ExaGrid Fuels Faster, More Efficient Backups for Seneca Companies

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> **Kevin Taber**
> **Network and Systems**
> **Administrator**
> **Seneca Companies**

Customer Overview

Seneca Companies was founded in 1973 by Chris Risewick with a vision to distribute the best products and services to clients across the Midwest. With four decades of experience and a proven record, Seneca Companies prides itself in being a full-service provider of petroleum storage and dispensing systems, environmental consulting, process systems and waste removal, electrical contracting, industrial coating and more. Seneca Companies is located in Des Moines, Iowa.

Paperless Initiative and Desire for Better Disaster Recovery Drove Need for New Backup Solution

The IT department at Seneca Companies had been using a robotic tape library with a single LTO-2 drive to back up and protect its information but staff members were concerned about the library's ability to keep up with increasing amounts of data in light of a new paperless initiative the company was planning.

"We were already dealing with long backup times and random tape errors and our tape solution seemed to be aging faster and faster as our backup data grew. We knew we had to upgrade our backup solution sooner rather than later and we also wanted to improve disaster recovery," said Kevin Taber, network and systems administrator at Seneca Companies. "We decided to move to a disk-to-disk-to-tape methodology but we needed a solution that wouldn't kill our budget."

ExaGrid Works with Existing Backup Application for Cost-effective, More Efficient Backups

Taber said that Seneca Companies initially considered a Quantum backup solution but eventually chose the ExaGrid system based on cost, ease of management, scalability and its data deduplication technology.

"The ExaGrid system was more affordable than the Quantum solution it offered all the features we were looking for. We spent some time learning about what ExaGrid customers had to say about the system and we liked what we heard. Many said that the ExaGrid was a 'set it and forget it' type of product and that really put my mind at ease," said Taber.

The ExaGrid system works along with the company's existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec, and backs up and protects SQL databases, Windows file servers, Citrix XenServer virtual machines, and Exchange data.

"The fact that the ExaGrid works so seamlessly with Backup Exec was a big factor in our purchase decision," said Taber. "Once we saw that the ExaGrid can use OpenStorage API's, we knew that it would marry well with Backup Exec."

Faster Backups and Restores, Overall Data Deduplication of 23.02:1 Maximizes Amount of Data Stored

Taber noted that since installing the ExaGrid system, backup times have dramatically decreased. In particular, the company's longest backup job went from 30 hours to eight hours.

"Our backup jobs run so much faster and more efficiently now," said Taber. "Also, ExaGrid's data deduplication technology really helps to maximize our retention. It's so nice to have so much retention available

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in case we need to do a restore. Restoring data from the ExaGrid is so much faster than tape. It really doesn't compare."

ExaGrid's data deduplication technology helps to maximize disk space and retention. Currently, Seneca Companies is receiving an overall data deduplication ratio of 23.02:1. The ExaGrid system 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.

Helpful Customer Support, Easy Management

Taber said that he installed the ExaGrid system himself with the assistance of the ExaGrid customer support engineer assigned to the company's account.

"The installation went very smoothly. It really doesn't get any easier than bolting the system to the rack and making a phone call. Our support engineer was extremely helpful and he did a complete walkthrough of the Backup Exec configuration as well," he said. "ExaGrid has exceptional support. Our support engineer takes his time to ensure that every aspect of our system is correctly configured and updated. I especially like the fact that they use WebEx to remote in so that our firewall ACL's don't have to be altered."

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.

"Our hardware is collocated in a datacenter, and I used to have to drive there to correct any tape drive malfunctions and to load more tapes. Restores were also a pain, because if the file I needed to restore was more than a week old, it would take a few hours out of my day to deal with it," said Taber. "Having the ExaGrid in place saves me at least three to four hours a week in management time alone."

Scalability to Grow, Reduced Backup Costs

The ExaGrid system can easily be expanded to accommodate more data. 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 has cut our annual backup costs by several thousands of dollars just on tape purchases and travel expenses alone. While tape systems do seem to cost less up front, we've gained savings on the management and disaster recovery sides as well. Time is money, and if for any reason we lost a key component of our infrastructure, the downtime for a slow restore would equate to big losses. With the ExaGrid, I don't have to cross my fingers during restores anymore," Tabor said. "Our ExaGrid system has performed flawlessly. I am finally confident about our backups and it's a great feeling. It's so nice to look at the job log in Backup Exec and see that it is completely error-free."

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.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid is a cost-effective, scalable disk-based backup solution that replaces tape in your nightly backup process, enabling faster and more reliable backups at a price comparable to a new tape library. ExaGrid offers the only disk backup appliance with data deduplication purpose - built for backup that leverages a unique architecture optimized for performance, scalability and price.

The ExaGrid system is a plug-and-play disk backup appliance that works with existing backup applications. ExaGrid's patented zone-level deduplication technology minimizes the amount of data to be stored by storing only the unique bytes across backups instead of storing the redundant data. This unique approach reduces the amount of disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to as high as 50:1 or more, delivering unparalleled performance in a cost-effective solution.

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