Skilled Nursing and Rehab Center Moves Backups Into the Future with ExaGrid

FutureCare
HEALTH AND MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

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>
> **Alan Siu**
> **Director of IT**

Key Benefits:

- Fits seamlessly into existing infrastructure
- Easy to implement
- Streamlined backups that run more quickly and efficiently
- Less time spent managing and troubleshooting backups
- GRID architecture allowed FutureCare to easily expand the system to accommodate data growth
- Customer support engineer provides "deep level of technical expertise"

Customer Overview

FutureCare Health and Management operates 12 skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers across the Baltimore-Washington area.

Long, Complex Backups to Tape Led Organization to Seek a More Unified Solution

FutureCare had been backing up its data to a combination of hard drives and tape, but space limitations on both made nightly backups complicated and time consuming to manage and to run.

"We had bits and pieces of backups here and there – wherever we could scratch up enough space," said Alan Siu, director of IT at FutureCare Health and Management. "We were constantly experiencing reliability issues with our backup jobs, but it was difficult to nail down where the problems were, and fixing them took a lot of time. Our backup jobs were running nearly seven days a week, and realistically, there wasn't enough time to get everything done."

Siu said that FutureCare decided to search for a more unified solution to back up data from its main datacenter and each of its 12 facilities, and contacted a trusted value-added reseller for advice. The reseller suggested that the organization look at a disk-based backup solution with data deduplication from ExaGrid.

"We were intrigued with ExaGrid's service and support model, and we liked its GRID architecture," said Siu. "We also compared its data deduplication technology to the competition. We were impressed with its approach over the alternatives because we believed it would result in faster, more efficient backups and restores."

ExaGrid Works with Existing Backup App, Management Time Reduced

FutureCare purchased a two-site ExaGrid system, and installed one appliance in its main datacenter and a second in its offsite location. The ExaGrid system works seamlessly with the company's existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec.

"The ExaGrid system fit right into our existing infrastructure to streamline our backups. Before, we had backups running all over the place, but now, everything's so much cleaner. Backups from our different facilities are sent directly to the ExaGrid system and then replicated offsite each night," said Siu. "It works extremely well with Backup Exec, and it was simple to implement. The other solution we looked at would have required proprietary software."

Siu said that since implementing the ExaGrid system, backup times have been reduced. "Our backup jobs run so much faster now, and I spend far less time managing them than I did in the past. Before, if there was a problem, I didn't have enough time to resolve it before our tapes needed to be sent out. Now, we run our full backups over the weekend and if there's an issue, I have all week to resolve it before we have to send the tapes out on Friday," he said. "All in all, I'm saving at least ten hours a week on managing and troubleshooting backup jobs."

EXAGRID™

Data Deduplication Reduces Amount of Data Stored

ExaGrid's approach to data deduplication reduces the amount of data stored, boosting retention while ensuring fast backups.

"We're backing up a wide range of data types, from Exchange servers to file servers, and SQL. The ExaGrid system does a fantastic job at reducing our data so that we maximize the amount of data we can retain," said Siu.

ExaGrid combines standard compression along with zone-level data deduplication, which stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. ExaGrid delivers extremely fast backup performance because data is written directly to disk, and data deduplication reduces the disk space required by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 or more, delivering unparalleled cost savings and performance. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication technology moves only the changes from backup to backup, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth

GRID Architecture Offers Scalability

Siu said that within a year after FutureCare purchased its first two ExaGrid systems, the company experienced a spurt in its data growth and decided to purchase two more appliances to handle the increased amounts of data.

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ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, and each appliance contains processing power, memory, bandwidth, and disk. When the system needs to expand, additional appliances are attached to the GRID, bringing with them additional processing power, memory, bandwidth, and disk. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows, and you only pay for what you need as you need it. In addition, as new ExaGrid appliances are added to the GRID, the system automatically load balances available capacity, maintaining a virtual pool of storage that is shared across the GRID.

Top-notch Customer Support

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 assigned to individual accounts. The system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

"I can't say enough about ExaGrid's customer support model. I talk with the same engineer each time I have a question, and he has a deep level of technical expertise," said Siu. "Unfortunately, oftentimes, support engineers aren't always well versed in either their software or in the practical application of it. Our ExaGrid engineer not only knows the ExaGrid device inside and out, but he's knowledgeable about Backup Exec, too. That's made a huge difference, and we've been very happy with the system."

ExaGrid and Symantec Backup Exec

Symantec Backup Exec is the gold standard in Windows data recovery, providing 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. It also supports single-drive libraries, encryption, and disaster recovery. High-performance agents and options provide fast, flexible, granular protection and recovery, 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.

About ExaGrid Systems, Inc.

ExaGrid provides backup storage with a unique landing zone and scale-out architecture. The landing zone provides for the fastest backups, restores and instant VM recoveries. The scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable GRID and provides for a fixed-length backup window as data grows, eliminating expensive forklift upgrades. Learn more at **www.exagrid.com**.

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