

The L&L Company Reduces Backup and Restore Times with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



The L&L Company

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Bob Ruckle
Director of IT
The L&L Company

Customer Overview

Since 1964, The L&L Company has provided quality floor coverings and design services to homebuilders and their customers, including stone, ceramic tile, hardwood, carpet, and vinyl. L&L has won Contractor of the Year and a variety of service awards from these very builders. The company is headquartered in Virginia and operates satellite design centers in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Delaware.

Multiple Locations, Time Zones Squeeze Backup Window

The L&L Company operates offices, showrooms and warehouses in different time zones, so its IT department strives to back up the company's data during off-peak hours. The company's warehouses open at 6:00 a.m. EST and some of its showrooms are open as late as 10:00 p.m. CST, so data is backed up during a seven-hour window. The company had been backing up its critical SQL data hourly to disk and then performing full backups each night to tape, but as its data grew, so did its backup times, and the staff worried that as the company's data continued to grow, backups would get out of control.

The IT staff decided that the time was right to reevaluate its backup strategy when the company began planning to move its datacenter from its headquarters to a co-location facility.

"We looked at our existing tape solution and decided that it was not going to work in a co-location environment," said Bob Ruckle, director of IT for the L&L Company. "We considered autoloaders but we were concerned about maintenance and reliability, and we'd still have to deal with how to transport the tapes off-site. We also briefly considered backing up to disk, but we felt that it would be too time consuming and with our rapidly growing data, we'd be adding disk space constantly."

ExaGrid System Works with Existing Backup Application

After looking at several different options, The L&L Company chose ExaGrid's disk-based backup solution with data deduplication. The ExaGrid system works along with the company's existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec.

"For us, one of the big advantages of the ExaGrid system was that we were able to leverage our existing investment in Backup Exec. We have been using Backup Exec for years, and so we were able to minimize our learning curve as a result," said Ruckle.

Small Footprint Makes the Most of Rack Space, Data Deduplication Maximizes Disk Space

Because The L&L Company planned to move its datacenter into a co-location facility, the physical size of the ExaGrid appliance and its strong data deduplication technology were both deciding factors in choosing the ExaGrid.

"The ExaGrid system takes up only 3U, where our tape drives and server would have taken up 7U. The smaller footprint saves us rackspace and will translate into a lower cost of ownership," said Ruckle. "In addition, ExaGrid's data deduplication technology does a tremendous job at reducing the amount of data we store on

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the system. We were initially skeptical but we're really amazed that we're able to store so much data in such a small footprint. We're able to now keep more than 60 days of retention."

ExaGrid combines last backup compression along with data deduplication, which stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. This unique approach reduces the disk space required by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 or more, delivering unparalleled cost savings and performance. ExaGrid delivers extremely fast backup performance because data is written directly to disk, and data deduplication is performed post-process after the data is stored to reduce data. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's byte-level data deduplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

Backup Times Cut in Half, Fast Restores

Since installing the ExaGrid system, Ruckle reports that the company's backup times have been cut in half and restores are now nearly instantaneous.

"We're now able to complete our backups each and every night within our backup window and restores are a breeze. With tape, we'd have to locate the correct tape, load it, and search for the right file. With the ExaGrid, it's a point and click operation. It saves us a huge amount of time and energy," said Ruckle.

Easy Expansion to Accommodate Growing Amounts of Data

As the L&L Company's data grows, the ExaGrid system can easily expand to accommodate more data. ExaGrid's GRID computing software makes the system highly scalable, and when plugged into a switch, different sized configurations can be mixed and matched into a single GRID system with capacities of up to a 100TB full backup plus retention. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

"We really like the fact that the ExaGrid system is so expandable. As we see the need to back up more data, we can easily add more capacity to handle it," said Ruckle. "It's also nice to know that we can deploy a second ExaGrid system in the future for better disaster recovery."

About ExaGrid Systems, Inc.

Customers worldwide depend on ExaGrid Systems to solve their backup problems—effectively and permanently. ExaGrid's disk-based, scale-out GRID architecture adjusts to increasing backup demands due to constantly growing data volumes. It is the only solution that combines compute with capacity as well as a unique landing zone to permanently shorten backup windows and eliminate expensive forklift upgrades. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.

Easy Setup, Superior Customer Support

Ruckle said that he and his team were surprised at the high level of support provided by the ExaGrid team.

"We unpacked the system, put it in the rack and started to configure it when we received a phone call from the ExaGrid support team. We've never had a vendor proactively contact us before and to be honest, we were amazed. Our ExaGrid engineer walked us through the setup and stayed with us the entire time. The setup was fairly straightforward but we had an extra level of comfort because we had support on the phone," Ruckle said. "I'm happy to say that ExaGrid has kept up that level of support for us. The ExaGrid team is always available for us if we have a question but they're also proactive. It's a one-of-a-kind support experience."

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 dedicated to individual accounts. The system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

"Quite honestly, having the ExaGrid system in place is a huge relief. We knew that tape wouldn't have provided the reliability or redundancy that ExaGrid's disk-based solution does, and that was critical in a co-location environment. We don't have to worry about changing tapes, moving tapes offsite, or tapes breaking," said Ruckle. "We have 20-plus locations to deal with, multiple states and time zones, and business-critical data that we simply cannot afford to lose. We can't afford to be down and we need to be able to restore data at a moment's notice. The ExaGrid system was the perfect choice for us."

ExaGrid and Symantec Backup Exec

Symantec Backup Exec provides cost-effective, high performance and certified disk-based backup and recovery – including continuous data protection for Microsoft Exchange, SQL, file servers and workstations. High performance agents and options provide fast, flexible, granular protection and scalable management of local and remote server backups.

For more information about ExaGrid, please visit us at www.exagrid.com or call us at 1-800-868-6985.