EXAGRID®

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

The Football Pools

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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

"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

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.

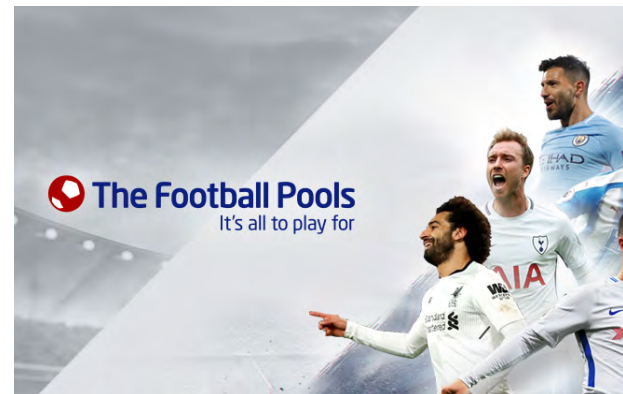## New Infrastructure Manager Recommends ExaGrid from Prior Position

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 the industry's leading backup applications so that an organization can retain its investment in its existing backup applications and processes.

In addition, ExaGrid appliances can replicate to a second ExaGrid appliance at a second site or to the public cloud for DR (disaster recovery).

The Football Pools
It's all to play for

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-cache Landing Zone, avoiding inline processing and ensuring the highest possible backup performance, which results in the shortest backup window. Adaptive Deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups for a strong recovery point (RPO). As data is being deduplicated to the repository, it can also be replicated to a second ExaGrid site or the public cloud for disaster recovery (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.

Veeam uses changed block tracking to perform a level of data deduplication. ExaGrid allows Veeam deduplication and Veeam dedupe-friendly compression to stay on. ExaGrid will increase Veeam's deduplication by a factor of about 7:1 to a total combined deduplication ratio of 14:1, reducing the storage required and saving on storage costs up front and over time.

'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.

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 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.

ExaGrid and Veeam

Veeam's backup solutions and ExaGrid's Tiered Backup Storage combine for the industry's fastest backups, fastest restores, a scale-out storage system as data grows, and a strong ransomware recovery story – all at the lowest cost.

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**.