful and industry leading.

However, learning from the experiences gained by the SAN Competency Center initiative and the TotalStorage Solution Center (TSSC) program, IBM has foreseen the need to help qualified partners develop a highly specialized Data Retention Center of Competency, an initiative in which Datatrend is supporting and investing. Besides showcasing the DR550 and providing testing/evaluation and benchmarking capabilities for interested parties, Datatrend will offer a full complement of training and best practices reviews for clients. We feel IBM has a real winner with the DR550 and see emerging needs for data retention in numerous industries from education to life sciences to finance and transportation. Please know that Datatrend will update the marketplace on our data retention offerings in concert with industry needs and the maturation of this offering set. The Datatrend data retention programs are tailored to specific vertical industry applications and best practices, while leveraging the excellent features of IBM's DR550.



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