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Graham Magnetix Turns Green

Long-Time Tape Manufacturer Becomes A Tape Recycling Company



In the IT sector, 40 years is an eternity. For Graham Magnetix (www.grahammagnetix.com), a division of eMag Solutions based in Graham, Texas, it is also a sign of persistence and determination. It shows both in Graham manufacturing

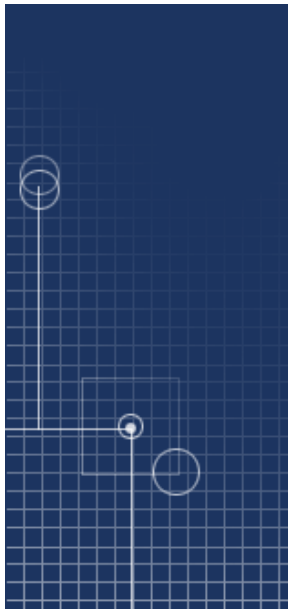
mainframe magnetic media tapes for data centers (as it did up until 2001) and today as a company that is focused on recycling legacy and current media storage tapes, including the 9840 and 3590 cartridges, as well as newer DLT (digital linear tape) and LTO (linear tape open) formats. With a new focus on "green computing," the company is helping reduce environmental waste and ushering in a new age of green data centers that are more energy-efficient and energy-conscious.

"The issue of recycling media has become very important and critical to helping prevent the premature disposal of magnetic media from becoming unnecessary landfill," says Keith Mayes, West Regional Manager for Graham. "Graham is proud of our 'green' contribution to help save the environment and has dedicated our resources and effort to recycling useful media products."

■ Company Milestones

Many technology changes have occurred during the past 40 years since Graham Magnetix started as the brainchild of George Jagers. "George Jagers was an entrepreneur and technology innovator in the truest sense," says Mayes. "He made his career of turning tiny companies into scrappy rivals of industrial giants. Graham Magnetix was no exception, and within a short period of time his small startup company, headquartered in Graham, Texas, became the industry's leader in quality, technology, and innovation, rivaling the giants of the industry."

"Some early successes and milestones were the development of the entirely new



formulation of magnetic media technology, using polymers to create a superior binder system which revolutionized and overtook the industry and our competitors,” continues Mayes. “Graham introduced a product called Verituf, the world’s first 1-million-pass computer tape for mainframes. Verituf was independently tested by the United States Navy, which confirmed and approved the 1-million-pass Graham position. By comparison to competitive products, many in the industry considered performance of 50 to 100 passes as good and acceptable. Many competitive products carried little or no warranty, and Graham warranted Verituf for 1 million passes, with a five-year replacement warranty.”

“The polymer chemist and engineers at Graham made another breakthrough discovery of a new binder system, which was 8,000 times tougher than any tape and which could withstand well over a million passes, and that carried a full 20-year warranty,” adds Mayes. “This new product, with a patented binder system, was called Epoch 4. As a testimonial to the success of this product, many customers now 30-plus years later still use Graham Magnetics Epoch 480 magnetic media.”

Other magnetic media products prior to 2001 included the Epoch 4, Thermal 465, Epoch 480, Omega 80, and the Epoch MTC 3480/3490 cartridges. The main choice for mainframe operators during this time was a half-inch open reel tape that was later updated to 3490 storage media. In the tape storage market, one of the interesting challenges is continuing to innovate with new products, even though the current product lineup is typically guaranteed to last 20 years or more.

“Due to the ever-advancing and changing media technology performance plus the high manufacturing infrastructure cost, the ability to always remain on the cutting edge with new and revolutionary products created challenges for media manufacturers,” says Mayes. “Graham continued to manufacture 3480/3490 but chose not to manufacture any of the newer and varied media products.”

“Today the choices for media selection are wide and varied, such as 9840; 9940; 3590; 3592; DLT; Super DLT; AIT; and LTO 1, 2, 3, and 4, all of which are great improvements over old media products in terms of performance and durability,” says Mayes. “The industry is continuously presented with many new magnetic media products in which some manufacturers warranty their products for a lifetime of 20-plus years with million-pass performance for durability and reliability. Magnetic media products continue to improve through very sophisticated binder technology [and] improved manufacturing processes, which offer long term and high usage to the end user, as evidenced by the newest introductions.”

Current Focus: Going Green

By refocusing on recycling legacy and new tape formats, Graham Magnetics has become one of a growing number of “green computing” companies that is helping recast the IT industry as environmentally conscious, instead of one of the primary contributors to global warming and energy consumption. After a long history of creating new tape products that were certified for reliability, Graham now recycles magnetic tapes and certifies them for reliability and performance.

“Graham Magnetics has taken a careful and calculated step to providing the highest quality certified magnetic media to the industry,” according to Mayes. “Every recycled product is fully inspected, tested, and certified to meet or exceed original specifications. Graham Magnetics assumes the full responsibility and liability for the guaranteed performance of every Graham Certified media product we sell and backs every Graham Certified magnetic media product with a full 10-year warranty.”

As part of the recycling effort in its Graham, Texas, plant, the company has also

introduced a new product offering for eradicating data on existing media, one of the concerns for data centers that may be using a tape format that has been recycled. "Graham realizes how important the destruction of the information contained on every cartridge of media is to the user," says Mayes. "Graham Magnetix has been able to effectively develop the process to thoroughly eradicate and destroy this critical data from a customer's unwanted media. This important and vital service can be performed on customer site or in the Graham manufacturing facility. Graham will remain proactive in offering new and valuable products and services to the data processing industry as the needs become known and required." ■

by John Brandon

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