ExaGrid-Veeam Solution Provides New Belgium with 'Always Available' Data Protection

NEW BELGIUM BREWING

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>
> **Adam Little**
> **Senior Systems Administrator**

Key Benefits:

- New Belgium chooses ExaGrid for its integration with Veeam
- The ExaGrid-Veeam solution provides quick recovery of data, giving IT team confidence in its level of data protection
- 'Invaluable' ExaGrid support provides proactive maintenance and system upgrades
- Scalable ExaGrid system ready to expand for New Belgium's future data growth

Customer Overview

New Belgium Brewing Company, maker of Fat Tire Belgian Style Ale, La Folie, Voodoo Ranger IPA, 1554 and other Belgian-inspired beers, began operations in a tiny Fort Collins basement in 1991. The brewing company is headquartered in Fort Collins, Colorado, with a second brewery in Asheville, North Carolina. New Belgium takes pride in being a responsible corporate role model with progressive programs such as 100% employee ownership, open book management, and a commitment to environmental stewardship.

Upgrading Backup with ExaGrid-Veeam Solution

One of Adam's first projects when he started as a Senior Systems Administrator at New Belgium Brewing Company was to improve the company's backup infrastructure, which had consisted of a mix of Hyper-V and VMware servers, as well physical servers. "The file-level backup product we were using was very error-prone and didn't work very well. We realized we needed a dedicated appliance to store our backups on, instead of an old server that contained some generic disks," said Little. "I was confident that we could fix the backup environment quickly with the right solution. The first step we took was to completely virtualize and move all our servers to VMware, and installing Veeam to back up all of the virtual servers. We initially implemented Veeam with a trial license, and realized that storing the backups on the disk we had wouldn't work for the long-term retention goals we had."

This was not the first time Little had worked on redesigning a backup environment. At his previous positon, the IT team had been using Veeam to back up to an aging Dell EMC SAN and decided to look into a backup appliance, and ExaGrid and Dell EMC Data Domain were considered. Though his previous employer chose Data Domain due the existing relationship with Dell EMC, Little remained very impressed with ExaGrid, especially with the ability to instantly recover data from ExaGrid's unique Landing Zone. "In designing a solution for New Belgium, I realized we did not have the hardware to pull off the same approach I used at my last job," said Little.

This time, Little decided on ExaGrid, especially as establishing offsite replication was one of his goals for New Belgium's backup environment. ExaGrid systems were installed at the company's primary site in Colorado and at its colocation site, with plans to eventually add another system at the second brewery in North Carolina. "Our data is cross-replicated so that it's available at both sites. We've set it up so that any applications or services that either breweries depend on are backed up to our colocation site, so that if we ever lost power at one brewery, the other could keep brewing," said Little.

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. 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®

Customers can use Veeam Backup & Replication's built-in source-side deduplication in concert with ExaGrid's disk-based backup system with Adaptive Deduplication to further shrink backups.

Quick Restores Allow for Easy Troubleshooting

Little backs up New Belgium's 400 virtual machines (VMs) on a nightly basis, as well as hourly log backups for some of it SQL servers, and a Microsoft Dynamic AX ERP system which is backed up every five minutes. Little is pleased that the backups stay within the windows he has scheduled.

He has also been impressed with the ability to quickly restore a backup from ExaGrid's Landing Zone, when needed. "When we've had an issue at our production site, we've been able to quickly spin up a copy of the most recent log backup, which was within the last five minutes, and dive into that replicated copy, troubleshoot the issue, figure out a solution, and then apply it the production site," said Little. "It's given me peace of mind to know that our data is cross-replicated to multiple sites. When we do need to restore data from one site to the other, we don't need to wait three or four hours to restore across our WAN circuit. I now take for granted that our data is always available. Our backups are so reliable, and I feel very confident in our solution."

Little has found that ExaGrid's data deduplication has been helpful in maximizing storage space. "The deduplication that ExaGrid offers has helped us save space and retain more data points. We're backing up 90TB worth of data at one site and 106TB at the other, but thanks to deduplication we don't need to store nearly that much. The ability to adjust the Landing Zone and deduplicated repository areas of our systems has also been helpful as we've been able to store more backups," he said.

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.

'Invaluable' Customer Support

Little has found that working with an assigned ExaGrid support engineer has been helpful in keeping New Belgium's backups solution well-maintained. "Our ExaGrid support engineer manages our updates for us, which is not something I've experienced when working with other vendors. It's been great to know that our system is being checked on and upgraded, so that's one less thing for me to manage.

"My support engineer has taken the time to learn my environment, and has been helpful whenever there has been an issue to work through. I'm able to contact him directly and I don't have to worry about calling in and working with someone who doesn't understand my system. Those are benefits that are invaluable for business, and that prospective customers should know about," said Little.

Scale-Out Solution Ready for Data Growth

As Little plans for the future of New Belgium's backup environment, he is appreciative of ExaGrid's scale-out architecture. "We haven't even started down this road yet, but one of the reasons we decided on ExaGrid was the capacity to add onto the system. It's nice to know that when we hit the point that we won't have to throw out the old appliance and buy a bigger, more expensive one; we will be able to buy a similarly-sized appliance and double up."

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. All of ExaGrid's appliances contain not just disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. When the system needs to expand, additional appliances are simply attached to the existing system. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows, with customers paying for what they need when they need it.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides intelligent hyperconverged storage 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**.