



CASE STUDY

Solution at-a-glance

Company name

Thought Equity Management, Inc.

Industry

Broadcast

Environment size

Enterprise

Employees

25

Customer application

- Archiving data
- Managing data

StorageTek® solutions

- D280 disk system (now called FlexLine™ FLX280 enterprise storage system)
- BladeStore B220 disk system (SATA)
- L20 tape libraries
- LTO Ultrium Generation 2 tape drives
- L700 tape library
- T9940B tape drives
- ACSLS Manager™ software
- McDATA Sphereon 4500 fabric switches

Other vendor solutions

Front Porch Digital software

Business results

- Fast content intake
- Fast delivery
- More profitability
- Enhanced customer service

Thought Equity Management, Inc.

Information lifecycle management strategy helps leading stock footage company scale exponentially.

Thought Equity is a young, ground-breaking company with the goal of becoming the largest stock footage supplier in the industry. On the company's Web site, customers research, preview and download post-production quality video content in the format they need.

Chief Technology Officer Mark Lemmons explains, "If a customer is producing a piece that requires a shot of icebergs, it may not be practical to travel to Alaska to get the shots. Customers can click on a selection on our Web site and view a proxy of the clip. They then can download an editable comp — a nearly full resolution, frame-accurate, watermark-protected copy of the asset. If it works for their application, they can buy the master clip, which can be edited to suit their needs."

Founded as a licensing and management company to provide pre-packaged print advertising, the company found that their market really lay in the video industry. "Our pre-packaged commercials can be edited with the customer's own information and voiceovers," Lemmons explained. "If we can provide a spot that will work for them with minimal production, then they can pursue advertising objectives that might have been out of reach before. They can buy just one shot, or they can get a whole pre-packaged commercial."

Business issues

When the company turned to the video market in 2003, storage became an issue. The company had established a small library of assets that were delivered via a private logon-required online system. There was no tape involved and no scale possible with that system.

"The next step was about scale," Lemmons said. "We knew the business was promising and viable. With our previous solution, we kept the masters on DVDs in a true archive offline. Everything else was kept on disk. But in a year's time, at least half our library will be high-definition, and we expect to grow to more than a petabyte. That really escalates our storage requirement. Longer form and high-definition content just couldn't be stored on DVDs. We knew that no matter how much storage we had, there would never be enough. So the solution we bought just had to scale. And we wanted to do it right the first time."

The solution

Purchasing a huge quantity of disk to tide them over until they outgrew it would have been too expensive. Lemmons explained, "We knew we needed a combination of disk and tape with both online and nearline access."

When Thought Equity became aware of StorageTek's film archive, a partnership was the logical conclusion. "We could make the StorageTek® archive browseable and accessible online, and we benefited from the content," said Lemmons. "Not only was StorageTek legendary in tape automation, but StorageTek could meet our aggressive timeline. When I joined the company in July 2004, we told StorageTek that we wanted to go live with the browseable Web site in October. Our expectations were met and in some ways exceeded."

The company uses L20 tape libraries with LTO Gen 2 drives. Lemmons explains, "We use the L20 tape libraries with LTO drives to

take content from customer or supplier sites, or from our refinery. We load that onto the LTO tape and transport it to the data center. There, we put the proxies on the D280s, we put the comps on the B220s and we put the masters into the L700 tape library."

That reflects how users access the content. Lemmons continues, "When a user looks at a clip on the Web site, the proxy is delivered from the fastest storage — the D280s with their 15,000 r.p.m. drives. The viewer sees it right away. A user may view a large number of proxies, but download few comps. For those who do, the B220s deliver them faster than most users' bandwidths. So, for the less-frequently-used comp, it makes sense to keep them on less expensive disk. The least frequently used content is the actual master, a many-megabyte file stored on tape. McDATA Sphereon 4500 fabric switches connect all of the systems to the storage in a storage area network (SAN)."

