



# ExaGrid Fuels Faster, More Efficient Backups for Seneca Companies

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



The Complete Solution

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**Kevin Taber**  
Network and Systems Admin

## Customer Overview

Seneca Companies was founded in 1973 by Chris Risewick with a vision to distribute the best products and services to clients across the Midwest. With four decades of experience and a proven record, Seneca Companies prides itself in being a full-service provider of petroleum storage and dispensing systems, environmental consulting, process systems and waste removal, electrical contracting, industrial coating and more. Seneca Companies is located in Des Moines, Iowa.

## Paperless Initiative and Desire for Better Disaster Recovery Drove Need for New Backup Solution

The IT department at Seneca Companies had been using a robotic tape library with a single LTO-2 drive to back up and protect its information but staff members were concerned about the library’s ability to keep up with increasing amounts of data in light of a new paperless initiative the company was planning.

“We were already dealing with long backup times and random tape errors and our tape solution seemed to be aging faster and faster as our backup data grew. We knew we had to upgrade our backup solution sooner rather than later and we also wanted to improve disaster recovery,” said Kevin Taber, network and systems administrator at Seneca Companies. “We decided to move to a disk-to-disk-to-tape methodology but we needed a solution that wouldn’t kill our budget.”

## ExaGrid Works with Existing Backup Application for Cost-effective, More Efficient Backups

Taber said that Seneca Companies initially considered a Quantum backup solution but eventually chose the ExaGrid system based on cost, ease of management, scalability and its data deduplication technology.

“The ExaGrid system was more affordable than the Quantum solution it offered all the features we were looking for. We spent some time learning about what ExaGrid customers had to say about the system and we liked what we heard. Many said that the ExaGrid



was a ‘set it and forget it’ type of product and that really put my mind at ease,” said Taber.

The ExaGrid system works along with the company’s existing backup application, Veritas Backup Exec, and backs up and protects SQL databases, Windows file servers, Citrix XenServer virtual machines, and Exchange data.

“The fact that the ExaGrid works so seamlessly with Backup Exec was a big factor in our purchase decision,” said Taber. “Once we saw that the ExaGrid can use OpenStorage API’s, we knew that it would marry well with Backup Exec.”

## Faster Backups and Restores, Overall Data Deduplication of 23.02:1 Maximizes Amount of Data Stored

Taber noted that since installing the ExaGrid system, backup times have dramatically decreased. In particular, the company’s longest backup job went from 30 hours to eight hours.

### Key Benefits:

- Seneca Companies’ switch to ExaGrid reduces backup widow from 30 hours to eight hours
- ExaGrid supports existing backup applications and processes
- IT staff reclaim four hours of workweek previously spent on backup management
- ExaGrid proves best for TCO; Seneca Companies able to cut annual backup costs by thousands of dollars



“Our backup jobs run so much faster and more efficiently now,” said Taber. “Also, ExaGrid’s data deduplication technology really helps to maximize our retention. It’s so nice to have so much retention available in case we need to do a restore. Restoring data from the ExaGrid is so much faster than tape. It really doesn’t compare.”

ExaGrid’s data deduplication technology helps to maximize disk space and retention. Currently, Seneca Companies is receiving an overall data deduplication ratio of 23.02:1. 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 unduplicated form for fast restores, VM Instant Recoveries, and tape copies while the offsite data is ready for disaster recovery.

## Helpful Customer Support, Easy Management

Taber said that he installed the ExaGrid system himself with the assistance of the ExaGrid customer support engineer assigned to the company’s account.

“The installation went very smoothly. It really doesn’t get any easier than bolting the system to the rack and making a phone call. Our support engineer was extremely helpful and he did a complete walkthrough of the Backup Exec configuration as well,” he said. “ExaGrid has exceptional support. Our support engineer takes his time to ensure that every aspect of our system is correctly configured and updated. I especially like the fact that they use WebEx to remote in so that our firewall ACL’s don’t have to be altered.”

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.

“Our hardware is collocated in a datacenter, and I used to have to drive there to correct any tape drive malfunctions and to

## 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](http://www.exagrid.com).

load more tapes. Restores were also a pain, because if the file I needed to restore was more than a week old, it would take a few hours out of my day to deal with it,” said Taber. “Having the ExaGrid in place saves me at least three to four hours a week in management time alone.”

## Scalability to Grow, Reduced Backup Costs

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 has cut our annual backup costs by several thousands of dollars just on tape purchases and travel expenses alone. While tape systems do seem to cost less up front, we’ve gained savings on the management and disaster recovery sides as well. Time is money, and if for any reason we lost a key component of our infrastructure, the downtime for a slow restore would equate to big losses. With the ExaGrid, I don’t have to cross my fingers during restores anymore,” Tabor said. “Our ExaGrid system has performed flawlessly. I am finally confident about our backups and it’s a great feeling. It’s so nice to look at the job log in Backup Exec and see that it is completely error-free.”

## ExaGrid and Veritas Backup Exec

Veritas Backup Exec provides cost-effective, high-performance, and certified disk-to-disk-to-tape backup and recovery – including continuous data protection for Microsoft Exchange servers, Microsoft SQL servers, file servers, and workstations. High-performance agents and options provide fast, flexible, granular protection and scalable management of local and remote server backups.

Organizations using Veritas Backup Exec can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Veritas Backup Exec, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Veritas Backup Exec, using ExaGrid in place of a tape backup system is as easy as pointing existing backup jobs at a NAS share on the ExaGrid system. Backup jobs are sent directly from the backup application to the ExaGrid for backup to disk.

United States: 350 Campus Drive | Marlborough, MA 01752 | (800) 868-6985

United Kingdom: 200 Brook Drive | Green Park, Reading, Berkshire RG2 6UB | +44 (0) 1189 497 051

Singapore: 1 Raffles Place, #20-61 | One Raffles Place Tower 2 | 048616 | +65 6808 5574



[www.exagrid.com](http://www.exagrid.com)