12Stone Church Reduces Backup Window by 80% with Veeam and ExaGrid

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>
> **Steve Gimbert**
> **IT Consultant**

Key Benefits:

- Backup windows are 80% shorter since switching to ExaGrid
- The combined ExaGrid-Veeam deduplication maximizes capacity
- 'Top-notch' sizing by the ExaGrid team extended 12Stone's inital storage plans for data growth
- Restoring data reduced from hours to minutes

Customer Overview

12Stone® Church is a multi-campus church that serves over 15,000 adults and children weekly with its creative worship and teaching styles. The church is part of the Wesleyan Denomination. Each of its eight campuses, which are located in three different counties, partners with dozens of city, county, and global non-profit agencies to be agents of change and transformation. The church is passionate about reaching the community so that people know they matter to God and they matter to 12Stone.

ExaGrid and Veeam Replace Tape and USB Backups

12Stone Church had been backing up its data to a combination of tape and USB drives, and used Windows Server Backup and Veritas Backup Exec to manage the backups. Steve Gimbert, an IT consultant that manages the church's data storage, had found backups to be difficult to manage in that environment and began to look for other solutions.

"Dealing with tape is cumbersome, especially the amount of time it takes to manage the overall backup process, and restoring data from tape takes an excruciatingly long time. USB backups are also very hard to manage, and both require constant rotation to and from offsite storage."

Gimbert looked into Carbonite storage solutions as well as online cloud-based solutions, and considered Dell EMC Data Domain with Dell EMC NetWorker as a backup app. After attending a presentation hosted by Veeam and ExaGrid, Gimbert was impressed with how well the backup products integrated and decided that the combination would be the best solution for 12Stone's environment.

"Quite a few people had recommended Veeam to me. Veeam offered a quick and easy way to back up virtualized machines, so it made sense with the direction in which we were moving. What I liked about ExaGrid specifically was its ability to scale out without having to replace hardware. That was a big selling point for me."

12Stone installed ExaGrid appliances at the church's primary data center and its DR site. Gimbert was impressed with how easy the installation went. "Everything was up and running in an afternoon; I was able to set it and forget it—and it works!" The ExaGrid system is easy to install and use, and works seamlessly with all of the most frequently used backup applications, so an organization can seamlessly retain its investment in existing applications and processes. In addition, ExaGrid appliances can be used at primary and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with live data repositories for disaster recovery.

Backup Window Reduced by 80%

Gimbert runs nightly backups of 12Stone's data, keeping a retention of a few weeks. Gimbert has seen a significant reduction in the time it takes to back up data since switching to ExaGrid. "It's cut down the backup window by 80%! Backups are down to two hours, tops."

EXAGRID®

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 undeduplicated form for fast restores, VM Instant Recoveries, and tape copies while the offsite data is ready for disaster recovery.

'Top-Notch' Sizing Leverages Scale-Out System

While scalability was an important factor in choosing ExaGrid, 12Stone has not needed to scale out its system yet. "Surprisingly, we haven't had to scale out. I thought for sure we would have by now, but the deduplication we are getting from the system has maximized capacity. The initial sizing and capacity planning by the ExaGrid team was top-notch. We still have plenty of room left on the appliances, so we set the right retention policies and planned for our predicted growth. I've been pleasantly surprised that we haven't had to add to the existing system," said Gimbert. "Using ExaGrid has offered cost savings, as there is no need to spend as much on space for backups."

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 1PB full backup plus retention and an ingest rate of up to 200TB per hour. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

Manageable System Saves on Staff Time and Frustration

"Using ExaGrid has saved us up to ten hours per week, and not only time, but the frustration and headaches from managing tape and USB drives are not there anymore," said Gimbert. As an IT consultant, Gimbert manages backups for a number of clients and has found that there is great value for those using ExaGrid.

"ExaGrid is a much higher-end appliance. It also offers better support than other vendors. The support engineers get in touch much faster and are much more personal. Using ExaGrid brings peace of mind with assurance that backups will work and that productivity can be increased since it doesn't take much time to manage the system."

One of the worst headaches from the previous solution had been restoring data. "When restoring from tape, the right media would need to be found, and also the right area of that tape, and all of that could take up to two hours, plus another hour or so to restore the data, depending on its size. USB was a bit quicker than tape, but the right USB drive would need to be found, which could be a process. Using Veeam and ExaGrid, I can restore a file within five minutes. One of the great things about using ExaGrid with Veeam is that Hyper-V servers can be spun up in the backup, within a few seconds—that's huge!"

ExaGrid and Veeam can instantly recover a VMware virtual machine by running it directly from the ExaGrid appliance in the event that the primary storage VM becomes unavailable. This is possible because of ExaGrid's "landing zone" – a high-speed cache on the ExaGrid appliance that retains the most recent backups in complete form. Once the primary storage environment has been brought back to a working state, the VM running on the ExaGrid appliance can then be migrated to primary storage for continued operation.

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. 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.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides hyper-converged secondary storage (HCSS) 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**.