EXAGRID®

Carter Installs ExaGrid, Reduces Backup Window By 88%, Provides Users with 'Robust' Recovery – an IT Manager's Dream

USA

Key Benefits:

- ExaGrid chosen over cloud solution due to need to build up infrastructure, double bandwidth – 'it's more complicated than people think'

- Tape backups can now be completed in time to start the next cycle

- Backup window reduced from 24 hours to less than 3

- Simplicity of restores allows for delegation from network admin to help desk, saving the company money

> "All of the previous daily annoyances – can't finish a backup, can't read the tape, the drive is full – have dropped off the radar."

Bill Durham
Information Systems Manager

Customer Overview

For over 90 years, Carter Machinery has been focused on enabling the highest level of success for our customers and our team members. This mission has allowed us to grow from humble beginnings in southwest Virginia to our current network of over thirty locations across Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and the District of Columbia. Through a team of more than 2,300 dedicated professionals, we sell and support the full line of Caterpillar equipment, engines, and electric power generation systems.

Backups Were 'Kind of a Mess'

Carter Machinery has a total of 17 facilities that all have a variety of data to be backed up – SQL databases, Microsoft Office files, Webex recordings, and more. Before installing ExaGrid backup storage, like many other organizations, Carter had "kind of a mess," said Bill Durham, Carter's IS manager. "We were replicating data from all 17 locations to our corporate office in Salem, Virginia. Using Backup Exec, we were backing up to an Overland storage device that we had on the network and then sent everything to tape for our secondary backup."

However, it got to a point where Durham's team couldn't complete all its backups before it was time to start the next cycle. They were in desperate need of a solution and looked at a number of options.

ExaGrid Meets Carter's Straightforward Requirements

Some of the solutions that Durham evaluated were very large and complex, but because of Carter's environment, he didn't want anything unnecessarily complicated. "We were looking for a way to get rid of tape and back up data in a couple of variations. We looked at ExaGrid, and it was basically a solution in a box that allowed us to keep using our backup software, Veritas Backup Exec, and it's worked out really well for us. As a manager, it has been a great success for me because it's very hands-off – I don't have to worry about it," Durham said.

Using ExaGrid, Durham's team has been able to do timely restores and satisfy user needs. "We haven't had any hardware or network hiccups. ExaGrid has basically been bulletproof. All of the previous daily annoyances – can't finish a backup, can't read the tape, the drive is full – have dropped off the radar."

In addition to simplicity and ExaGrid's backup application agnosticism, data deduplication was important to Carter's IT team. "Because we have 17 branches, our duplication of files is over the top. Each site feels like they need to have local access to their documents and tech drawings, so given that, data deduplication was a big, quick win for us when it came to the backup scheme," Durham said.

Being able to keep Veritas Backup Exec wasn't a 'must-have,' but it has worked out nicely, according to Durham. However, he likes the fact that he's not tied to a specific backup application in the event he wants to make a change in the future.

Cloud Solution Proves Impractical

During Carter's due diligence process, Durham also looked at a cloud option.

"When we really starting looking at it, we realized we'd have to build up so much infrastructure and needed so much bandwidth, that we were right back in the situation where we didn't think we could get backups done in a day's time. We'd have to double our current bandwidth just for backup, and then the restore side – getting the data back

– is more complicated than most people think. Without building the infrastructure, or having a separate connection to the cloud services, we were going to impact day-to-day business."

Backup Window Reduced from 24 Hours to Less Than 3

Before ExaGrid, Carter was well outside its backup window, with backups not completing before it came time to start a new backup cycle.

According to Durham, he now has the confidence to do a full weekly backup and incrementals several times during the day. "That allows us to offer our user community a much more robust recovery solution than what we had before because our backup window has gone from 24 hours to less than 3 hours. Some of that is because of the deduplication, and some is because we were finally able to do incrementals as opposed to having to do a full on a regular basis."

Restores are 'Dramatically Simplified'

Restores used to be a problem from tape, reports Durham. "We had to manually figure out the name of the file that contained the backup, find it, and then restore it – usually over the file that existed. However, if it needed to be restored in a different location, you had to stand on one leg and wave a dead chicken, to be cliché about it! Seriously, though, it was a very annoying process. With ExaGrid, it's been dramatically simplified – so much so that I don't even know the process anymore because it's something we've been able to delegate down to Help Desk support, and they have a process to do restores."

Time Savings and More

Since installing ExaGrid, Durham estimates that his team easily saves three or more person days per month that they're able to devote to something besides backup. "However, it's more than just the time savings, because I no longer need to have a network administrator, at his hourly rate, worry about backups and restores. I can delegate that work to a different employee and save the company even more money."

The ExaGrid system was designed to be easy to set up and operate. ExaGrid's industry-leading level 2 senior support engineers are assigned to individual customers, ensuring they always work with the same engineer. Customer's never have to repeat themselves to various support staff, and issues get resolved quickly.

An IT Manager's Dream

Durham has been pleased with ExaGrid's 'install it and forget it' approach. "You spend a little bit of time up front making sure that your processes are clean (the ExaGrid installation team was helpful with getting us to do that) and that you've got the right people assigned to it. But ExaGrid is everything it claims to be. The system doesn't require handholding, and it doesn't require an admin to sit there and make sure it does what it's supposed to do. In that respect, it's a manager's dream – you make the investment, it does what you ask it to do, and you don't have to babysit."

ExaGrid and Veritas Backup Exec

Veritas Backup Exec provides cost-effective, high-performance backup and recovery – including continuous data protection for Microsoft Exchange servers, Microsoft SQL servers, 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 Veritas Backup Exec can look to ExaGrid Tiered Backup Storage for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Veritas Backup Exec, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Veritas Backup Exec, using ExaGrid 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 ExaGrid for backup to disk.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides Tiered Backup Storage with a unique disk-cache Landing Zone that enables fastest backups and restores, a Repository Tier that offers the lowest cost for long-term retention and enables ransomware recovery, and scale-out architecture which includes full appliances with up to 2.7PB full backup in a single system.

Learn more at **www.exagrid.com**.

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