ExaGrid and Veeam Fleet Keep Backup Storage Strong and Steady at TAL International

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

"My ExaGrid engineer is very attentive and helpful! He can fix something on the fly or send me the steps to do it – we just get it done. This gives me confidence and allows me to focus on other things."

Larry Jones
Senior Systems Engineer

Key Benefits:

- Problems of burdensome administration and inability to back up all data have been alleviated
- TAL's mix of Oracle RMAN, EMC NetWorker, and Veeam backups all supported by ExaGrid
- 20:1 dedupe ratio maximizes TAL's disk space
- Automated replication keeps both sites in sync so DR site always has production data
- Assigned customer support engineer provides fast response and assistance 'on the fly'

Customer Overview

TAL International is one of the world's oldest and largest lessors of intermodal freight containers. The company was founded in 1963 soon after the development of containerized trade, and today serves virtually every major shipping line in the world. TAL operates its business through 17 offices in 11 countries and approximately 230 third-party container depot facilities in 40 countries. The TAL fleet includes over two million TEU of dry containers, refrigerated containers, tank containers, open tops, flat racks, chassis, generator sets and palletwide containers, making TAL one of the largest container leasing companies in the world.

Virtualization Drives Better Economics and Tight Integration

TAL started as an EMC NetWorker/Arcserve shop backing up to tape. Things got to a point where backups did not happen within a day and administration became burdensome. TAL is a geographically dispersed company with offices around the world, requiring regional backup operators to make sure there was a tape in the server at all times. This meant remotely administering technicians and remote hardware to get regional data backed up. It got to be a logistical headache and it was clear they needed to virtualize and look at a disk-based backup solution.

TAL backs up data nightly from a variety of apps, which they assumed would be tough to aggregate. They had a mix of Oracle RMAN backups, EMC NetWorker backups and Veeam backups each night. TAL performs a GFS (grandfather, father, son) rotation of daily, weekly, monthly and yearly backups.

TAL looked at a couple of other disk-based appliances but ExaGrid won because of its extensive number of supported backup apps, speed to disk, deduplication rates and not having to do forklift upgrades down the road. TAL installed a two-site solution that included a remote DR site.

"ExaGrid definitely alleviated most of the backup storage burden. It took away the manual work that I had to focus on previously. The fact that backup is now a lot more automated, with good reporting and alerts, is huge. For the most part, you set it and forget it," said Larry Jones, Senior Systems Engineer at TAL International.

Adaptive Deduplication Provides Optimal System Performance

"We are seeing a 20:1 dedupe ratio overall, which I am very happy about. The key for me was trying to wrap my head around what deduplication really does and trying to understand the best ways to present our data for optimal performance. With ExaGrid's landing zone, when the backups aren't running, it does the processing, deduping, and replication. I just go about my life; now that's really powerful," said Jones.

ExaGrid combines last backup compression along with data deduplication, which stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. This unique approach reduces the disk space required by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 or more, delivering unparalleled cost savings and performance.

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.

TAL described that recovery time is the feature that matters most when needed.

"Before ExaGrid, we had to ship things off to our DR site. Now we just set the replication schedule, throttle the bandwidth, and let the ExaGrid appliances keep each other in sync.

It's really nice to know from the help desk standpoint and from the operator standpoint that the job completes each day. I don't have to think about it. I know that our DR site will always have production data, which is really nice," said Jones.

The ExaGrid system fully leverages Veeam Backup & Replication's built-in backup-to-disk capabilities and ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication for additional data reduction (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 zone-level deduplication to further shrink backups.

Helpful, Knowledgeable Support

Jones said that he's found the support engineer who is assigned to the TAL account to be very helpful and attentive.

"ExaGrid's support model is probably one of the best I have experienced. I really appreciate having an assigned tech so I don't have to give my life story every time I call and get first level support before I get escalated. My engineer can fix something on the fly or send me the steps to do it – we get it done."

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 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.

GRID Architecture Provides Superior Scalability

ExaGrid's scalable GRID architecture will enable TAL to continue to expand its system as its backup requirements grow.

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, so when the system needs to expand, additional appliances are attached to the GRID, bringing with them not only additional disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows. In addition, as new ExaGrid appliances are added to the GRID, the ExaGrid automatically load balances available capacity, maintaining a virtual pool of storage that is shared across the GRID.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides backup storage with a unique landing zone and scale-out architecture. The landing zone provides for the fastest backups, restores and instant VM recoveries. The scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable GRID and provides for a fixed-length backup window as data grows, eliminating expensive forklift upgrades. Learn more at **www.exagrid.com**.

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