

# business trends

## Software Asset Management: Supporting Business' Need to Meet Sarbanes-Oxley Requirements

(NAPSA)—For many companies today, complying with Sarbanes-Oxley is like maintaining the sunset-red paint on the Golden Gate Bridge. As soon as workers finish painting one coat, it's time to start another. The Sarbanes-Oxley Act requires organizations to monitor and demonstrate that they have effective internal controls in place. This requirement is based on the underlying principle that managers must fulfill their corporate responsibility to company shareholders to demonstrate integrity and instill trust. Similar to maintaining the Golden Gate Bridge, meeting these financial guidelines in addition to the myriad of other Sarbanes-Oxley requirements can seem daunting.

Getting and staying compliant with Sarbanes-Oxley demands that companies keep a steady hand on the internal controls that govern corporate accounting, and IT is a critical component of this compliance. The IT department is a key support to a company's infrastructure, including hardware, software and operations that are essential to the financial reporting process.

A robust Software Asset Management (SAM) process not only helps organizations maintain accurate, up-to-date and verifiable financial information, it can also play a vital part in automating those procedures so that continuous monitoring and verification are affordable.

A solid SAM process makes good business sense and helps keep a company within the bounds of the law. It can also keep a company's licensing position optimized and help ensure peace of mind through processes and controls that safeguard assets to help ensure that valuable data is not lost, software media is stored off-site and backup procedures are documented. It also helps protect the data necessary to support financial reporting. This advantage is due to SAM's ability to enhance automation and streamline IT and purchasing departments, establish and maintain a thorough and security-enhanced library of a company's software assets and licenses, and keep tight control over vendor accounts and maintenance contracts. What's more, SAM can save labor costs because proactive management and automation enable employees to focus on other, more productive activities besides manually ensuring compliance.

Any SAM plan should be developed in conjunction with existing IT governance models, such as the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) and Control Objectives for Information and Related Technology (COBIT.)

More information on SAM and Sarbanes-Oxley can be found at [http://www.microsoft.com/resource/sam/benefits\\_SarbanesOxley.mspx](http://www.microsoft.com/resource/sam/benefits_SarbanesOxley.mspx).