

Spirit Air Meets SOX Requirements with ExaGrid's Automated Offsite Data Replication and DR

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



"ExaGrid [...] gave us the offsite backup capability that we needed for SOX compliance. ExaGrid allows us to manage our retention offsite as well, and we're able to keep the amount of retention that's required by our legal team."

Yudesh Gosine
Sr. Systems Administrator

Customer Overview

Spirit Airlines (NASDAQ: SAVE) is committed to offering the lowest total price to its destinations, on average much lower than other airlines. Spirit Air starts off with an unbundled, stripped-down Bare Fare™. Then passengers get Frill Control™ which allows them to pay only for the options they choose - like bags, seat assignments, and refreshments - the things other airlines bake right into their ticket prices. Spirit helps people save money and travel more often, create new jobs, and stimulate business growth in the communities it serves. With Spirit's Fit Fleet™, the youngest fleet of any major U.S. airline, Spirit operates more than 400 daily flights to 59 destinations in the U.S., Latin America, and the Caribbean.

When 'the Same Old Way' Doesn't Cut It Anymore

Spirit Airlines had been doing backup the same old way for close to ten years without any change in sight. "We were using Veritas Backup Exec and DAT tapes of different sizes, and we had a tape loader from Dell. It was a very manual process," said Yudesh Gosine, senior systems administrator at Spirit Airlines. "Just in the one primary site datacenter that I oversee, I cycled out tapes daily for every job, and once a week, I cycled out 50 to 60 tapes which would get picked up and taken to a third-party storage facility. In addition to being a painstaking process, the reliability of our backups was also in question because with Backup Exec, if tapes were rejected or servers failed, I'd end up with poor reliability of backup continuity."

When Gosine on-boarded and Spirit implemented VMware, he decided to leverage Veeam Backup & Replication as Spirit's primary backup application and move away from Backup Exec. "We needed a storage device that did data deduplication, and ExaGrid was the perfect fit for us - we were able to seamlessly integrate ExaGrid into our virtual infrastructure and leverage Veeam to back up to ExaGrid."

Gosine reports an immediate impact on the reliability of Spirit's backups when he started using Veeam with ExaGrid. "It alleviated the need to manually manage tapes and continually juggle them every week. The ExaGrid 'DR Share' capability allowed us to automatically replicate all of our backup data to our offsite data center



and gave us the offsite backup capability that we needed for SOX compliance. ExaGrid allows us to manage our retention offsite as well, and we're able to keep the amount of retention that's required by our legal team.

"For us, making the change to ExaGrid and Veeam was a huge gain - a big time-saver - and we're very happy with the solution," Gosine said.

Multi-Site Cross-Protection

Currently, Spirit has its Terremark facility in Miami, Florida; its main office, or system support center (SSC); and its co-location.

At Spirit's system support center (SSC) location, which is its primary location, the airline backs up all of its primary flight operations servers, which are the application servers for its operations control center (OCC). OCC is the facility that dispatches aircrafts and crew, and that's backed up using Veeam to ExaGrid. According

Key Benefits:

- Painstaking process and poor continuity of tape backups no longer a concern
- Restores that used to take hours - or sometimes even days - are now done in seconds
- Time spent managing backups reduced by up to 80% per week
- Customer support is 'guiding light' even for non-ExaGrid-related issues

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to Gosine, those are highly critical data and servers that they're backing up—leveraging the ExaGrid and replicating it offsite so that Spirit has all of the offsite DR capabilities.

"At the Terremark facility, Spirit backs up its Citrix infrastructure to support our airport operations and we're replicating all of these in Citrix infrastructure via Veeam and replicating it offsite, to Detroit as well from Terremark," he said.

The system allows Gosine to schedule multiple jobs at off hours, which basically triples the amount of jobs Gosine would previously have been able to run off to tape. "As far as restores, what used to take hours with tape we can now do in seconds," said Gosine.

Airline is 'Thrilled' with Huge Time Savings

Backup is taking much less of Gosine's time than it was when he was dealing with tape. "When I come into work each day, I review all of my jobs to make sure they all completed. I spend maybe ten minutes reviewing my backup logs as compared to three to five hours every week when I was managing physical tapes. This is a huge time-saver, and the company is just thrilled with it."

It used to take a few hours, or could take up to a few days, to do restores when Spirit was using tape, especially if it was an offsite request, reports Gosine. "If you're restoring data from ExaGrid, if the data is still in the landing zone, which is basically within the last three or four days of backups, you're able to recover a VM of 100GB, for example, within five minutes or so. Larger VMs will take maybe an hour. Other variables, of course, are things like network performance and how busy the ExaGrid is at that time, but typically it's night and day compared to tape!"

Instant VM Recovery for Flight Plan Manager

Gosine recalls a time that he had to recover one of Spirit's flight plan managers (FPMs), which is its Dispatch Flight Manager planning software. "We had to recover one of the interface servers, and we were able to simply take the current server offline and go back to Veeam to run a restore job for the previous night's backup on that server. Within five to seven minutes, that VM was replaced by the backup that was stored on the ExaGrid, and the VM was up and running just as it was the day prior, without issues. We had no other configurations to make – all of the IP addresses, host names, everything was identical. The old VM was automatically overwritten by the restore process, and that was it!"

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.

Reliable Business Continuity Means No Backup Worries

The security that the multi-faceted ExaGrid system provides has made a real difference to Gosine and his work at Spirit. "Having disk-based backup data and offsite replication, knowing that we have retention capability, and we have data for business continuity, is very important. Couple that with greater reliability and speed of backups, it's saved me literally days of running into the data center every week – I'd say ExaGrid saves me close to six or seven hours, which equals almost a full day's work every week dealing with physical tapes.

"It's meant a lot to me – saves me time, saves me stress. And the greater reliability and seamless backups make our restore capability that much better."

Customer Support Is a 'Guiding Light'

ExaGrid's customer support is renowned as being exemplary, and Gosine's experience has been nothing short of that. "My support rep is awesome. If I have an issue, she jumps right in and takes care of it, no matter what it is. She's extremely knowledgeable and is able to always be our guiding light to get even non-ExaGrid-related problems resolved. I can't say enough good things about the support that ExaGrid provides. It's really such a huge help for me as well as a time-saver. At eye-level, that's what ExaGrid has meant to Spirit Airlines," said Gosine.

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.

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