

Architecture Firm Chooses Veeam and ExaGrid, Reduces Backup Window from 108 to 36 Hours

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Pat Stammer
Systems Administrator
Solomon Cordwell Buenz

Key Benefits:

- Veeam synthetic fulls occur on the ExaGrid, eliminating the need to move data between the Veeam backup server and backup storage, shortening backup window
- Restores, and recoveries complete faster with Veeam and ExaGrid - in seconds to minutes
- Easy scalability provides increased capacity and performance as needed

Customer Overview

Solomon Cordwell Buenz (SCB) is an award-winning architecture, interior design, and planning firm with offices in Chicago and San Francisco. SCB has extensive commercial and institutional design experience in multi-family residential, hospitality, retail, corporate office, higher education, laboratory, and transportation facilities.

Need for Backup Solution Designed for Virtualized Environments Led to Veeam

The IT team at SCB needed to revisit the company's backup strategy after a virtualization initiative led to rapid data growth. The firm has nearly 14TB of backup data that consists mainly of AutoCAD, PDF, general office files, and assorted databases. The SCB IT team had been backing up to tape but found they needed a solution that was optimized for virtualized environments and would reduce backup times.

"Our old tape solution and backup application weren't designed for virtualized environments, and our weekly backups were running from Friday nights to Wednesday mornings, so we really needed to reign in our backup times," said Pat Stammer, systems administrator at SCB. "We needed a new solution to more efficiently back up our environment."

The firm contacted its trusted reseller, who recommended that the team evaluate several different approaches. SCB decided on Veeam® Backup & Replication™ because it was designed specifically for virtual environments along with a two-site ExaGrid system due to the high level of integration between the two products and the efficiencies of their data deduplication and scalability.

Stammer said that SCB did a thorough analysis of various backup applications before choosing Veeam.

"Our reseller spent a lot of time going over the pros and cons of different approaches, but Veeam was the clear choice for our virtual environment. We loved Veeam's ease of use and easy restores, and the fact that it works so seamlessly with the ExaGrid system," he said.

"We liked how effective ExaGrid's data deduplication was at reducing data, and were impressed with the sheer amount of usable storage space available on the system," said Stammer. "We also felt the ExaGrid system would deliver faster backup times than some of its competitors because it sends backups directly to a landing zone and deduplication occurs in parallel."

SCB installed an ExaGrid system in its Chicago and San Francisco offices and replicates data from San Francisco to Chicago each night for disaster recovery. Data from Chicago is backed up to tape but will eventually be replicated back to San Francisco once the ExaGrid system is expanded.

Full Backup Times Reduced From 108 Hours to 36 Hours, Deduplication Reduces Data to Maximize Disk Space

Stammer said that prior to installing the ExaGrid system, weekly full backups would run from Friday night at 7:00 p.m. to Wednesday morning. Initially, active full backups to the ExaGrid system would run approximately 60 hours but now run 36 hours after implementing the ExaGrid-Veeam Accelerated Data Mover.



“We saw a huge improvement in our backup times when we switched over to the Veeam-ExaGrid solution, but when we started using the Data Mover, we gained even better results,” said Stammer.

The ExaGrid-Veeam Accelerated Data Mover, which is integrated with all ExaGrid appliances, allows all Veeam backups, restores, and recoveries to complete faster. The Veeam backup server more efficiently interoperates with its own Veeam Data Mover using optimized Veeam communications versus the Common Internet File System (CIFS). In addition, the entire synthetic full backup operation occurs on the ExaGrid appliance, eliminating the need to move data between the Veeam backup server and backup storage, which greatly reduces the time to complete a synthetic full backup.

Data is initially deduplicated using Veeam, and then deduplicated again when it lands on the ExaGrid system to maximize disk space.

ExaGrid ensures the fastest possible backup window using its adaptive deduplication, which performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups in order to provide full system resources to the backups. 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 unduplicated form for Veeam’s fast file-level restores, Instant VM Recovery™ and tape copies while the offsite data is ready for disaster recovery.

Simple, Easy-to-Maintain Environment

Stammer said that the ExaGrid system is very intuitive and has a simple interface that makes management quite simple. “ExaGrid’s user interface is streamlined and easy to use. I like that there aren’t a million different configuration screens to go through to customize things the way I want to,” he said. 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.

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.

“We absolutely love ExaGrid’s customer support model, and our engineer has been nothing short of awesome. The engineer assigned to our account knows the system inside and out, knows us, and is incredibly responsive. If we have an issue or concern, he remotes in and can diagnose and resolve the problem quickly and easily,” said Stammer.

Scalability to Grow

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.

“One of the other key reasons we picked the ExaGrid system is its scalability. When we need to expand the system, it’s a ‘plug-and-play’ process, where we can easily add appliances to increase performance and capacity,” said Stammer.

Veeam and ExaGrid

The combination of Veeam and ExaGrid was the right choice for SCB, Stammer said. “Veeam and ExaGrid work together seamlessly and provide all the functionality needed to deliver fast, stress-free backups as simply as possible,” he said. The combination of Veeam’s and ExaGrid’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 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.