



ExaGrid Fuels Faster, More Efficient Backups for Seneca Companies



USA

Key Benefits:

- Seneca Companies' switch to ExaGrid reduces backup window 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

"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 with the ExaGrid system."

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 APIs, 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.

"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 ExaGrid is so much faster than tape. It really doesn't compare."

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).

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 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.

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

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.

"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 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 Tiered Backup Storage 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 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 ExaGrid for backup to disk.

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.

