Highland Capital Partners Invests in ExaGrid's Disk Backup with Data Deduplication

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> **Vice President of Global Infrastructure**
> **Highland Capital Partners**

Customer Overview

Highland Capital Partners is a global venture capital firm focused on building companies in the communications, consumer, digital media, healthcare and information technology markets. Founded in 1988, Highland Capital's strategy is to invest in exceptional people and provide them with the right mix of strategic guidance, management expertise, and hands-on leadership for building successful and enduring companies. The company recently closed its eighth fund, capping it at $400 million, and also launched a $300 million Highland Consumer Fund. These new funds bring Highland's committed capital to over $3 billion.

Highland Capital Tires of Tape, Seeks to Better Position Firm to Handle Exploding Data Growth

Over the last 24 years, Highland Capital Partners, an ExaGrid investor, has grown into an international industry-leading VC firm. As Highland Capital has continued to grow and expand, so too have its data volume and backup window. Because the company has decided not to cap user data for primarily litigious reasons, its Exchange data in particular has a consistently vertical growth trend.

Highland Capital had for years been backing up the firm's data to an LT03 tape library, but expanding backup window and dealing with faulty tape led Highland to look at alternatives. "When looking at the two technologies, tape versus disk, it's pretty obvious that backup to disk is the up-and-coming technology," said Rob Bemis, vice president of global infrastructure at Highland Capital Partners. "When we were finally at a point where we were ready to make the move from tape, we compiled all of the industry information, statistics, and customer feedback in terms of the backup-to-disk products available, and ExaGrid was at the top of the list."

Bemis' primary objectives when evaluating a new system to replace tape were greater reliability, reduction in backup window, and increased speed of restores. In addition, he felt it was important to plan for future growth and select a system that could easily scale not only to accommodate data growth but also to provide replication capability and disaster recovery protection. To meet those goals, Highland Capital decided on an ExaGrid disk backup system with data deduplication.

Backup Window Reduced by 50%

When the company was backing up to tape, Highland Capital started its backups at 9:00 pm and wouldn't finish until sometime the next morning, resulting in an excessive backup window. This interfered with the business day since network resources were being used to complete backups, resulting in performance problems.

According to Bemis, "We'd begin our backups at around 9:00 pm and we were starting to run into 10:00 to 11:00 am completion times. We were starting to experience performance degradation as a result. After putting the ExaGrid in place, we were able to begin our backups later so that we're not putting any additional stress on those servers while the West Coast or Far East operations are still working during their business day, but we've also been able to complete backups before the start of East Coast operations. We went from a thirteen- or fourteen-hour backup window down to a seven or eight."

ExaGrid delivers extremely fast backup performance because data is written directly to disk, and data deduplication is performed post-process after the data is

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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.

Easy Installation, Outstanding Customer Support

Bemis is pleased with how simple the ExaGrid was to install. "It was as easy as getting it on the network, putting an IP on it, and pointing backups to it," he said. "I think we spent maybe an hour or two configuring the ExaGrid."

Ongoing customer support according to Bemis has been "outstanding." He says, "Usually my phone rings before I even see there's an issue. My ExaGrid support engineer lets me know we've got a problem, and he's well ahead of it. He's done upgrades in the middle of the day with no issues, not affecting the backup window at all, and I very rarely even get involved. He logs into the system, makes the necessary upgrade, and moves on."

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.

Scalability and Ease of Use Get High Marks from Highland

When Highland Capital was evaluating disk backup systems, scalability was an important consideration. In addition to being able to easily increase capacity in their East Coast location as data inevitably increased, Bemis had plans for another datacenter on the West Coast and wanted to put a system in place that would easily scale for replication.

According to Bemis, "The ability to scale was one of the things we looked closely at. Being able to expand the ExaGrid by just adding another box into the grid was really attractive rather than investing in a system that exceeds capacity and having to do a forklift upgrade. That's one of the great features of this system." Bemis also likes the simplicity of the interface and the reporting structure. "I rely on the reports on a daily basis to ensure that the backups are going well," he said.

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.

ExaGrid and Symantec Backup Exec

Symantec Backup Exec provides cost-effective, high-performance, and certified disk-to-disk-to-tape backup and recovery – including continuous data protection for Microsoft Exchange, SQL, file servers, and workstations. High-performance agents and options provide fast, flexible, granular protection and scalable management of local and remote server backups.

Organizations using Symantec Backup Exec can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Symantec Backup Exec, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Symantec Backup Exec, 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, resulting in a solution that is 25 to 30% the cost of standard SATA drives.

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.