ExaGrid and Veeam Tag Team for Backup Storage Speed and Reliability

> "ExaGrid was one of those things that seems 'too easy.' You set it up in a single day and realize it was a piece of cake! ExaGrid and Veeam - they just work."
>
> **Brian Knight**
> **Director of IT**
> **Hamilton County DD Services**

Key Benefits:

- 'Tag-team solution' of ExaGrid and Veeam provides fast backups plus efficient data storage
- Backup window reduced from full day to four hours; Exchange backup cut from 20 hours down to two
- 'Piece of cake' installation; ExaGrid-Veeam setup done in less than a day
- System delivers key advantages of both speed and reliability

Customer Overview

The mission of Hamilton County DD Services is to promote and support opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to live, work, learn and fully participate in their communities. They are building a new legacy of including and integrating people with disabilities in all aspects of community life. Hamilton County is headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Job Fails and Virtualization Force Elimination of Tape

Hamilton County implemented many variations of their backup storage solution until they realized things were not improving. According to Brian Knight, Director of IT, "We used some tape and also had two Backup Exec appliances that were doing daily backups to tape, which is only so good. You literally store them on a shelf and just hope that seven years later, if you ever need them, the backups are OK. We frequently had backup jobs fail, and storage was always a problem as were the backup devices themselves. We had to physically replace them at least three different times within just a three-year span."

Today, Hamilton County operates its systems in a virtualized Veeam environment. "We selected ExaGrid with Veeam to perform backup because it's a tag-team solution. I was tired of previous devices and was ready to literally throw them out," said Knight.

Complicated Backup Management Strains Resources

According to Knight, backups typically took multiple days to finish. "Essentially, backup would occur in pieces. We could only run backup once every week because it took too long. Some of our databases are fairly large and would take almost a day – or even longer – to complete.

"Backup Exec didn't work well with daisy-chaining the jobs. Each time, I hoped that the jobs weren't getting in the way of the resources because they could only handle one job at a time. A full backup of our Exchange server used to take somewhere in the neighborhood of 20 hours to complete in the past but now takes just two hours. I can have a whole night's backup of all my systems done in about four and a half hours – I never knew that was even possible prior to ExaGrid!"

Data Deduplication Impact

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

Essentially, what Hamilton County couldn't do with Backup Exec, they can do with Veeam. "If we have to recover anything out of the Veeam environment – backups or even a physical server – I can retrieve it from the ExaGrid system without having to store it somewhere else," said Knight. "Restores are quick and easy."

Retention requirements are a difficult balance for any business but in healthcare, some files and data need to be kept forever. "Most regulatory requirements are typically in the range of seven years, and that's usually for federal regulations since we deal with Medicare and Medicaid," said Knight.

Seamless Installation and Service Translate into Peace of Mind

The ExaGrid/Veeam setup was seamless. "We had a joint ExaGrid-Veeam team in the server room who got the system set up for us in just one day and ensured everything was communicating correctly," said Knight. "It was a piece of cake!"

EXAGRID®

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.

"Installation was quick and easy, and we haven't really had any support issues, said Knight. "At one point, my ExaGrid engineer noticed that the system wasn't reporting in. He reached out to me, figured out what the issue was, and fixed it. I get alerts every day but, frankly, it's one of those things that just runs. Before ExaGrid, I was dealing with backup failures almost nightly – either a tape ran out or the backup job agent in Backup Exec failed, or something to that effect. Rarely did I go through a night when I didn't have to go back and troubleshoot."

Reliability is Key

According to Knight, reliability was pivotal to Hamilton County's decision to implement ExaGrid with Veeam. "Speed is nice but if it's not reliable, then it's not helpful. Knowing that your system is going to work – and that it's going to work within a reasonable amount of time – are two key things that any person who runs backups will appreciate," he said.

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. The ExaGrid system fully leverages Veeam Backup & Replication's built-in backup-to-disk capabilities and ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication for additional data reduction (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.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality disk drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is far more cost effective than simply backing up to straight disk. ExaGrid's patented zone-level deduplication reduces the disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 by storing only the unique bytes across backups instead of redundant data. Adaptive deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups while providing full system resources to the backups for the shortest backup window. Adaptive deduplication delivers the fastest backups, and as data grows, only ExaGrid avoids expanding backup windows by adding full appliances in a GRID. ExaGrid's unique landing zone keeps a full copy of the most recent backup on disk, delivering the fastest restores, instant VM recovery, "Instant DR," and fast tape copy. And, as data grows, ExaGrid saves up to 50% in total system costs compared to competitive solutions by avoiding costly "forklift" upgrades.

About ExaGrid

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**.