Implementation and Planning Guide

Let me start this section by saying nobody ever knows how complex their existing tape management processed are until they start implementing TapeTrack.

There are many factors that result in this realization, but above all, is the fact that prior to the TapeTrack implementation, the majority of management processes are manual, and unmanaged, and have been created with no consideration of ever formalizing the process.

Inevitably, the five biggest challenges that any TapeTrack user has to overcome are:

1. The lack of understanding of existing processes.
2. Existing processes that are unnecessarily complex and based on unsound logic.
3. Implementing software that will warn of mistakes that previously went unnoticed.
4. Not realizing that Tape Management is an ongoing process and using TapeTrack inconsistently.
5. The design of TapeTrack, which shows tapes in all locations, not just one.

Implementation Phases

When implementing TapeTrack, it is important to take into account how the product will be implemented, and who this implementation will affect.

The following implementation phases are based upon the knowledge we have gained over the past 20 years as we have implemented TapeTrack. It goes without saying that this knowledge is based almost exclusively on mistakes that have been made in previous implementations.

While it is completely up to you how you implement TapeTrack, these suggested phases are what we would recommend as best practice for implementing the product.

Identifying Tape Management Objectives

When implementing TapeTrack, each company have their own objectives. It is however important that these objectives be identified before any other activities begin.

At a high level, our suggested objectives are:

1. To create a completed inventory record of every tape asset owned by the enterprise.
2. To create a consistent tape management process across the enterprise, or where that is not appropriate, a common framework to formalize the different management processes that might exist in each region.
3. To create a chain-of-custody record of each activity related to each and every tape.
4. To automate as many tape management processes as possible by leveraging the features of TapeTrack, and by integrating with third party software products and library hardware.
5. To better organize tape libraries that are in racks and shelving units.
6. To implement reporting processes to comply with regulatory requirements.

Obtaining Consensus

It is rare for all backup state-holders to be all behind the implementation of TapeTrack. Sometimes the drive to implement the product comes from Operations, and other times it comes from the backup administrators. While it might not be possible to gain a complete agreement from all interested parties regarding how TapeTrack is implemented, it is important that all interested parties come to some sort of understanding about what will be implemented.

Examples of the kind of disagreements that might arise are:

1. The level of integration and automation that is implemented.
2. Who is responsible for supporting TapeTrack.
3. What level of alerting is enabled within TapeTrack.

Mapping the Existing Environment

It is rare for any enterprise that is implementing TapeTrack to start with a complete understanding of the existing tape management requirements and processes.

Before starting a TapeTrack implementation it should map out the following:

1. Which sites are using tape and require tracking from TapeTrack.
2. How tapes are currently being managed at each site that uses tapes.
3. What backup software is being use in each environment that uses tapes.
4. Who is responsible for tape management in each location.
5. Are there any third parties handling the tapes, such as offsite vendors or outsourced tape operations.

Identifying Stakeholders

Business Data Owners

Operations

Backup Administrators

Auditors

Identifying Key Staff

Creating a Project Plan