



Restaurant Chain Strengthens Integrity of Backups, Prevents Data Loss Thanks to ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Rodney Jones
Senior Systems Engineer

Key Benefits:

- Adding ExaGrid to environment protects data and relieves strain on production server
- ExaGrid Support prevents data loss during incident
- ExaGrid-Veeam solution provides faster backups and restores despite data growth
- Checkers and Rally's able to double length of data retention as dedupe saves on storage

Customer Overview

Based in Tampa, Florida, Checkers & Rally's Restaurants, Inc., an iconic and innovative drive-thru restaurant chain known for its "Crazy Good Food," exceptional value, and people-first attitude, operates and franchises both Checkers® and Rally's® restaurants. With nearly 900 restaurants and room to grow, Checkers & Rally's is a proven brand with flexible building formats that is aggressively expanding across the country. Checkers & Rally's is dedicated to being a place where franchisees and employees who work hard can create opportunity for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Switch to Dedicated Backup Storage Relieves Strain on Production Server

Checkers & Rally's Restaurants had been backing up their data to their production storage using VMware vSphere Data Protection (VDP), a virtual appliance.

Rodney Jones, the company's senior systems engineer, found that backing up data and restoring it from VDP was very slow, and was also concerned that backing up data to production storage left the data vulnerable. In addition, it could also strain the production server. "Sharing storage with our backups would affect our production servers and when backups were running it would slow the response time of our production servers due to of all the disk I/O going on in the SAN," he said.

The company added Veeam to its backup environment and decided to purchase a dedicated backup storage system. As Jones began looking into different products, he went to a Lunch & Learn event which included a presentation by ExaGrid. After more research about ExaGrid, he decided it was a good fit for the restaurant chain's backup environment.

"Installing the ExaGrid system was very straightforward, and working with my assigned ExaGrid support engineer made the process even easier. He's very knowledgeable about both ExaGrid and Veeam, which was helpful as we configured the new system," said Jones.



Quick Backups and Restores Save on Time and Money

Jones backs up Checkers & Rally's data in daily incrementals and weekly fulls. Jones backs up close to 100TB of data, including SQL data, Exchange servers, and other types of data. Though the company's data has tripled since installing an ExaGrid system, Jones no longer struggles with slow backups he had experienced with the previous solution.

Jones is impressed with how quickly data is restored from ExaGrid's Landing Zone. "Restore times are so much faster. When we can restore data quickly, it saves the company money on downtime. Since our backups are so reliable it also gives me more confidence in the ability to restore our data, because I know ExaGrid delivers a good, clean backup to restore from," said Jones.

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 while providing full system resources to the backups for the shortest backup window. 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. 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 Support Helps Reverse Data Loss

Jones appreciates working with an assigned ExaGrid support engineer who is an expert on his backup environment. "My support engineer is proactive about installing firmware upgrades and also regularly presents options on how to further improve our backups. He also helped to migrate our data when we installed an additional ExaGrid appliance to our system. He's walked me through each process that we've worked on together, explaining everything, and even following up to make sure the system is running smoothly whenever we've made any changes."

Jones particularly relied on help from his ExaGrid support engineer during a recent incident with potential data loss. "We recently had an incident where we lost our data on the production servers and started to lose our backup data as well. I contacted my ExaGrid support engineer and he responded right away, and because of his quick response time, we were able to prevent further data loss and even restore what actually had been lost. He worked with other members of the ExaGrid support team to get us up and running again. Years' worth of data could have been lost if ExaGrid support had not been able to go into our system and restore it. It saved our company thousands of dollars' worth of time from having to rebuild servers and redo everything we almost lost. Throughout the ordeal, my support engineer stayed in constant contact with me with status updates. It was like he held my hand the whole way through. I've been in IT for over 20 years and working with him is the best customer service I've ever had," said Jones.

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 level 2 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.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides tiered backup storage with a unique disk-cache Landing Zone, long-term retention repository and scale-out architecture. ExaGrid's Landing Zone enables the fastest backups, restores, and instant VM recoveries. The retention repository offers the lowest cost for long-term retention. ExaGrid's scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable system. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.

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Expanding Retention: 'Double the Days with Triple the Data'

Jones has found that introducing data deduplication to the backup environment has increased storage capacity, allowing him to double the retention of data stored on the ExaGrid system. "We used to save two weeks' worth of data on our production server but space was very limited. Since we have switched to using our ExaGrid system, our data has grown and we have many more servers to back up, and we have still been able to increase our retention to 30 days' worth of data. So we're getting double the days with triple the data. Deduplication has made quite an impact on our backup environment," he said.

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 up to 5:1 additional deduplication rate. The net result is a combined Veeam and ExaGrid deduplication rate of upwards to 10:1, which greatly reduces the amount of disk storage required.

ExaGrid and Veeam

Jones is glad that ExaGrid and Veeam work so well together. "They go together hand in hand. It's almost as if they were built by the same company," he said. 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. ExaGrid fully leverages Veeam's built-in backup-to-disk capabilities, and ExaGrid's adaptive data deduplication provides additional data 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 Adaptive Deduplication to further shrink backups.



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