



ExaGrid's Evergreen Architecture Provides Investment Protection for STAR Financial Bank

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Cory Weaver
Lead Systems Engineer

Key Benefits:

- STAR chooses ExaGrid for its scalable architecture and unique Landing Zone technology
- STAR's IT team reduces time spent on backup management due to ExaGrid's ease of use
- ExaGrid-Veeam solution provides data deduplication that maximizes storage capacity
- 'Excellent' ExaGrid support helps keep STAR's backup solution well-maintained and upgraded

Customer Overview

STAR Financial Bank, headquartered in Fort Wayne, Indiana, is committed to delivering quality financial expertise and distinctive banking solutions to exceed customer expectations. In addition, STAR Private Advisory offers private banking, investment and fiduciary services. STAR Insurance Agency is a full-service insurance and annuity provider. STAR has grown to \$2 billion in assets with locations across Central and Northeast Indiana.

ExaGrid Eliminates the End-of-Life Process

STAR Financial Bank had backed its data up to a Dell EMC Data Domain system, using Dell EMC Avamar. As its data was reaching max capacity in the Data Domain system, the company was faced with the prospect of renewing hardware and software support for that solution while purchasing an additional disk array to add the needed storage. The IT staff decided to look into other backup solutions and compare costs.

"We typically work with our hardware vendor and explore options of renewing versus engaging with their 3-5 top recommendations of products," said Cory Weaver, lead systems engineer at STAR. "After reviewing all potential possibilities, we chose ExaGrid. Some of the determining factors were its ease of use, integrations with our backup system, and that we would work directly with an assigned support engineer. A key benefit of ExaGrid's architecture for us revolves around storage expansion. With other systems, you're simply adding a disk enclosure and sharing the compute resources collectively. With ExaGrid, each enclosure contains its own processing power, so performance remains constant.

"We also had multiple conversations with the ExaGrid team about its Landing Zone technology. We liked that we could reallocate storage space between the Landing Zone and retention space as needed. We felt very comfortable with the ExaGrid system that they sized for us. ExaGrid also provided more competitive pricing, so it was also a better option for our budget," he added.



STAR purchased an ExaGrid system and Veeam to replace Data Domain and Avamar. "The implementation was a piece of cake. The only thing we had to do is set up a network connectivity, and then we got in touch with our ExaGrid support engineer. He ran through the product with us and helped us with the data migration process," said Weaver.

ExaGrid provides an evergreen approach to backup, offering a series of multiple appliance models that can be mixed and matched into a single configuration, adding onto the system as data grows. ExaGrid not only delivers the fastest backups and restores, but is the only solution that truly scales, provides a fixed length backup window as data grows, and eliminates forklift upgrades as well as product obsolescence. This combination of capabilities in a turnkey appliance makes the ExaGrid system easy to install, manage, and scale. ExaGrid's architecture provides lifetime value and investment protection that no other architecture can match.



Data Deduplication Maximizes Storage

Weaver backs up STAR's data in daily differentials and weekly fulls, as well as weekly, monthly and yearly backups. There is a substantial amount of data to back up; a full back up of STAR's 300 virtual machines (VMs) amounts to 575TB of data, before deduplication. After deduplication, this data is able to be stored on 105TB of space on the ExaGrid system.

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.

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.

Backup Maintenance Simplified with ExaGrid

Weaver has found that ExaGrid's integration with Veeam makes it simple to manage backups, which had been a longer process in the past. "ExaGrid requires less management compared with Data Domain. If I want to check the statistics or see our available backup storage, I can log into the ExaGrid and find the numbers quickly because the information is right there. I don't have to drill down to submenus, either. It's so easy to use.

"When we used Data Domain, we would have to go through half a dozen menus to configure the reporting, the scheduling,

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.

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the servers, and the storage that it pointed to, and then another one to tie them all together. We weren't able to simply add a new server to an existing backup job, you had to go through the entire list and manually enter it. Now, when we build out new servers, it automatically gets added into Veeam, which already points to ExaGrid, so we don't have to worry about forgetting a step," said Weaver.

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.

'Excellent' ExaGrid Support

Weaver appreciates the high level of customer support that ExaGrid provides. "We work directly with our assigned support engineer. He responds promptly whenever we have a question, and he proactively checks to see if there are any upgrades to our system, and preloads the update to run over the weekend during our maintenance window.

"We also had an instance where a disk failed over the weekend. We did get alerts sent to us from the ExaGrid system, but by the time I called to check in, our support engineer already had a new disk on the way. The support is excellent," said Weaver.

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.

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