

New Remote Backup Solution Packs 30 Percent Margins



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ROBObak is looking to simplify the backup process for remote and branch offices with a new software suite that packs 30 percent plus margins for VARs.

The company, whose name stems from its focus on Remote Office and Branch Office backups, is selling ROBObak exclusively through solution providers, and is in the recruitment mode, said Ron Roberts, president of Atlanta-based ROBObak.

"We expect some of our resellers will become MSPs with the software," he said. "A lot of them have been selling hardware, and are looking for services. Our value for many of them will be a tag-along sale."

The ROBObak software suite, which will be released next week, consists of four parts. The first is ROBObak, which automatically handles backups and restores for local and remote branch offices. The second, ROBObak Open File Manager, backs up open files including hot PST files. The third, ROBO Encryption Manager, encrypts files as they are backed up using AES encryption at up to 448-bit. And the fourth, ROBOark archives, backs up files for long-term retention with the ability to search for files using metadata.

Ron Roberts, president of Atlanta-based ROBObak, said the software requires a single Windows Server 2003-based server be located in a central data center, and a client be installed in each remote office, to allow customers to centralize their backups, including data from mobile and desktop PCs.

The software works with Linux and Unix applications as well as Microsoft. However, because the software is Microsoft-focused, it can automatically do hot backups of any Microsoft application, meaning that open files can be backed up to ensure the data is as fresh as possible, Roberts said.

The software can also back up multiple concurrent remote sites, and concurrently send the backups to multiple sites, he said. It scales in a grid-like fashion to multiple processors handling hundreds or thousands of sites, all with full backup protection, he said.

ROBObak also includes data compression along with data de-duplication at the block level to improve backup speed and decrease the amount of data stored when compared to de-duping at the file level. "We can also de-dupe graphical data, including videos with changes done at the last minute," he said.

Also included with ROBObak is ROBOcrawl, which can search the network to find all files that need to be backed up according to customer settings without the need to build a backup tree, Roberts said.

ROBObak is storage platform-agnostic, making it easy for solution providers to work with the vendor, Roberts said.

"We don't care what happens next year or the year after with hardware," he said. "If you sell hardware, the customer has to decide on a new vendor, maintenance, and support. Our approach is, the customer has a relationship with his solution provider, and has his favorite vendor."

Shawn Lanham, an account executive with Technology Group, a San Diego-based solution provider, likes the ROBObak approach.

"It's a pretty compelling product," Lanham said. "I've never found anyone who can scale like ROBObak from desktops to servers. Especially desktops. I have Department of Defense accounts all over the world. Backup is a big deal to them. And encryption is also important to them."

While it is nice to have some of the other features like archiving and de-dupe, customers are not clamoring for them, Lanham said. "They will become important," he said. "But many of our customers like regional banks are still more focused on things like retooling their core applications."

Lanham also said that he has been happy with the quality of the people at ROBObak. "In my research, they are pretty unique," he said. "The software is well priced, and the people do what they say they will do. It's been a nice surprise."

Pricing for the ROBObak software depends on how many Gbytes are stored on the central server, after de-duping, Roberts said. For 200 Gbytes of data after de-duping, the price is about \$1,990. For 1 Tbyte, the price might be about \$10,000, or \$15,000 with extra features and maintenance.

Link:

<http://www.crn.com/storage/199906152;jsessionid=DTMEZCFMFXIFIQSNDLRSKHS CJUNN2JVN>