ExaGrid-Veeam Solution 'Best Decision' for IT Company's Data Center

KRAMER Technology Solutions

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Nathan Smitha
Senior Network Architect

Key Benefits:

- ExaGrid and Veeam integrate to provide 'solid' solution with expert support

- Ingest speed of ExaGrid-Veeam 'much faster' than other solutions in the data center

- Running a VM from ExaGrid's landing zone results in quick restoration, minimal downtime

Customer Overview

MCM Kramer Technology Solutions, located in the Louisville, Kentucky area, offers IT support, including technical helpdesk support, computer support, and consulting services to small and medium-sized businesses. The company provides enterprise-level IT practices and solutions to the small business sector, at small business prices.

ExaGrid is Best Fit for Data Center Redesign

When Nathan Smitha started his position as MCM Kramer Technology Solution's senior network architect, the company was in the process of redesigning its data center, which included upgrading the backup environment. One of Smitha's first projects was to implement a new backup solution. "We were already using Veeam as our primary backup application, so I looked at backup appliances that would work best with it. I eventually narrowed the search down to Dell EMC Data Domain and ExaGrid. Since we already use a Dell EMC SAN in our environment I was inclined to stick with the same vendor for backup storage, but I was interested in ExaGrid's built-in integration with Veeam and also ExaGrid's Landing Zone, which allows for faster backups as the data stored on it doesn't need to be rehydrated. ExaGrid also offered better pricing, so we ended up purchasing that system. I think choosing ExaGrid was the best decision we've made because I have worked with Data Domain in other environments and I've had a much better experience using ExaGrid."

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 retain its investment in existing applications and processes. "Installing the ExaGrid system was a quick and simple process. I was able to just 'rack and stack' it, as they say in the industry. After that, I worked with my ExaGrid support engineer to get it online and configured. The whole process only took two hours, which is impressive, especially compared to the

lengthy hardware installs I've experienced with other products in our data center," said Smitha.

'Spare-Tire Mode': Running a VM from a Backup

Smitha backs up the company's data in daily incremental backups and a weekly synthetic full. He finds that backing up data to the ExaGrid-Veeam solution is quick and efficient. "Our backup windows are short, between three to four hours each night. The ingest speed is much faster than other solutions I work with in the data center," he said.

ExaGrid writes backups directly to a disk landing zone – a high-speed disk cache on the ExaGrid appliance that retains the most recent backups in complete form – avoiding inline processing and ensuring the highest possible backup performance, which results in the shortest backup window. ExaGrid's Adaptive Deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups while providing full system resources to the backups for the shortest backup window.

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"Using Veeam to restore data from the ExaGrid system is so fast! I've actually had to use ExaGrid in 'spare-tire mode' where we ran a VM directly from a backup on the landing zone, from the ExaGrid system itself. ExaGrid's landing zone had been one of the features I was drawn to during the evaluation process, and it ended up being so useful when we needed it. We were able to figure out what caused the problem and restore the program in real time, so there was very minimal downtime for us at that point," said Smitha.

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. 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: A 'Solid Solution' with Expert Support

Smitha has found that he seldom needs to call ExaGrid support because the system is so reliable. "I've only needed to call ExaGrid support a few times in all the years that we've had an ExaGrid system, and mostly regarding firmware updates. I like that I've been able to speak with the same support engineer since the beginning, when our ExaGrid system was first installed."

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.

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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 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.

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.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides intelligent hyperconverged storage 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**.