Business benefits

"The stock footage market is between \$500 million and \$1 billion a year in the United States," Lemmons commented. "We compete because of how fast we can scale and take in content, and how fast we can deliver to the customers. The StorageTek solution allowed us to deliver our assets faster. And whether it's scaling up the library or moving from 500 gigabytes to 2 terabytes of D280, I can scale my storage pretty easily. Or I can scale accessibility by adding more drives in the library."

Another asset that StorageTek brought to the table was Front Porch Digital software. "This software allows us to manage both meta-data and media content to a deeper layer of granularity than just the asset itself," Lemmons said. "For example, if I have a one-hour video, but I know the time code for the five-second clip that I need to restore, we can do a partial restore of that piece. Instead of having to restore the whole one hour and then using an editing system to

isolate the clip, we can pull the five seconds right out of the data file in the tape library. So this software gives us a live archive."

Financial benefits

If a purchase doesn't include any extra licensing issues, a customer can complete the transaction by downloading the master online without any human intervention. The master is still stored on tape. "This really helps save on labor costs," Lemmons commented. "Even if there are rights issues, our sales support staff can pull content much more rapidly off of tape than they could from the old DVD system."

Lemmons added, "By increasing the speed with which we can take in content and deliver it, we are becoming more profitable. We've probably quadrupled how fast we can take content in, and we're not done improving that yet, based on our new solution with StorageTek."

Technology benefits

"Using tape allows us to be flexible as to where we are digitizing content," Lemmons said. "Using the L20s, we can bring in content from remote customer or supplier sites. A client may have a 12,000-hour library that can't physically be shipped to us. So we fly equipment to them. On their site we can digitize and store content on the L20 library. Then we Fedex the data tapes. In two days we can take in 60 hours of content. We have the flexibility to store content in a variety of ways and retrieve it in a variety of ways. That flexibility helps in every aspect of our business."

"For me, the StorageTek solution is all about scale," said Lemmons. "Our refinery and our current data center will merge in a new data center being constructed in Laramie, Wyoming. We plan to use the L700 until we move into the new facility. And if we decide to scale up to the StreamLine™ SL8500 modular library system, we can just migrate the drives into the new library and go."

About Thought Equity

Thought Equity is a leading provider of video management and licensing solutions. Customers such as cable companies, networks, media companies and holders of large motion libraries use the company's products and solutions to reduce production time and costs, accelerate their online distribution strategies, and provide maximum value and revenue potential of motion assets.

About Front Porch Digital

Front Porch Digital is a leader in the emerging market for digital media workflow. Front Porch offers integrated, best-of-breed archive management and transcoding solutions to the media and entertainment industry.

StorageTek performance metrics summary

Goal	Before StorageTek solution	After StorageTek solution	Result
Aggressive implementation	Content stored offline on DVDs	3-month implementation of new solution	Released public Web site on target
Faster delivery of assets that have no licensing issues	Customers could search and browse but delivery was manual	Customers can search, browse and download master clips without human intervention	Able to deliver more product faster
Scalability	Could not scale	Unlimited scaling	Ability to grow as needed
More storage capability	Limited offline storage on DVDs	Can store high-definition and longer content	Online and nearline flexibility
Save on storage costs	Potential disk cost of \$1 million	Actual cost half a million	Profitability and competitive advantage

Case study company: Thought Equity
www.thoughtequity.com

"We have the flexibility to store content in a variety of ways and retrieve it in a variety of ways. That flexibility helps in every aspect of our business. We've been thrilled with StorageTek."

Mark Lemmons, Chief Technology Officer, Thought Equity Management, Inc.

ABOUT STORAGETEK

Storage Technology Corporation (NYSE: STK) is a \$2 billion global company that enables businesses, through its information lifecycle management strategy, to align the cost of storage with the value of information. The company's innovative storage solutions manage the complexity and growth of information, lower costs, improve efficiency and protect investments. For more information, visit www.storagetek.com, or call 1.800.275.4785 or 01.303.673.2800.

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