Ingenico Reduces 'Round-the-Clock Backups to a Six-Hour Backup Window with ExaGrid

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>
> Suresh Teelucksingh
> Director of IT

Key Benefits:

- Time spent troubleshooting backups, previously totalling eight man hours per week, has been eliminated

- Backups jobs no longer run into, and interfere with, the workday

- Reliability of ExaGrid and increased retention led to total elimination of tape

- Backup has gone from 'an arduous task' to something that the IT team doesn't think about anymore; 'we expect it to work, and it does'

Customer Overview

Ingenico's wide range of fixed, wireless, and mobile point-of-sale solutions and services eliminate payment complexity and make purchasing quick, seamless, and secure for merchants and consumers. Over the past 30 years, Ingenico has become the trusted strategic partner of choice for merchants and payment industry players in the U.S. and worldwide. With an acceptance network of more than 1,000 banks and financial institutions, over 250,000 merchants are connected to its platforms, including 70% of the top 30 retail brands.

Backups a 'Time-Consuming Exercise'

Ingenico had been using a mixture of tape and straight disk for its backup storage with Veritas Backup Exec as its backup application, but the disk space wasn't dedicated, and most of the backups at Ingenico's various sites went to tape. At the point that the company moved to a new version of Backup Exec, there were some problems with it, and that compounded Ingenico's backup issues.

"Backup in general was always a time-consuming exercise for us," said Suresh Teelucksingh, director of IT for Ingenico. "I'd say that we typically allocated about eight man-hours per week just to address the required troubleshooting and correcting of backup problems. Backup was on our daily checklist at each site that had a backup system. We had to have somebody log into Backup Exec and look at the jobs that were failing, troubleshoot and resolve them, and rerun the jobs."

In addition to the failing backup jobs, Ingenico's backup window frequently interfered with its working day. "We used to have to prioritize our backup jobs, and the high priority ones would kick off at 6:00 p.m. and run through the night. The lower priority jobs would get backed up during the day. Backups used to run continuously throughout the workday at some of our sites. At our larger sites, we pretty much had something backing up 24 hours," Teelucksingh said.

Since installing ExaGrid, Teelucksingh reports, "We don't need to do that anymore. Our throughput has increased tremendously, which allows us to back up essentially the same volume of data but backups now finish during the night. We kick them off at 6:00 p.m. and by midnight, they're done."

Results of Due Diligence Point to ExaGrid as Best Choice

"I came across ExaGrid while doing some research on the Internet, and we looked at other vendors, too. We looked at Dell – they're actually our preferred vendor – and we looked at eVault, and one other. We shortlisted the options to three, ExaGrid, eVault, and one other."

In its selection process, Teelucksingh says that there were a handful of features that were especially important to him and his team. "First of all, we wanted a product that would do a really good job at deduplication and replication. Second, we wanted a solution that was expandable so that as our volume of data grows, we can just add to the system instead of having to replace it. The third thing we looked at, of course, was the cost, and we needed it to be compatible with the Backup Exec version that we were running at the time.

"Based on the research we did, we thought that ExaGrid's data deduplication was really quite good, and the way we can set up the hub-and-spoke replication for different sites seemed very simple to do as well. ExaGrid's

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cost for the system was a lot better than the pricing we were getting from the other vendors.

"ExaGrid also seemed to be very easy to expand. As it was explained to us, we can just buy another appliance, add it on, and we won't have to think about retiring or replacing the existing system."

Level of ExaGrid Reliability and Retention Leads to Elimination of Tape

When Ingenico was backing up to tape, doing a simple restore could mean a lot of time and energy – and if the restore went a ways back in time, the catalog would need to be recreated before doing the actual restore, and Teelucksingh reports, "that's a really lengthy process. First, we had to retrieve the tape from offsite, which was usually a next-day exercise. And then, we had to recreate the catalog, then do the actual restore. It generally took us about three days to restore data for something that wasn't recent."

When Ingenico first purchased ExaGrid, Teelucksingh planned to continue to do monthly backups to tape, but because of the reliability of the system and the amount of data they're able to retain, they decided to do away with the complexity and time associated with tape, and eliminated it completely.

Because of the data deduplication that's done on the ExaGrid, Ingenico is able to retain much more data than is required by its retention policy, which is six weeks for dailies and one year for monthlies. "We've been able to retain a lot more than that. We're essentially keeping almost a year in dailies and some monthliesy's probably. We still have not gotten rid of our monthly backups since we started with the ExaGrid," he said.

Backup Worries Are a Thing of the Past

Since Teelucksingh installed the ExaGrid system, he reports "a few small hiccups with the implementation – not very big ones. But we did make a few mistakes along the way because we weren't very well versed in the ExaGrid at that point. However, with the help of people like Dan – our assigned customer support engineer – we got back on track.

"Honestly, I really don't think about backups anymore. There's the occasional issue, which isn't a result of the backup hardware or software, but rather something to do with maybe a system that's being backed up or something like that. But, generally, we spend very little time now actually doing anything at all with backups. We get a daily report that tells us all our backup jobs have been completed as well as whether one fails for some reason, which does happen from time to time but it's very easy to troubleshoot. Now that we have ExaGrid, backup is a very painless exercise. It's gone from being a major task to something that we really don't think very much about," he said.

Customer Support 'Quickly Solves Every Issue'

Ingenico first installed a two-site ExaGrid system, and since that time added three more. According to Teelucksingh, the process was "very easy, very painless. We bought the hardware and followed the instructions for the initial setup that came with the appliances. Then we called our customer support engineer to help us with the rest. And that was it."

Teelucksingh reports that his experience with ExaGrid customer support has been very good. "If we do have a problem at any time – and we've had a few issues occasionally, especially with the initial setup – customer support is very knowledgeable about the product and is able to solve every issue we send his way, and solves it pretty quickly. We've found that not only is the support very good, but ExaGrid in general is very easy to do business with."

Due Diligence Provides Validation and Peace of Mind

As part of his due diligence, Teelucksingh read some of the ExaGrid customer stories as well as third-party reviews. That information gave him additional peace of mind that he was making a good decision going with ExaGrid.

"From my perspective as the person who manages IT here at Ingenico, since we've implemented the ExaGrid system and have had it in operation, our backup has gone from an arduous task to something that we really don't think about. We just expect it to work, and it does.

"I've told other IT people about ExaGrid because of the experience we've had with it. And when other backup storage vendors come to me with their products, I tell them that we went with ExaGrid a few years ago, and it's been working great. I have no desire to change it."

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**.