

Brooks Rehabilitation Meets Compliance Requirements with ExaGrid and Veeam

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



BROOKSSM
Rehabilitation

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Denis Peach
System Engineer 2

Key Benefits:

- 80% time savings on administering backup
- Dedupe ratios as high as 10:1
- Compliance requirements are met with offsite replication
- Integration with Veeam is 'very low maintenance'
- Assigned ExaGrid engineer is at 'beck and call,' providing peace of mind

Customer Overview

Brooks Rehabilitation has over 40 years of expertise in providing medical rehabilitation services. Their highly trained clinicians provide the most advanced therapy and medical care, along with the compassion, motivation, and hope to help people reach their highest level of recovery.

Tape = Huge Time Sink

Denis Peach joined Brooks in 2011 when the company was using IBM TSM as its primary backup solution. Brooks had a small virtual environment at that time and was running Veeam. The vast majority of the servers were physical running IBM TSM and backing up to tape at the main datacenter.

"Tape backup was a clumsy process. It wasn't working well," said Denis Peach, System Engineer 2 at Brooks Rehabilitation. "In my opinion, tape is a waste of an engineer's time. It had a lot of issues, and we weren't confident in the solution. I spent my first three or four months at Brooks just learning IBM TSM – spending time with a consultant just so I could complete a health check on our environment. And at the end of all that, I felt like I knew IBM TSM pretty well, yet I just didn't feel like it was a good overall solution for us."

Brooks had a large enterprise datacenter solution that did not translate well for a mid-sized company with a relatively small datacenter. IBM TSM was a very complex system and wasn't well suited for an organization without a dedicated backup engineering team, so Peach began to look for a new solution. "I didn't feel particularly comfortable being able to actually recover something once I backed it up. Fortunately, we didn't run into that problem, but I didn't feel good about trying to do a bare metal recovery from a tape backup," said Peach.

"One of the first projects I was involved with was trying to find a better solution. We wanted to get away from tape! I was running over to our datacenter, which is about five miles away from my office, several times a week just

swapping tapes. It was a huge drain on my time – tape inventory, tracking, and keeping them safe."

ExaGrid Selected Over EMC Data Domain

Brooks narrowed the field of systems it was considering down to three backup solutions: EMC Data Domain, Quantum, and ExaGrid. "We not only wanted to get off of tape, but we wanted to get off of IBM TSM as well. We were ready to move to a completely new backup solution. After looking at the hardware and software side of things, ExaGrid running Backup Exec came out on top," said Peach.

"I was fifty percent successful with that decision. I liked the ExaGrid piece, but Backup Exec didn't work well for us. We had difficulty managing backup retention, and backup windows were very long with that solution. We ended up abandoning it within nine months and moving over to Veeam for all virtual servers and Arcserve for a few physical servers we still have. Now, we're primarily a Veeam and ExaGrid shop with 95% of our environment virtualized, and it just works. ExaGrid has never failed us," stated Peach.

The ExaGrid system is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with all of the most frequently used backup applications, so an organization can retain its investment in existing applications and processes.

Brooks currently backs up over 160TB data, and its backup footprint has grown very quickly over the last few years. Currently, Brooks has a two-site ExaGrid solution with replication for disaster recovery.

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80% Time Savings on Administration of Backup

"I would estimate that I save 80% of my time babysitting backups or doing backup-related tasks," said Peach. "Backup Exec required a huge chunk of my time because it was so hard to manage, but once I switched from Backup Exec to Veeam/ExaGrid, it just worked. It's very low maintenance now. Our backups are growing so fast that we'll soon be adding more ExaGrid appliances, but I can rest easy knowing how seamless it is to add appliances to the GRID."

Product Support and Ease of Management Offer Peace of Mind

"Installation was easy, plus we have an ExaGrid engineer assigned to our account – which was another selling point for ExaGrid. Our engineer is at our beck and call, always. I love that," said Peach.

"With most products that I support, I have to call into a help desk or a ticketing system of some kind. I'll get an operator or have to open a ticket, get transferred to someone else, and wait for a call back – it's quite frustrating. I like the fact that ExaGrid support sees what's going on with our system. In addition to the reports that I can see, they get other more in-depth reports. So when I am talking with our engineer, he already knows what I'm looking at because he's got it right in front of him as well. He's on top of it."

The ExaGrid system was designed to be easy to set up and maintain, and ExaGrid's industry-leading customer support team is staffed by trained, in-house engineers who are assigned to individual accounts. The system is fully supported, and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

"I like the graphical interface, the reporting, and the capacity alerts," said Peach. "I use the retention report all the time just to see how I'm trending. It makes my job so much easier. There is a whole host of issues that I don't have to think about anymore because I know it's on disk. It's on write-protected disk, and it's replicated, which happens pretty quickly after the backup is done. Compliance is met because I've got an offsite copy of everything. ExaGrid gives me the peace of mind I had hoped for."

ExaGrid and Veeam Backup & Replication

The combination of ExaGrid's and Veeam's industry-leading virtual server data protection solutions allows customers to utilize Veeam

Backup & Replication in VMware, vSphere, and Microsoft Hyper-V virtual environments on ExaGrid's disk-based backup system. This combination provides fast backups and efficient data storage as well as replication to an offsite location for disaster recovery. The ExaGrid system fully leverages Veeam Backup & Replication's built-in backup-to-disk capabilities and ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication for additional data reduction (and cost reduction) over standard disk solutions. Customers can use Veeam Backup & Replication's built-in source-side deduplication in concert with ExaGrid's disk-based backup system with zone-level deduplication to further shrink backups.

According to Peach, "Veeam integrates very well because it has the capability of linking to ExaGrid backup copies as well as primary copies. I like the fact that I can easily set shares for my servers. I can just say this server has access to this share, and be done with it. That helps me with my SQL DBA team. I don't have to worry about which team member is in there configuring backups, doing a recovery, or restoring a database. I know they'll be able to get to the appropriate share because it is pretty straightforward."

Veeam-ExaGrid Dedupe

Veeam uses the information from VMware and Hyper-V and provides deduplication on a "per-job" basis, finding the matching areas of all the virtual disks within a backup job and using metadata to reduce the overall footprint of the backup data. Veeam also has a "dedupe friendly" compression setting which further reduces the size of the Veeam backups in a way that allows the ExaGrid system to achieve further deduplication. This approach typically achieves a 2:1 deduplication ratio.

ExaGrid is architected from the ground up to protect virtualized environments and provide deduplication as backups are taken. ExaGrid will achieve a 3:1 up to 5:1 additional deduplication rate. The net result is a combined Veeam and ExaGrid deduplication rate of 6:1 upwards to 10:1, which greatly reduces the amount of disk storage required.

"We see dedupe ratios as high as 10:1, and they're a big part of our success metrics," said Peach.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides backup storage with a unique landing zone and scale-out architecture. The landing zone provides for the fastest backups, restores and instant VM recoveries. The scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable GRID and provides for a fixed-length backup window as data grows, eliminating expensive forklift upgrades. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.

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