

Stribling Selects ExaGrid and Veeam, Reduces Backup Window by 84%

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Jack White
Network Administrator

Key Benefits:

- 'End of life' encountered with Dell devices not a concern with ExaGrid appliances
- ExaGrid's remote support saves outsource costs
- Integration with Veeam provides superior performance over Veritas
- Backup window reduced by 84%, from 36 to 6 hours
- 'Set and forget' 24/7/365 backup storage alleviates strain on IT staff

Customer Overview

Stribling Equipment is Mississippi's leader in construction equipment and forestry-related products and services. Stribling's mission is to continually improve its products and services to meet customer needs. The company prides itself on being a well respected, family-owned and -operated business since 1944.

No 'End of Life' Makes for Long-Term Solution

When network administrator Jack White joined Stribling Equipment, the company had just implemented ExaGrid's disk-based backup storage after years of backing up to a tape system that had become a nightmare to manage.

"ExaGrid worked well. I looked at some other products as a comparison, but we quickly decided to stay with it," said White. "It was the support that I got from ExaGrid that mattered the most. We recently went ahead and purchased another unit, which we put at our offsite location for replication.

"I quickly realized why I liked ExaGrid better than some of the others vendors I dealt with. The fact that ExaGrid does not end-of-life its appliances was a big 'wow factor' for me. That is one thing that is huge for us – being able to get maintenance on the system forever. It's much easier to keep maintenance on a device than it is to go out and purchase a new one every couple of years. It makes great business sense," he said.

White is impressed by how much ExaGrid's technical support helped out when Stribling had Veritas Backup Exec. "They had deep knowledge in 3rd party software, and we had never before experienced that level of support. We once had a hard drive die on one of the appliances after a couple of years, and before I could put in a ticket or contact tech support, I already had an email from them saying they noticed that we had a problem and were overnighting a new hard drive."

When Stribling had network storage with Dell, it was a constant battle, according to White. "The service tags proved that we had maintenance on the gear, but it had reached end of life. Dell hadn't notified us, and the drive was dead. Dell said that they no longer replaced those drives, and we couldn't order a new one because Dell didn't even sell them anymore. So we have some of our most important data on a device on our network that's reached end of life, and we have no way of keeping it running. We'll never deal with Dell again if we don't have to," said White.

Scalability and DR Easily Accomplished

In addition to its main data center, Stribling has a DR site at sister company, Empire, to which they replicate using a fiber connection.

"We're looking to the future and as our data grows, it's great that the ExaGrid systems are scalable and don't 'end of life' – so we can just drop new appliances in place and keep on going. ExaGrid's GRID architecture is so nice," said White.

Dedupe, Retention, and Veeam – A Powerful Combination

Stribling Equipment switched from Veritas Backup Exec to Veeam for its backup software, which partners exceptionally well with the ExaGrid solution.

"Veeam is a nice backup application; it's easy to set up and provides high performance. That was one of the things that I disliked about Veritas Backup Exec – it took forever to

complete a backup. I enjoy the deduplication capability, and the best dedupe we've seen is 17:1, so we've now got room to spare. We're looking at going to a larger system only so we can retain longer. Right now we're doing 20 snapshots, a backup every night, and we do a weekly and a monthly that we hold onto for longer. Our retention averages two or three months," said White.

'Amazing' Customer Support Takes Charge

White says that the level of support that ExaGrid includes with maintenance is outstanding. "We've got a 'real' person assigned to our account. Pretty much every other vendor makes you feel like you're pulling teeth to get support," said White.

"I would love to extend our infrastructure out, and ExaGrid makes everything so easy – easy to purchase, easy to install, and easy to set up. As a matter of fact, half the time we just connect our ExaGrid support engineer to one of our servers and let them have at it. They shoot us an email that we're good to go. ExaGrid blows my mind with how easy it is to deal with support, how quickly they help us out, and the fact that they can take charge and solve a problem remotely – amazing," said White.

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.

"When we started working with ExaGrid, we didn't know that this level of support was part of the package. We spent \$2,000 having somebody else set up ExaGrid for us. If we had known that installation support was included, it would have saved us lots of money and the hassle. Now we know," said White.

Backup Window Reduced by 84%, from 36 to 6 Hours

"I've been there when they were doing the tapes monthly, and I've seen how long it took to get one backup done. It often took us two to three days. If it happened over a weekend, it could take four or five days. Backups complete overnight now," said White.

"The ExaGrid system is something that I just let it do its job. I really don't do anything on it now. With tapes, we had to constantly watch our emails to see if one of the backups

finished, walk over to the tape drive, put another tape in, start the next job, let it run – and hope that it was set up before going home for the day. We'd often have to come back and do another one, or one of our team members would have to stay. Now with the ExaGrid system, we run a backup schedule, and it just runs and completes. We get an email alert from our assigned support engineer if it fills up or a hard drive fails. ExaGrid stands for reliability and ease of support. Actually, I would recommend ExaGrid solely based on the support," he said.

White noted that speed and performance between the two sites have improved with Veeam. "This combination optimizes our entire backup regimen. Our backup window went from 36 hours to under 6 hours. ExaGrid has changed my job entirely – I simply 'set it and forget it,'" said White.

GRID Architecture Provides Superior Scalability

The ExaGrid system can easily scale to accommodate data growth. ExaGrid's GRID 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 GRID 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.

Veeam-ExaGrid Dedupe

Veeam uses the information from VMware and Hyper-V and provides deduplication on a "per-job" basis, finding the matching areas of all the virtual disks within a backup job and using metadata to reduce the overall footprint of the backup data. Veeam also has a "dedupe friendly" compression setting which further reduces the size of the Veeam backups in a way that allows the ExaGrid system to achieve further deduplication. This approach typically achieves a 2:1 deduplication ratio.

ExaGrid is architected from the ground up to protect virtualized environments and provide deduplication as backups are taken. ExaGrid will achieve a 3:1 up to 5:1 additional deduplication rate. The net result is a combined Veeam and ExaGrid deduplication rate of 6:1 upwards to 10:1, which greatly reduces the amount of disk storage required.

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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