

Comfort Systems USA Rests Easy after Installing ExaGrid for Faster, Easier Backups

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Jason Rose
Network Engineer
Comfort Systems USA

Customer Overview

Headquartered in Houston, Texas, Comfort Systems USA is a leading provider of commercial and industrial heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) and building automation services. With more than 85 locations nationwide, Comfort Systems delivers high-quality engineering, design, installation, energy assessment, and repair and maintenance services across the U.S. and in a wide range of business sectors.

Backing up Data from Multiple Locations Time Consuming and Difficult with Tape

The IT staff at Comfort Systems USA is responsible for backing up data from disparate networks in many different locations. The company had been backing up to tape, but the process had become increasingly expensive and problematic as the company grew. Backup times were long, restores difficult, and the IT staff found it difficult to manage and store massive amounts of tape.

"We were spending way too much time and money on backups," said Jason Rose, Network Engineer at Comfort Systems. "Our backup jobs were running 12 to 16 hours a day, and restores and tape management were taking up too much valuable staff time. Storage was also an issue because we were retaining massive amounts of tape. We decided to install the ExaGrid system based upon the recommendation of our outside consulting firm, and we haven't looked back. It's outperformed our expectations."

ExaGrid System to Provide Disaster Recovery, Reduce Reliance on Tape

Comfort Systems USA has purchased an ExaGrid system to work along with the company's existing backup application, CA ARCserve. The system has been installed in the company's headquarters building, and a second unit is planned for its datacenter. Data will be replicated between the two systems nightly for disaster recovery purposes.

"From the outset, we were extremely impressed with the ExaGrid system," said Rose. "It was easy to set up, easy to use, and it's worked flawlessly since the very beginning. We've been able to reduce our reliance on tape, which has been a huge win for our IT department."

Backup Times Reduced, Less Time Spent Managing Backup Processes

Since installing the ExaGrid system, Comfort Systems has been able to reduce backup times from between 12 and 16 hours to less than six, and restores are significantly faster than they were with tape.

"Our backups are so much faster with the ExaGrid than they were with tape, and they run without fail each and every night," said Rose. "Restores are also significantly faster and are far less labor intensive they were before, especially since we can keep so much retention on the system and we don't have to go sorting through tapes anymore."

ExaGrid's data deduplication technology helps to maximize the amount of data stored on the system by combining last backup compression along with data deduplication, which stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. This unique approach reduces the disk space required by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 or more, delivering unparalleled cost savings and performance.



ExaGrid delivers extremely fast backup performance because data is written directly to disk, and data deduplication is performed post-process after the data is stored to reduce data. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

Rose said that since the ExaGrid system has been in place, he spends far less time managing and administering backups than he did with tape.

"Before, we had to manually change tapes at our corporate office every day, twice a day. In our data center, we had to pay someone to do it. With the ExaGrid, we've been able to eliminate that cost as well as the cost of the tape. We're saving several thousand dollars a year just on tape purchases alone," he said.

Knowledgeable Customer Support Makes Installation a Breeze

"Installing the ExaGrid system couldn't have been easier. Our ExaGrid support engineer contacted us and set up a remote session to perform the install. He then walked me through the systems and procedures, and we were up and running," said Rose. "It took no time at all."

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 dedicated to individual accounts. The system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

"I can't say enough good things about our customer support engineer. He's very knowledgeable about both the ExaGrid system and ARCserve," said Rose. "Every time we call in for support, we reach the same engineer, and I've never had a question he couldn't answer. ExaGrid support is top-notch!"

Scalability to Accommodate Growth

The ExaGrid system can easily scale to accommodate more data as the company's data grows. ExaGrid's GRID computing

software makes the system highly scalable, and when plugged into a switch, different sized configurations can be mixed and matched into a single GRID system with capacities of up to a 130TB full backup plus retention. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

"The ExaGrid system is a rock-solid backup solution. It performs flawlessly day in and day out, and we don't have to worry about our backups anymore," said Rose. "In terms of management and usability, it's absolutely the easiest system we have. I wish that everything in our datacenter worked as well."

ExaGrid and CA ARCserve Backup

CA ARCserve Backup delivers reliable, enterprise-class data protection across multiple hardware and software platforms. Organizations using ARCserve can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as ARCserve, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running ARCserve, using ExaGrid in place of a tape backup system is as easy as pointing existing backup jobs at a NAS share on the ExaGrid system. Backup jobs are sent directly from the backup application to the ExaGrid for onsite backup to disk.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality SATA drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication technology stores only the changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies, reducing the amount of disk needed by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 or more. The ExaGrid system is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with popular backup applications, so organizations can retain their investment in existing applications and processes. ExaGrid servers can be used at primary and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with live data repositories for disaster recovery.

For more information about ExaGrid, please visit us at www.exagrid.com or call us at 1-800-868-6985.

About ExaGrid Systems, Inc.

Customers worldwide depend on ExaGrid Systems to solve their backup problems—effectively and permanently. ExaGrid's disk-based, scale-out GRID architecture adjusts to increasing backup demands due to constantly growing data volumes. It is the only solution that combines compute with capacity as well as a unique landing zone to permanently shorten backup windows and eliminate expensive forklift upgrades. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.