# Huttig's Switch to ExaGrid Results in 75% Shorter Backup Window and Reduces Storage Costs

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>
> **Adrian Reed**
> **Senior Systems Administrator**

## Key Benefits:

- ExaGrid-Veeam deduplication helps Huttig save on storage costs
- Backup window reduced by 75%
- Scaling out Huttig's ExaGrid system is a 'seamless' process
- ExaGrid provides the 'best support model out there"

## Customer Overview

Huttig Building Products, headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, is one of the largest domestic distributors of millwork, building materials and wood products used principally in new residential construction and in home improvement, remodeling and repair work. Huttig distributes its products through 27 distribution centers serving 41 states. Huttig's wholesale distribution centers sell principally to building materials dealers, national buying groups, home centers and industrial users, including makers of manufactured homes.

## Legacy Solution Replaced with ExaGrid and Veeam

When Adrian Reed started his position as a senior systems administrator at Huttig Building Products, he brought new ideas for the company's existing backup environment. The company had been using Veritas NetBackup to tape, a solution which often resulted in slow backups and difficult restores. "The previous solution was a legacy model that I wanted to get away from," said Reed.

"I'd had great success using Veeam in a past job experience, and wanted to incorporate it into Huttig's environment, but needed to find the right target for our backups. I had used Dell EMC Data Domain with Veeam in the past, but I hadn't been happy with it. I looked into ExaGrid and the more I learned, the more excited I became. One of the things about ExaGrid that piqued my interest was its Landing Zone technology, especially the fact that data is stored there in an undeduplicated format, so it wouldn't need to be rehydrated if we had to restore data. I was also impressed with its scalable architecture and the fact that our backup window wouldn't grow, even if our data does," he said.

Huttig installed an ExaGrid system at its primary site that replicates to another ExaGrid system installed at its disaster recovery (DR) site. "It was so easy to set up and configure our ExaGrid systems. The pre-populated option in Veeam to select ExaGrid already takes care of a lot on the Veeam side, which is fantastic," said Reed.

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 DR. ExaGrid fully leverages Veeam's built-in backup-to-disk capabilities, and ExaGrid's adaptive data deduplication provides additional data and cost reduction over standard disk solutions.

## ExaGrid-Veeam Deduplication Key to Cost Savings

Reed is pleased with the data deduplication that the ExaGrid-Veeam solution provides. "The data that is backed up to the ExaGrid system is very diverse; we have AIX, SQL, and Exchange data as well as some unstructured data, too. We've been impressed that the deduplication provided by our ExaGrid-Veeam solution has resulted in less consumption of our storage, which helps us save money in the long term. We don't have to add storage as often because the dedupe is helping to keep our footprint smaller."

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

## 75% Shorter Backup Window and Quick Data Restores

Reed manages different backup schedules for different types of data, and is pleased that he has been able to increase the frequency of some backups since switching to the new solution, and with the increased speed of the backup jobs. "Since switching to our ExaGrid-Veeam solution, we've been able to increase the number of synthetic fulls that we do," he said. "Our backups used to run all night, but now the backup window has been reduced by 75%, so it's down to two hours. The replication from one ExaGrid system to another has been great, as we don't have to offload that process to Veeam or anything else, which would consume additional resources from the environment."

Reed has found that the new solution has had a "big impact" in terms of how quickly data can be restored. "When we were using tape, if we needed to restore something, we'd have to order the tape back from offsite storage at Iron Mountain. It could take hours to days before we were able to restore data. Now, not only can we easily search Veeam to find the files or servers that need to be restored, the speed that data is restored from the ExaGrid system has been phenomenal. For instance, restoring a full VM has gone from hours to minutes, depending on its size. It's definitely made our internal customers happier that we're able to restore the data they need in minutes instead of a full day, which helps keep the business running. Not only that, but it takes less staff time on our end that would have spent on restoring data, so we have more time for our other tasks."

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 while providing full system resources to the backups for the shortest backup window. Available system cycles are utilized to perform deduplication and offsite replication for an optimal recovery point at the disaster recovery site. Once complete, the onsite data is protected and immediately available in its full undeduplicated form for fast restores, VM Instant Recoveries, and tape copies while the offsite data is ready for DR.

## 'Seamless' Scalability

As data has grown, Reed has been able to easily add more appliances to Huttig's ExaGrid systems. "We started out with one ExaGrid EX21000E model each at our primary data center and DR location, and as we slowly consumed capacity, we decided to invest in larger models since we like the ExaGrid technology. Now, we have two EX63000E models at our primary data center and we moved our original EX21000E from our primary data center to the DR location, and purchased a third appliance for that location as well, and it took less than 30 minutes to link the new system up," said Reed. "There is a seamless pooling of data between nodes, so we didn't have to worry about aggregates or LUNs or volumes. The way ExaGrid intelligently shifts data between the appliances in the background is fantastic!"

The ExaGrid system can easily scale to accommodate data growth. ExaGrid's computing software makes the system highly scalable, and when plugged into a switch, appliances of any size or age can be mixed and matched in a single system with capacities of up to a 2PB full backup plus retention and an ingest rate of up to 432TB per hour. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

## ExaGrid Support: 'The Best Model Out There'

Reed appreciates the high-quality support he receives from ExaGrid. "We've actually bragged to other vendors that the ExaGrid support model is the best one out there" he said.

"Our ExaGrid support engineer is fantastic! Since we're able to work with the same person every time we call, we're on a first name basis with our support engineer, and she already knows our environment. She's very responsive to our emails, and she keeps our ExaGrid systems updated with the newest firmware. She also helped us with implementing and configuring our new appliances when we expanded our primary site and DR location," said Reed.

## About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides tiered backup storage with a unique disk-cache Landing Zone, long-term retention repository and scale-out architecture. ExaGrid's Landing Zone enables the fastest backups, restores, and instant VM recoveries. The retention repository offers the lowest cost for long-term retention. ExaGrid's scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable system. Learn more at **www.exagrid.com**.

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