ExaGrid's Integration with Veeam Provides 'Seamless' Backup for Logan Aluminum

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>
> **Kenny Fyhr**
> **Senior Technology Analyst**

Key Benefits:

- Logan Aluminum chose ExaGrid over straight disk after an impressive product evaluation
- Restores are signficantly faster using ExaGrid with Veeam
- DR testing is no longer a 3-day 'ordeal' – now completes within a few hours
- Desired retention fits 'comfortably' on ExaGrid system

Customer Overview

Logan Aluminum, a subsidiary of Novelis Corporation, is a leading manufacturer of flat rolled aluminum sheet. Founded in 1983, the Kentucky-based company uses cutting-edge technology as well as a team-focused work system, which has propelled it to a leadership position in the industry.
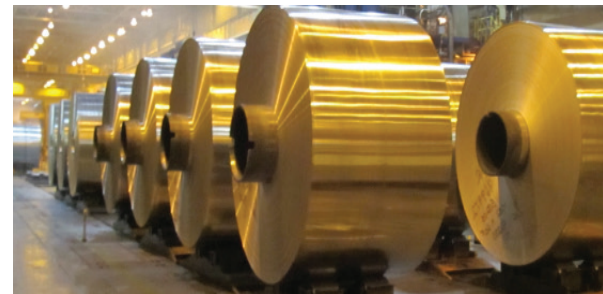
Impressive Product Evaluation Leads to Installation of ExaGrid

Logan Aluminum had been backing up its data using Veeam to a local disk drive and then copying the backups to an IBM tape library using Veritas NetBackup. At the point that support for the tape library ended, it was an ideal time to look into other storage solutions. Kenny Fyhr, Logan Aluminum's senior technology analyst, started the search with 'off-the-shelf' disk storage. A reseller he works with recommended ExaGrid because in addition to providing disk storage, the system also does data deduplication.

Fyhr wanted to evaluate an ExaGrid system, so the sales team met with him and installed demo appliances. Fyhr was impressed and decided to install an ExaGrid system at both the primary site and DR site, while retaining Veeam as the company's backup application.

"The evaluation went very well. The ExaGrid sales team was great to work with," Fyhr said. "When we first started considering the product, they sent us demo appliances and we didn't have to pay a dime. We had a 30-day trial and decided that we really liked it, but we felt that we needed larger appliances, so the sales team extended our trial while they reconfigured pricing. When we received our production appliances, ExaGrid allowed us to keep the demo appliances even longer while we built up retention on our new, permanent system. The entire process, from the trial to production, was a very good experience."

Fyhr believes that purchasing ExaGrid was definitely the right choice for his environment. "We hadn't had a purpose-built appliance for backup before. We had either used tape or just raw storage that we

configured to do the job, but it wasn't necessarily something specialized. Now that we've used one, I can't see going back to anything else. We are very satisfied with our ExaGrid system."

ExaGrid and Veeam Provide 'Seamless Backup'

Fyhr's environment is completely virtualized and he finds that ExaGrid and Veeam provide 'seamless backup.' He backs up data daily in forward incrementals with Veeam, which backs up the changed data day-to-day.

"The amount of data we're backing up on a daily basis is about 40TB of production data. We back up a mix of database environments and also a lot of proprietary manufacturing data files that relate specifically to what we do here," Fyhr said. "Every process at our facility is backed up with hundreds of electronic data points, and all of that information about all of the materials that go through our facility is housed in the database environment.

"We also back up a large amount of user files, such as standard office documents and images. Currently, we're keeping three weeks of all the daily backups. If we tried to restore something older than that, it would be invalid at that point. So three weeks

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is adequate, and we're able to do that comfortably with the ExaGrid that we have.

"We're getting close to a 4:1 deduplication ratio. Our total backup size is 135TB but thanks to deduplication, that takes up just 38TB. When we were using tape, it was harder to realize how much tape storage we were actually using because we had so much of it offsite at any point in time. So from that perspective, the ability to take all that data that was on hundreds of tapes and store it on one system—that's been pretty great!"

Fyhr finds that backup jobs are running within the desired timeframe. "Most of our backups are spread across the entire 24-hour day. We've never had an issue with getting things completed within that time period, but if we did want to condense it down and run it in a shorter period, we could probably complete the entire daily backup within eight to ten hours. However, to keep the Veeam environment from becoming overloaded, we like to spread the backups out throughout the entire day."

Restores Reduced from Days to Minutes

Fyhr has noticed a significant improvement in restore times since combining Veeam with ExaGrid. "It used to take us 24 to 48 hours to restore data that was more than one day old when we were using tape because we would have to ask the offsite facility to bring the tape back to us, and then we would have to mount the tape to find and restore the data. Using ExaGrid and Veeam together, the data is immediately available and data can be restored in minutes to hours, depending on its size, instead of multiple days."

ExaGrid writes backups directly to a disk 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 disaster recovery.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides hyper-converged secondary storage (HCSS) for backup with a unique landing zone and scale-out architecture. The landing zone enables the fastest backups, restores, and instant VM recoveries. The scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable system and ensures a fixed-length backup window as data grows, eliminating expensive and disruptive forklift upgrades. Learn more at **www.exagrid.com**.

Improved DR Strategy Keeps Data Protected

Fyhr feels confident in his disaster recovery plans thanks to ExaGrid's replication, and DR testing is much easier, too. "Our whole DR strategy has really taken a turn for the better. We can do a full test within a matter of hours and it doesn't throw a wrench in anybody's day. Prior to using ExaGrid, we contracted through Sungard Availability for our DR. DR testing then was a three-day ordeal to travel to a remote location. We would take our tapes with us, get them all restored and brought back online, and then spend a day to travel back home. Now, we have two ExaGrid systems set up in a hub-and-spoke configuration. We're backing up to the primary ExaGrid onsite, which replicates backups over a fiber link to the secondary ExaGrid at our DR site, and we know the data is there should we ever need it. We do DR testing a couple of times a year, and so far that's been seamless with the ExaGrid setup. We've been able to restore, verify, and complete DR testing within a few hours."

ExaGrid and Veeam

Fyhr appreciates how well ExaGrid and Veeam work together. "It's evident that both products are designed with each other in mind, especially considering that Veeam can configure specifically for an ExaGrid. In our previous solutions, the products we used hardly integrated at all. We used to write the Veeam backups out to a local disk drive, and then Veritas NetBackup would pick that up later. There was really no configuration or integration, other than us timing two jobs to point at the same thing. It's definitely better now that we are using Veeam with ExaGrid."

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.

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