



Steel Company Galvanizes Availability with Veeam, HP and ExaGrid to Meet Customers' Supply Chain Demands



USA

Key Benefits:

- Despite 50% data growth, backup is 60% faster and doesn't impact production
- Recovery of VMs running ERP and SQL takes minutes
- Technical support provides extensive resources and efficient resolutions, enabling the IT team to get back to work

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Ken Miller

EDI/Database Administrator

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Customer Overview

Heidtman Steel Products, Inc. processes, packages and distributes flat-rolled steel products to manufacturers in the automotive, furniture, appliance and HVAC industries. Based in Toledo, Ohio, the company processes more than 5 million tons of steel each year in facilities throughout the Midwest.

The Business Challenge

During the energy crisis of the mid 1970s, the automotive industry sought ways to produce lighter, more fuel-efficient vehicles. Heidtman Steel answered the call with high-strength low-alloy steel and became one of the nation's leading suppliers.

Forty years later, Ford Motor Company and General Motors continue to be two of Heidtman Steel's largest customers, in addition to manufacturers in other industries. Their production success is contingent on Heidtman Steel providing its products on time.

To meet customers' supply chain demands, Heidtman Steel's processing facilities frequently operate around the clock thanks to custom-built enterprise resource planning (ERP) software that utilizes Microsoft SQL Server for database management. Without the ERP system, which facilitates electronic data interchange (EDI) between Heidtman Steel and its customers, the processing facilities must operate manually, which impedes product completion time and quality – and ultimately customers' production success.

"If we resort to manual processes, we run the risk of being the reason an automotive plant shuts down temporarily," said Ken Miller, EDI/ Database Administrator for Heidtman Steel. "Our ERP must be available at all times, or we could lose customers."

Because the legacy backup tool was unreliable, Heidtman Steel didn't have full confidence in its ability to deliver 24x7x365 ERP availability. ERP is one of several virtualized Tier I systems that play a key role in Heidtman Steel's business. The others include Microsoft Active Directory, Exchange and SharePoint.

"Throughout my career I've always been designated as the 'backup guy,' and I've used just about every solution out there," Miller said. "The legacy tool was supposed to work well with HP and ExaGrid, but we didn't see any integration. My colleagues and I got tired of wasting our time on



the phone with the backup vendor trying to figure out why our backups failed so frequently. We were told 'Sometimes backups work and sometimes they don't.' That's a ridiculous statement in today's virtualized world!"

The Veeam Solution

Heidtman Steel chose an availability solution designed expressly for virtualization. Veeam® Backup & Replication™ helps the company meet customers' supply chain demands by delivering 24x7x365 availability of ERP, which automates the processing facilities, as well as other virtualized systems that run the business.

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Veeam Backup & Replication delivers 24x7x365 availability through high-speed backup and recovery. When Veeam is combined with HP and ExaGrid, backup and recovery are tremendously complementary, making around-the-clock availability even easier.

Heidtman Steel's VMs reside on HP 3PAR StoreServ, enabling Veeam to make backups from storage snapshots as often as every 15 minutes with

practically no disruption to the production environment. If a snapshot is left over after a backup has completed, Veeam's Snapshot Hunter removes it.

"We love the Snapshot Hunter because it's completely automated, so you don't have to configure anything," Miller said. "Like everything else in Veeam, it just works."

Miller said Veeam backups are 60% faster than previous backups, even with a 50% increase in data during a two-year period. He credits the ExaGrid-Veeam Accelerated Data Mover.

"Our Veeam backups really fly," Miller explained. "The ExaGrid-Veeam Accelerated Data Mover processes backups on the ExaGrid array, which frees up network and server CPU for other tasks. Veeam and ExaGrid also combine their deduplication efforts to conserve backup storage. After Veeam deduplicates data, ExaGrid deduplicates it again, giving us a reduction ratio of 3.6:1. This lets us retain more active restore points for our critical VMs. We used to keep two weeks of restore points, but with Veeam we keep five weeks."

Recovery with Veeam is fast too, which is crucial for around-the-clock availability. Veeam's Instant VM Recovery™ lets Heidtman Steel restart a failed VM quickly from a backup on ExaGrid's landing zone – a high-speed cache on the ExaGrid appliance that retains the most recent backups in complete form.

"I used Instant VM Recovery to bring a VM back from the dead, and it was awesome," Miller said. "When our ERP development team made a change to a SQL VM that rendered it unstable, I used Instant VM Recovery to restore the failed VM from a regular backup on the ExaGrid appliance in minutes. The developers were amazed. I told them they don't have to worry about testing because Veeam will always restore what they need."

Heidtman Steel uses another high-speed recovery feature called Veeam Explorer™ for Microsoft Active Directory.

"ERP training sessions are set up in Active Directory, but one day someone wacked all the user profiles by mistake," Miller explained. "We used Veeam Explorer to recover the user profiles to Active Directory VM in minutes. When you work in a small IT shop like ours, no one has time to worry about availability. We need fast, reliable backup and recovery, and that's exactly what Veeam provides. Veeam gives us a level of comfort we've never had before. Each time I show my colleagues something cool I've discovered in Veeam, they tell me I've gone 'Veeam crazy.'"

The Results

- **Despite 50% data growth, backup is 60% faster and doesn't impact production** – "One of the things I appreciate most about Veeam is backup speed," Miller said. "Even though we added 25% more VMs during the last two years to accommodate 50% more data, our backup speed with Veeam is 60% faster than backup with the previous tool."
- **Recovery of VMs running ERP and SQL takes minutes** – "If we can't recover ERP and SQL quickly, our processing facilities default to manual processing, and we run the risk of not meeting customers' supply chain demands," Miller added. "Between Instant VM Recovery and five weeks of reliable restore points for critical VMs, we know we can recover anything with Veeam quickly."
- **Technical support provides extensive resources and efficient resolutions, enabling the IT team to get back to work** – "Backup with our old backup tool was hugely unreliable, but not as unreliable as the backup vendor's technical support. It was a constant struggle to get our questions answered," Miller said. "Veeam's technical support is the exact opposite. If we can't find what we're looking for in customer forums or knowledge base articles, we make a phone call and get a fast, helpful response every 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.

