SAIF Maximizes Storage Capacity with 'Incredible' Deduplication Using ExaGrid-Veeam Solution

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>
> **Dan Sproule**
> **Infrastructure Engineer**

Key Benefits:

- ExaGrid-Veeam solution keeps SAIF's backups short, despite 'exploding' data growth
- SAIF easily scales out system with help from ExaGrid support
- Restoring data from ExaGrid is 'instantaneous' using Veeam
- ExaGrid's deduplication saves on storage costs, which helps SAIF budget for future growth

Customer Overview

SAIF is Oregon's not-for-profit workers' compensation insurance company. Since 1914, SAIF has been taking care of injured workers, helping people get back to work, and striving to make Oregon the safest and healthiest place to work.

SAIF Chooses ExaGrid for its Integration with Veeam

SAIF's IT team had been backing up the non-profit's data to disk using Veeam, but found that the disk storage couldn't keep up with data growth. "Our backup storage was getting to be huge because our environment had exploded in size, and I was looking for a backup solution that provided deduplication so that I could get my backups compressed a little bit and save money in the long run," said Dan Sproule, SAIF's infrastructure engineer.

After some research, Sproule decided to narrow the search to ExaGrid and a competitor. "I liked ExaGrid's technology, as far as the speed of restores from its landing zone as well as its deduplication, and that the replication would happen automatically in the background," he said.

Sproule was also interested in ExaGrid's unique integration with the Veeam Data Mover. ExaGrid has integrated the Veeam Data Mover so that backups are written Veeam-to-Veeam versus Veeam-to-CIFS, which provides a 30% increase in backup performance. ExaGrid is the only product on the market that offers this performance enhancement. Because ExaGrid has integrated the Veeam Data Mover, Veeam synthetic fulls can be created at a rate that is six times faster than any other solution.

SAIF installed an ExaGrid system at its primary site and its DR site. "Installation was simple. Our ExaGrid support engineer helped us configure the systems and we haven't looked back since then," said Sproule. The ExaGrid system is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with all of the most frequently used backup applications, so an organization can retain its investment

in existing applications and processes. In addition, ExaGrid appliances can be used at primary and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with live data repositories for disaster recovery.

'Incredible' Deduplication with Oracle RMAN and 'Instantaneous' Restores with Veeam

Sproule backs up SAIF's data in daily incrementals and weekly fulls. SAIF's data consists of 550 VMs as well as SQL and Oracle databases. "We back up our Oracle databases directly to ExaGrid. The deduplication we're getting on the Oracle RMAN backups is incredible!" said Sproule. ExaGrid enables the fastest Oracle RMAN Backups with performance load balancing utilizing Oracle RMAN Channels. ExaGrid delivers a 10 to 50:1 deduplication ratio for long-term retention and stores the most recent backup in an RMAN native format for the fastest restores.

Whether backing up VMs or databases, Sproule has been impressed with the reliable backups and quick restores from the ExaGrid system. "Our data has exploded since we first installed our ExaGrid systems a few years

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ago, but thanks to ExaGrid our backup window has been able to stay the same. Plus, using Veeam to restore data from ExaGrid's landing zone is instantaneous and very simple," 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.

ExaGrid's Deduplication Saves on Storage Costs

"We're getting quite a bit more deduplication using ExaGrid and Veeam than we were with spinning disks. It saves me some time before we actually have to buy more storage and I don't have to worry about running out of space anymore. It took a few budget cycles to buy all of our ExaGrid systems and factoring in the deduplication helps with our planning and our budgeting for future growth," said Sproule.

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.

Scalable System Easily Managed with Assistance from 'Fabulous' Customer Support

Sproule has appreciated ExaGrid's high level of support, especially when he was ready to scale out his ExaGrid system to accommodate data growth. "I like the ExaGrid support model

of working with an assigned support engineer; it's unlike any other in the industry. My engineer has helped me configure additional appliances to our existing ExaGrid systems, making it a very simple process.

"The customer support has been fabulous. In addition to helping with installation of appliances in our systems, our ExaGrid support engineer has been very proactive in monitoring the health of our systems. By the time the ExaGrid system alerts me to any issue, my support engineer is already checking it out to see what's going on. We did have an issue where the storage space on one of our appliances was running low, so he helped migrate data across to another one. It's been so easy to work with the ExaGrid system thanks to our support engineer," said Sproule.

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.

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 level 2 engineers who are assigned to individual accounts. The system is fully supported, and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

ExaGrid and Veeam

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. 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.

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**.