

Horizon Reduces Backup Window by 85% with ExaGrid / Veeam Backup Storage Solution

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Roger Beard
Director, Information Systems

Key Benefits:

- Reduced backup window 85% – from 20 hours to 3 hours
- 'Blazingly' fast restores
- ExaGrid R&D tightly aligned with Veeam – constantly bring new features to market
- Graded 'number one' vendor for customer support
- Repeatable success – easy to scale as data grows

Customer Overview

Horizon Food Group is a leading bakery manufacturer of Cutie Pie® snack pies. Cutie Pie snack pies were born in the 1960s, giving moms a healthier snack option. In the 1990s, Cutie Pie met National School Lunch Program standards. Cutie Pie snack pies have gone on to become America's best snack pie, selling over 100 million flavor-filled snack pies every year.

Long, Problematic Backups Led to Search for a New Solution

Horizon Food Group used PHD Virtual data backup with Veritas Backup Exec to external hard drives for years. Because Horizon was completely virtualized, drives had to be manually swapped every day to ensure backup copies were in sync. At that time, there were three people on Horizon's IT staff. Today, network and system administration, and website and SharePoint administration are outsourced to two consulting companies, leaving one full-time position on the company's IT staff.

"We were having trouble – it grew to the point where we were having issues getting our backups done in a day. Backups would start and they'd still be running throughout the next day – taking between 20 and 22 hours to complete. It was horrible," said Roger Beard, Director of Information Systems for Horizon Food Group.

Horizon realized it was time to become efficient with backup storage, so three and a half years ago Beard began searching for a disk-based appliance. Horizon now backs up 30TB+ of data via an ExaGrid and off-site solution.

"I chose the ExaGrid as our backup-to-disk appliance, and at the same time we went with Veeam. One thing I really love is that Veeam and ExaGrid are not static. It was good before and it's even better now, and they keep adding features and better integration. Both companies are very forward-thinking and progressive. I love the integration and continued development. My backups continue to get faster and more efficient. I also have a Veeam backup repository that's offsite for my DR plan," stated Beard.

Recently, the ExaGrid team reached out to Horizon about a new Veeam integration feature and it proved to decrease backup by another 10-20%. "Boy, was my ExaGrid engineer right! Our backups are finishing noticeably faster, and our off-sites are too! We stagger our backups now to the ExaGrid; we start at 5:45 p.m. with our last backup starting at 7:45 p.m., and everything is typically done by 8:30 p.m.," said Beard.

Restores from the Landing Zone Are 'Blazingly Fast'

Prior to ExaGrid, the biggest headache for Beard was when he had to perform a restore. "Somebody would report that they deleted a file four days ago and ask if we could please go find it. Our IT staff would have to go onto the backup tool, find what hard drive that file was on, pull that hard drive, and attempt the restore. In addition, we actually had to have a second disk enclosure because our backups were still happening at the same time, and we couldn't interrupt the process. It was really inconvenient. What's nice now is that I can do the restore from the ExaGrid landing zone with full confidence and at blazingly fast speed," said Beard.

Repeatable Success and the 'Real Deal'

"ExaGrid is very fast, very reliable and stable, and it's repeatable. Every day it's a success," said Beard.

"Just last week we turned a new integration feature on — I am suitably impressed with the continued engagement of ExaGrid's R&D and how they bring new Veeam features to market. It's not 'pie in the sky' with ExaGrid and Veeam; it's where the rubber meets the road, the real deal. ExaGrid just works."

EXAGRID®

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.

'Number One' in Customer Support

"I would have to say, honestly, that ExaGrid is the best vendor from a support perspective. If I had to grade all my vendors, ExaGrid would be number one. My ExaGrid engineer is very proactive and helpful. I really like that," said Beard.

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.

"ExaGrid brings me peace of mind. I know that sounds cliché, but I don't worry about my backups not finishing, because ExaGrid works with Veeam so tightly; it's a well-oiled, very stable platform. Even before people wake up and come into the office, backups are already complete and offsite. It just does its job, and does so very well. I don't worry about my backups not being there, I don't worry about not being able to perform a restore if needed, and I don't worry about my offsite backups not getting offsite. I can breathe easy since every backup job fires off a success email – I love those! It is very rare that I get a failure or a warning on anything," said Beard.

ExaGrid and Veeam

"ExaGrid knows Veeam software, and Veeam knows ExaGrid hardware. The initial setup was very smooth. Both companies knew what they were doing and what they were talking about, and I think that made all the difference. Both companies made it really simple. We were set up and working in a couple of hours," said Beard.

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.

Combined ExaGrid-Veeam Deduplication

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 a 3:1 up to 5:1 additional deduplication rate. The net result is a combined Veeam and ExaGrid deduplication rate of 6:1 upwards to 10:1, which greatly reduces the amount of disk storage required.

GRID Architecture Provides Superior Scalability

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, where each appliance contains not just disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. When the system needs to expand, additional appliances are simply attached to the GRID. 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 when 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.

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.

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