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

USA

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

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Cory Weaver
Lead Systems Engineer

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 Dell EMC 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's award-winning scale-out architecture provides customers with a fixed-length backup window regardless of data growth. Its unique disk-cache Landing Zone allows for the fastest backups and retains the most recent backup in its full undeduplicated form, enabling the fastest restores.

ExaGrid's appliance models can be mixed and matched into a single scale-out system allowing a full backup of up to 2.7PB with a combined ingest rate of 488TB/hr, in a single system. The appliances automatically join the scale-out system. Each appliance includes the appropriate amount of processor, memory, disk, and bandwidth for the data size. By adding compute with capacity, the backup window remains fixed in length as the data grows. Automatic load balancing across all repositories allows for full utilization of all appliances. Data is deduplicated into an offline repository, and additionally, data is globally deduplicated across all repositories.

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-cache 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 for a strong recovery point (RPO). As data is being deduplicated to the repository, it can also be replicated to a second ExaGrid site or the public cloud for disaster recovery (DR).

ExaGrid and Veeam can instantly recover a file or VMware virtual machine by running it directly from the ExaGrid appliance in the event that the file is lost, corrupted or encrypted or the primary storage VM becomes unavailable. This instant recovery is possible because of ExaGrid's Landing Zone – a high-speed disk cache on the ExaGrid appliance that retains the most recent backups in their complete form. Once the primary storage environment has been brought back to a working state, the VM backed up on the ExaGrid appliance can then be migrated to primary storage for continued operation.

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, 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.

'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 operate. ExaGrid's industry-leading level 2 senior support engineers are assigned to individual customers, ensuring they always work with the same engineer. Customers never have to repeat themselves to various support staff, and issues get resolved quickly.

ExaGrid and Veeam

Veeam's backup solutions and ExaGrid's Tiered Backup Storage combine for the industry's fastest backups, fastest restores, a scale-out storage system as data grows, and a strong ransomware recovery story – all at the lowest cost.

ExaGrid-Veeam Combined Dedupe

Veeam uses changed block tracking to perform a level of data deduplication. ExaGrid allows Veeam deduplication and Veeam dedupe-friendly compression to stay on. ExaGrid will increase Veeam's deduplication by a factor of about 7:1 to a total combined deduplication ratio of 14:1, reducing the storage required and saving on storage costs up front and over time.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides Tiered Backup Storage with a unique disk-cache Landing Zone that enables fastest backups and restores, a Repository Tier that offers the lowest cost for long-term retention and enables ransomware recovery, and scale-out architecture which includes full appliances with up to 2.7PB full backup in a single system.

Learn more at **www.exagrid.com**.

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