

'Zero-Touch' ExaGrid-Veeam Solution Reduces VM Backups by 95%

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

The Football Pools

"There's been much less technician involvement since we've introduced ExaGrid. It's zero touch from an administrator's perspective. I'm most impressed with how easy it is to set the system up, and how well it integrates with backup products, such as Veeam."

Chris Lakey
Infrastructure Manager



UNITED
KINGDOM

Key Benefits:

- Switch to ExaGrid results 95% shorter VM backups
- 'Extremely high' data deduplication – 29:1 dedupe ratios for Linux backups
- ExaGrid is an easy, 'zero-touch' solution requiring less technician involvement

Customer Overview

The Football Pools, headquartered in Liverpool, United Kingdom, has been a core part of the British football weekend since 1923, offering customers the chance to win £3 Million twice a week every week. During the last 95 years, The Football Pools have paid out over £3 Billion in prize money to more than 60 million lucky winners.

New Infrastructure Manager Recommends ExaGrid from Prior Position

Chris Lakey, The Football Pools' infrastructure manager, liked working with ExaGrid so much while in a previous role that he recommended the company switch after starting at his new position there. "The key points that I brought up were ExaGrid's deduplication, scalability, and the fact that it eliminates the need for manual intervention. Those points, plus the fact that the overall total cost of using an ExaGrid system was far less expensive than our previous solution, were what led us to make the switch."

The company installed an ExaGrid system at its primary site that cross-replicates with another system at its data centre (colo) site. "Installation was extremely simple. We were able to have the ExaGrid systems up and running within an hour, from out of the box to sending backup data to the system," said Chris Lakey.

Chris Lakey was pleased that ExaGrid integrates well with Veeam, The Football Pools' existing backup application. "I'd say ExaGrid integrates better with Veeam than any other backup application. In my previous role, I used Backup Exec, which is a little more challenging to get configured, though still beneficial in terms of deduplication and compression."

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.



In addition, ExaGrid appliances can be used at primary and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with live data repositories for disaster recovery (DR).

VM Backups Reduced by 95%

Chris Lakey backs up The Football Pools' data on a daily, weekly, and monthly schedule. "Our data is typically comprised of virtual hard disk files followed by bespoke application data. What I mean by that is that the data can be outputs from in-house applications. It can be additional documents, databases, or a mixture of Windows and Linux operating systems.

"We've tried to maintain consistency by keeping the backup start times the same, only now they are so much quicker! Backups used to take up to 40 minutes per virtual machine (VM). Now, backups of each VM are deduplicated and encrypted-at-rest inside of two minutes," said Chris Lakey. "We run at a high speed now – a full backup of our entire estate at our main office can be as short as five-and-a-half hours."

ExaGrid writes backups directly to a disk landing zone, avoiding inline processing

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and ensuring the highest possible backup performance, which results in the shortest backup window. "Adaptive" deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups while providing full system resources to the backups for the shortest backup window. Available system cycles are utilized to perform deduplication and offsite replication for an optimal recovery point at the DR site. Once complete, the onsite data is protected and immediately available in its full unduplicated form for fast restores, VM Instant Recoveries, and tape copies while the offsite data is ready for DR.

High Deduplication Ratio for Linux Backups

Incorporating data deduplication into The Football Pools' backup environment was an important factor in the company's search for the right solution. "Our deduplication is extremely high, and our best deduplication ratio is seen with our Linux backups—we're actually running at a 29.7:1 ratio!" said Chris Lakey.

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 up to 5:1 additional deduplication rate. The net result is a combined Veeam and ExaGrid deduplication rate of up to 10:1, which greatly reduces the amount of disk storage required.

'Zero-Touch' Solution

Chris Lakey values the simplicity of his backup environment, now that ExaGrid has been installed. "There's been much less technician involvement since we've introduced ExaGrid.

About ExaGrid

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

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It's zero touch from an administrator's perspective. I'm most impressed with how easy it is to set the system up, and how well it integrates with backup products, such as Veeam. Once the ExaGrid system is configured and the backup schedule is set up in Veeam, there's no need to do anything else. Knowing that the backups will continue to run has given me peace of mind. I can relax and focus my time on other issues."

In addition to the low-maintenance system, Chris Lakey appreciates working with ExaGrid's customer support. "I've worked with two ExaGrid support engineers and have found that both are equally helpful and always available. It's great to know they're just a phone call away."

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 level 2 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.

ExaGrid and Veeam

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. ExaGrid fully leverages Veeam's built-in backup-to-disk capabilities, and ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication provides additional data 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.



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