EXAGRID®

HS&BA Optimizes Backups with ExaGrid and Veeam, Cutting Backup Window in Half

USA

Key Benefits:

- HS&BA able to back up more data using ExaGrid on a more flexible schedule than with tape

- IT staff saves time on backup management, no longer deals with manual aspects of tape

- HS&BA replaced vRanger with Veeam, gaining more efficiency and integration with ExaGrid

- Backup window reduced from 22 to 12 hours with ExaGrid-vRanger solution, then down to 10 hours with ExaGrid-Veeam

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Miguel Taime
President

Customer Overview

Health Services & Benefit Administrators, Inc. (HS&BA) was founded in 1989. They are a Plan Administrator for Taft-Hartley Trust Funds. They are hired by Trustees of Taft-Hartley plans to perform various functions associated with the administration of their Funds. HS&BA is based in Dublin, CA.

Difficult Tape Backups Replaced by ExaGrid System

Health Services & Benefit Administrators, Inc. (HS&BA) had been backing up its data to DLT and LTO tapes using Veritas Backup Exec, and the IT staff had grown frustrated with the "headaches" of managing tape backup.

"At a certain point, the backup windows became too long, and the IT staff often had issues with media failure," said HS&BA President, Miguel Taime. "In addition, the manual tape rotations for nightly backup jobs were time-consuming. Not to mention, if data needed to be restored, the tape would sometimes need to be brought in from offsite storage, adding to the time spent managing backups."

HS&BA decided to find another way to handle backup, looking first at top-tier and popular managed solutions. During a trial period using one solution, the software agents had trouble working with HS&BA's applications, so the company continued its search.

As an alternative, the IT staff decided to look into solutions they could manage on its their own and requested a trial of an ExaGrid system. "ExaGrid brought us appliances to test, and we ended up purchasing those. The ExaGrid sales team really stood out because they were attentive, and they took care of everything. We described what we were looking for and the team took the time to evaluate our environment, and then the support engineer configured everything for us. It was a very easy process," said Taime.

Backup Window Reduced and Staff Time Recouped

In addition to installing an ExaGrid backup storage system, HS&BA migrated to a virtual environment and replaced Veritas Backup Exec with Quest vRanger software. Quest vRanger offers full image-level and differential backups of virtual machines (VMs) to enable faster, more efficient storage and

recovery of VMs. ExaGrid's disk-based backup systems serve as the backup target for these VM images, using high-performance, adaptive data deduplication to dramatically reduce the disk storage capacity required for backups.

Taime describes HS&BA as a third-party administrator of health, welfare, and benefit packages, making the company a HIPAA-covered entity. HS&BA backs up its claim system processing data to its ExaGrid system. "We're also backing up the systems that support that environment, such as Active Directory, and DNS file and print services. Switching to ExaGrid allowed us to capture more data than we had been previously, and it's much simpler. There are certain things that we might only back up on a weekly basis because they are less critical to us, and there are others that we make sure to back up daily," said Taime.

The IT staff saw a huge improvement with the daily backup window. "The tape backups seemed almost never-ending; our backup window had grown to 22 hours! Once we switched to ExaGrid, the backup window was reduced to 12 hours," said Taime. In addition to reducing the backup window, Taime found that replacing tape had reduced the time needed for backup administration. "Our IT staff spends far less time managing backups now. They no longer have to deal with the manual aspects of tape like rotating

media and loading cartridges, or with the transport window to move the tape offsite. It's definitely saved a hours of staff time per week."

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).

Switching Backup Apps Optimizes Virtualized Backup Environment

While the switch from tape to ExaGrid and vRanger had improved the backup window, the IT staff found themselves still having issues with managing backups. "We noticed that we were constantly running out of capacity, and our ExaGrid support engineer found that vRanger wasn't cleaning up after itself; the capacity issue was stemming from a problem with that backup software. We would go into vRanger and purge a backup job, which is supposed to remove that data from the repository and delete it. We found that vRanger was deleting the backup job from our history, but it wasn't actually removing the files from the ExaGrid system, so we looked for a replacement backup application," said Taime.

HS&BA looked into alternative backup software and tested Veeam to replace vRanger. The company was impressed with Veeam's integration with ExaGrid, and decided to purchase it. "We found in our testing that Veeam produces smaller backups and runs faster than vRanger. In addition, the support that we get from Veeam and ExaGrid is much better than previous vendors.

"Switching from vRanger to Veeam has had a pretty big impact on our backup environment. Backups run more quickly due to Veeam's integration with ExaGrid, so the backup window is even smaller now – it's down to ten hours – even though we are backing up more servers. Now, we back up everything on a daily basis, in addition to adding backups for some work stations for some of our key users. With vRanger, there was one server that would consistently fail, and we'd need to reboot it for it to work. Since switching to Veeam, we haven't had any failures related to that server. Veeam also truncates our SQL server logs, so we can open up SQL Explorer to pull out databases, which we could not do with vRanger before. So we got some added capability, especially working with databases," said Taime.

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.

ExaGrid-Veeam Combined Dedupe

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.

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**.