

ExaGrid Proves to Be the Right Fit for Merit Brass

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Chris Michetti
System Administrator
Merit Brass

Key Benefits:

- Backup window cut in half, and backups don't spill over into the workday
- Restores are done in minutes
- increased confidence in ability to recover from a disaster
- Easy scalability accommodates future data growth
- 'Incredible' customer support

Customer Overview

Merit Brass is a leading manufacturer of stainless steel, brass, chrome-plated brass, and aluminum pipe nipples. Merit Brass also manufactures special nipples in various lengths and types of machined ends. In addition, Merit Brass offers a complete package of stainless steel pipe, tubing, fittings, outlets, thread tape, flanges and valves as well as the nation's largest, most comprehensive inventory of both leaded & lead-free cast brass fittings, flanges and pipe. The company is located in Cleveland, Ohio.

Need for Faster Restores, Backups and Better Disaster Recovery

The IT staff at Merit Brass had grown frustrated with time-consuming restore processes and long backups to tape. Finally, with a new IT project looming that promised to add even more data to the firm's overloaded infrastructure, they decided the time was right to look for a new solution.

"Restoring a single file used to take a minimum of 45 minutes from tape, and large files could take hours. Disaster recovery was obviously a big concern because we realized it could take days to get our data off tape. We also worried that older tapes would deteriorate to the point where the data could be inaccessible," said Chris Michetti, system administrator for Merit Brass. "The other issue we had was long backup times. Our backups were running ten hours a night, and we were in the process of changing ERP systems, which was going to add even more backup data and extend our backup times from ten to fifteen hours a night."

GRID Architecture Delivers Easy Scalability and Disaster Recovery Options, Faster Restores

Merit Brass chose the ExaGrid system after briefly looking at several different solutions including Dell AppAssure.

"We really wanted an appliance for ease of use but many of the 'solutions' we looked at

were really servers that required software and integration. We liked the ExaGrid system because it was purpose-built for backup, and its GRID architecture will enable us to add appliances for increased capacity and performance at any time," Michetti said.

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, so when the system needs to expand, additional appliances are attached to the GRID, bringing with them not only additional disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows. In addition, as new ExaGrid appliances are added to the GRID, the ExaGrid automatically load balances available capacity, maintaining a virtual pool of storage that is shared across the GRID.

Merit Brass installed an ExaGrid system in its main datacenter and uses it in conjunction with a pair of backup applications, Symantec Backup Exec for its physical servers and Veeam Backup & Replication for virtual machines. The system is currently also backed up to tape from the ExaGrid appliance once the initial ExaGrid backups complete.

"Improving disaster recovery was one of our goals in looking for a new backup solution. With the ExaGrid system, we can choose to install a second system offsite to replicate data between the two sites," Michetti said. "We're considering doing just that in the near future to improve our ability to recover from a disaster and eliminate tape."



Restores Completed in Minutes, Backup Times Cut in Half

Michetti said that restoring data is far faster and less complex than it was with tape, and the firm is able to retain plenty of data on the system thanks to ExaGrid's data deduplication. "Now, we can restore files in minutes from the ExaGrid with just a few keystrokes," he said. "We have instant access to plenty of retention, and ExaGrid's data deduplication has worked wonders for us. We're currently storing 32TB of data on the system in under 2TB of disk space with a data deduplication ratio of 18:1."

ExaGrid's data deduplication ensures efficient data reduction while delivering fast backup times. Prior to installing the ExaGrid system, Merit Brass's backups were running nearly ten hours per night. Now, nightly backup jobs are completed in five hours and no longer threaten to spill over into the workday.

Proactive Customer Support Helps Keep System Running Smoothly

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 dedicated to individual accounts. The system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

"I can't say enough about ExaGrid's customer support. Our support engineer is experienced, knowledgeable, and easy to reach," Michetti said. "The best part is that he monitors our system remotely, and in fact he's contacted us three or four times in the past year to let us know that a system update is available. Then, he schedules and performs the update remotely. Support has been incredible!"

Michetti said that installing the ExaGrid system has eliminated Merit Brass's backup issues.

"The ExaGrid system has more than lived up to our expectations. Our backup times have been cut in half and we're far more confident in our ability to restore files on a daily

About ExaGrid Systems, Inc.

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.

basis and in our ability to recover from a disaster. We're also perfectly positioned in terms of growth because ExaGrid's GRID architecture will enable us to easily scale in the future," he said.

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.

ExaGrid and Symantec Backup Exec

Symantec Backup Exec is the gold standard in Windows data recovery, providing cost-effective, high-performance, and certified disk-to-disk-to-tape backup and recovery—including continuous data protection for Microsoft Exchange, SQL, file servers, and workstations. It also supports single-drive libraries, encryption, and disaster recovery. High-performance agents and options provide fast, flexible, granular protection and recovery, and scalable management of local and remote server backups.

Organizations using Symantec Backup Exec can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Symantec Backup Exec, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Symantec Backup Exec, using ExaGrid in place of a tape backup system is as easy as pointing existing backup jobs at a NAS share on the ExaGrid system. Backup jobs are sent directly from the backup application to the ExaGrid for onsite backup to disk.