



Education

SRM: Can You Get What You Want?

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➤ SRM: Can You Get What You Want?

Storage resource management tools are now maturing and becoming more of a “must have” capability. However, a broad range of products, each with many different options now confront the potential buyer. Therefore, using the Request for Information (RFI) and Request for Proposal (RFP) processes to differentiate the vendors and their offerings is highly recommended. This tutorial starts with some RFP basics, then moves to a discussion of the important things to look for in storage management applications. It will also include an elucidation of the various standards at play including SMI-S.

Business Problem Assessment

- What problem (s) are you trying to solve?

- Weighting - What's most important? What's least important? What's in-between?

- Who will you have to sell the solution to?
 - ◆ CxO
 - ◆ Business Units
 - ◆ Others within IT

Basics to Look For

- Discovery
- Topology and grouping
- Event monitors and alert notification
- Reports
- Security (SAN and Administrative)
- “Drill down”
- Command Line Interface (CLI)
- Audit trail
- Repository

Desirable Features and Add-ons

- Performance monitors
- Configuration repositories
- Application awareness
- Policy-based automation
- Resource provisioning
- Chargeback
- Report generators and reporting tools
- Remote management
- Trend analysis

A Word About “Frameworks”

- What is a management application framework?
- Open or vendor lock-in strategy – you must be the judge
 - ◆ The promise of disparate storage management application integration, but at what cost?
- The SNIA Management Frameworks Work Group

Is the Management App Manageable?

Scalability

- ◆ Can you and your management application grow together?
- ◆ Will other management applications be required?

Interoperability

- ◆ With infrastructure that is both currently installed *and planned*?
- ◆ Is data exportable to other management applications?

Change manageability

- ◆ When will downtime be required?

RFP Platitudes

- Get as much decision-point data as possible at the beginning of a project (rather than at the end)
- Be aware of all project phases up front so that you can gather data for each phase *during* the RFP process
- You don't get what you don't ask for

While Writing the RFP...

Do

- ◆ Be detailed and specific
- ◆ Be as descriptive of the IT environment and the business need as is prudent in the RFP
- ◆ Know the relevant standards
- ◆ Put yourself in the vendor's shoes (Ask a confusing question, get a confusing answer)
- ◆ Give vendors a reasonable time to respond

Don't

- ◆ Create a “vendor bias” impression

Getting Started With Some Basic Questions

- RFI, RFP, or RFQ?
- SAN Management, or Storage Resource Management (SRM), or both?
- SAN, NAS, and DAS?
- Single “pane of glass” or multiple views?
- Integration with other management apps?
- Do you want to merely monitor?
 - ◆ Does the mere thought of automated management scare you?
- What’s the “agent philosophy” in your organization?

Important Questions to Ask

- Can we run a test environment?
- Can we get product documentation before we buy?
- Can we get a product road map?

Preparing for Negotiation

- Bundled in SAN solution or stand-alone?
- Whenever possible – get a line-item cost for everything
 - ◆ Basic modules and add-ons
 - ◆ Upgrades (even if you don't need them right now)
 - ◆ Maintenance and support
 - ◆ Training
 - ◆ Implementation services

Covering the People-to-People Issues

- How much help can the vendor provide during the internal selling process?
- What is the vendor's problem resolution process?
- Will the management application give you:
 - ◆ The ammunition you may need to defend yourself or your group if (when) challenged?
 - ◆ The data needed to effect (force) future change?

What is SMI-S and Why Should We Want It?

- Storage Management Interface Standard
- Based on pre-existing open standard
 - ◆ DMTF Common Information Model (CIM)
 - ◆ Wealth of information available from SNIA and vendors
- Reduce management complexity
- Increase flexibility
- Mitigate risk of vendor “lock-in”
- Reduce cost

When You Specify SMI-S...

- Know how to interpret the responses
- Know what these words mean
 - ◆ Compatibility
 - ◆ Qualification
 - ◆ Conformance
 - ◆ Compliance
 - ◆ Certification
- Understand the relevant revision levels
- Become familiar with SNIA's Conformance Testing Process (CTP) for SMI-S

- Please send any questions or comments on this presentation to SNIA: track-storage@snia.org