After a Full Year of Independent Testing, Dell APEX Still Outshines the Competition

By Andrew Glinka, Vice President of Competitive Intelligence, Dell Technologies | Oct. 2022

Last year, Principled Technologies evaluated and compared the Storage-as-a-Service experience between Dell APEX Data Storage Services and a similar competing solution from Vendor C. Now, a full year since the study began, Dell APEX continues to hit the mark, while Vendor C falls short.

Let's look back at the study, what was evaluated, and how each vendor performed.

Principled Technologies evaluated how APEX and Vendor C performed in four categories: delivered hardware, delivered services, proactive support, and active administration of on-premises hardware. Principled Technologies found that the Dell APEX Data Storage Services offering met the criteria of a full Managed Service Provider (MSP) while Vendor C did not.

How well APEX and Vendor C meet Gartner's Definition of an MSP

	APEX Data Storage Services	Vendor C solution
Delivers hardware?	YES	YES
Delivers services?	YES	MIXED
Consistent proactive support?	YES	MIXED
Active administration of on-premises hardware?	YES	NO

See the full report here and infographic here.

Deployment

The APEX solution arrived with the hardware fully assembled and with the Dell Technologies team on site ready to deploy the solution. Although APEX had a longer installation time (two business days vs four hours), it allowed for the entire solution to be set up and managed completely by Dell. Vendor C's deployment process was not nearly as streamlined. Their solution arrived in multiple boxes and had to be put together on site and activated by a field team. Additionally, the primary contact information was out-of-date and required multiple attempts to resolve the issue. The need to track down a contact could end up costing customers time and money.

Delivery of Services

Dell's dedicated Customer Success Manager provided proactive check-ins and was key to the successful rollout of APEX DSS. Vendor C was dependent on partners and other service

providers to deliver and install the solution. The lack of a single point of contact and having to track down third parties can create challenges for the customer and wastes valuable time.

While Dell proactively addressed any issues behind the scenes and with little interaction required by the customer, Vendor C only communicated issues, such as approaching capacity thresholds. They did not provide any guidance but did offer to send more storage. This left the customer to figure out fixes on their own as opposed to Dell's proactive approach.

Support

Vendor C did not provide proactive support like the Dell APEX team. The APEX team regularly communicated potential issues, thresholds, and recommended remedies. Vendor C merely sent emails indicating potential problems in the environment with data from the array itself. When outages or network downtime occurred, Vendor C's support failed to indicate the environment was unreachable. This is in sharp contrast to the regular communications from the APEX team. Dell APEX gives customers peace of mind that their environment is proactively monitored, alleviating the risk of unplanned downtime or outages. Vendor C just doesn't stand up to the level of support from APEX.

On-Premises Administration

One of the biggest differences in the overall customer experience came down to which vendor provided proactive administration versus reactive. With Vendor C, the customer had to initiate updates. Also, the customer had to schedule requests for patch updates well in advance based on what Vendor C had available, not what was more convenient for the customer. Moreover, the Vendor C solution was implemented with a software version that was more than a year old. The customer discovered this on their own and had to manually request an update. It took an additional 30 days for Vendor C to schedule and complete the initial update. Even after the update, the software was still two versions behind and the soonest time offered to install the next update was three weeks out.

This was definitely not the case with APEX. Dell reached out to the customer, provided timeframes that worked best for the customer, and verified that they were happy. The only major software update, which was handled completely by the Dell team, improved the appearance of the Console UI with no apparent downtime to the customer.

Based on Gartner's definition of a Managed Service Provider, it is clear that Dell APEX Data Storage Services met the mark while Vendor C fell significantly short. The dedicated, proactive Dell Customer Success Manager offers peace of mind by managing and completing patches, updates, and always being a single point of contact, no matter the issue. This study demonstrated that when it comes to Data Storage-as-a-Service, Vendor C is no match for APEX.

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Check out the full report here and infographic here. Reach out to your local partner or Dell Sales representative for more information on APEX.

About the author: Andrew Glinka is Vice President, Competitive Intelligence at Dell Technologies. Andrew is an 11-year Dell Technologies veteran and brings over 23 years of experience in technology sales, management, and operations. Prior to assuming his current role, Andrew served as Global Director of Sales Strategy for the Data Protection Solutions Division. He has also managed the Global Software Sales team as well as other sales teams in the Data Protection Solutions Division. Prior to joining Dell through the EMC acquisition, Andrew owned and operated an IT Managed Services business in Virginia for over 8 years before successfully selling the company.

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