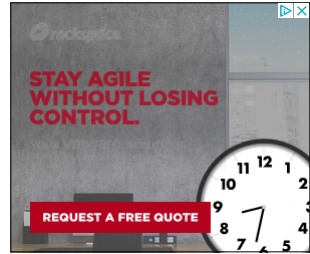


## HOW TO RECOVER VMWARE ESXI ROOT PASSWORD ?

VMWARE ESXi 5

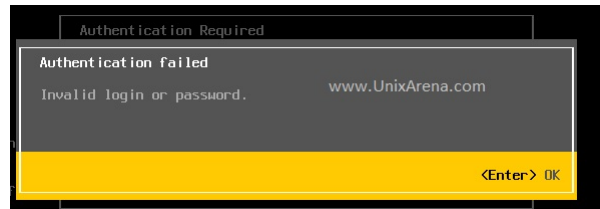


We should not lose the superuser account on any operating system especially on VMware ESXi. There may be a chance of losing root password due to system administrator carelessness or defective keyboard. If you forgot root password of ESXi host, then there is no way to recover it. VMware does not provide utility or methods to recover the original root password of an ESX/ESXi host. If you try with some other method, it may lead to the host failure or unsupported configuration due to complex architecture of ESXi as per VMware KB. However, I have reset the VMware ESXi root password using booting from Linux DVD.

Before reinstalling ESXi, you can just try this method as a last option since you are nothing to lose.

VMware ESXi Version : 5.5

Here you can see, I am not able to login to ESXi host.



*VMware Esxi root login failed.*

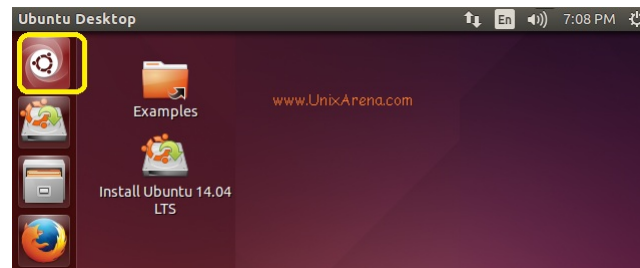
In order to recover the root password, you need Ubuntu Desktop operating system DVD.

1. Halt the VMware ESXi server from console (Hardware console whatever you have) since we can't login to ESXi host to shutdown the server by pressing F12.
2. Boot the server from Ubuntu Desktop DVD. Here I am using Ubuntu Desktop 14.04 (Latest Version) since it will work as Live CD.
3. Once the Ubuntu is boot up, it will ask two options. You just select "Try Ubuntu". We don't want to install it.



*Just Try Ubuntu*

4. From the Ubuntu desktop, Click on the search icon and search for terminal .



*Ubuntu Desktop – Search*

Here you go. Double click the terminal icon.



*Search for Terminal*

5. In terminal , just gain root access by using sudo command. Use fdisk command to list the available disks.

```

root@ubuntu: ~
ubuntu@ubuntu:~$ sudo su -
root@ubuntu:~# id
uid=0(root) gid=0(root) groups=0(root)
root@ubuntu:~# fdisk -l
WARNING: GPT (GUID Partition Table) detected on '/dev/sda'! The util fdisk
't support GPT. Use GNU Parted.
Disk /dev/sda: 10.7 GB, 10737418240 bytes
255 heads, 63 sectors/track, 1305 cylinders, total 20971520 sectors
Units = sectors of 1 * 512 = 512 bytes
Sector size (logical/physical): 512 bytes / 512 bytes
I/O size (minimum/optimal): 512 bytes / 512 bytes
Disk identifier: 0x0007d456

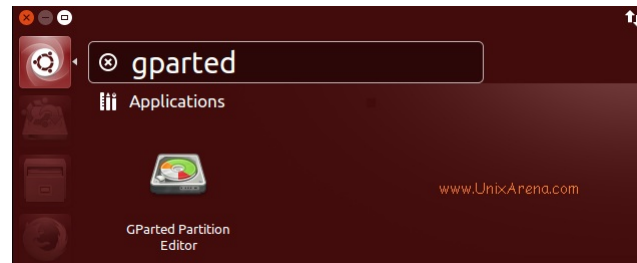
   Device Boot      Start         End      Blocks   Id  System
/dev/sda1             1       20971519     10485759+   ee    GPT

WARNING: GPT (GUID Partition Table) detected on '/dev/sdb'! The util fdisk
't support GPT. Use GNU Parted.
Disk /dev/sdb: 42.9 GB, 42949672960 bytes
255 heads, 63 sectors/track, 5221 cylinders, total 83886080 sectors
Units = sectors of 1 * 512 = 512 bytes

```

VMware ESXi root disk

6. Normally /dev/sda will be the root disk of VMware ESXi. As per the above screenshot, sda is having GPT partition and it's not supported in fdisk. Let me try from Gparted utility.



Search gparted and open it

Gparted screen will look something like below one.

GParted Edit View Device Partition Help						
/dev/sda (10.00 GB)						
<div> <div>/dev/sda9 2.50 GiB</div> <div>/dev/sda2 4.00 GiB</div> <div>/dev/sda3 2.62 GiB</div> </div>						
Partition	File System	Label	Size	Used	Unused	Flag
/dev/sda1	fat16	ESXi	3.97 MiB	496.00 KiB	3.48 MiB	boot
/dev/sda5	fat16		249.98 MiB	157.29 MiB	92.70 MiB	msftdata
/dev/sda6	fat16		249.98 MiB	276.00 KiB	249.71 MiB	msftdata
/dev/sda7	unknown		109.98 MiB	—	—	
/dev/sda8	fat16		285.98 MiB	191.43 MiB	94.55 MiB	msftdata
/dev/sda9	unknown		2.50 GiB	—	—	
/dev/sda2	fat16		4.00 GiB	8.38 MiB	3.99 GiB	msftdata
/dev/sda3	unknown		2.62 GiB	—	—	

Gparted - /dev/sda

7. You need to mount /dev/sda5 to recover the VMware ESXi password. You need to identify in terms of size and flag. Once you have mounted, you can see files like the below screen shot.

```

root@ubuntu: /mnt
root@ubuntu:~# clear

root@ubuntu:~# mount /dev/sda5 /mnt
root@ubuntu:~# cd /mnt
root@ubuntu:/mnt# ls -lrt
total 160796
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 375027 Nov 28 22:27 user.b00
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 44304 Nov 28 22:27 tboot.b00
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 3186239 Nov 28 22:27 k.b00
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 20357 Nov 28 22:27 chardevs.b00
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 71713 Nov 28 22:27 b.b00
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 11225 Nov 28 22:27 a.b00
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 56050264 Nov 28 22:29 sb.v00
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 90292221 Nov 28 22:31 s.v00
Mount /dev/sda5

```

8.Copy the file "state.tgz" to /tmp . Then untar the state.tgz which will create file called local.tgz.

```

root@ubuntu: /tmp
root@ubuntu:/tmp# cd /mnt
root@ubuntu:/mnt# cp state.tgz /tmp
root@ubuntu:/mnt# cd /tmp
root@ubuntu:/tmp# ls -lrt
total 12
-rw-rw-r-- 1 ubuntu ubuntu 0 May 1 19:22 unity_support_test.1
drwx----- 2 ubuntu ubuntu 60 May 1 19:22 ssh-tPyXfFYqWJiZ
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 12202 May 1 19:38 state.tgz
root@ubuntu:/tmp# ls -lrt
total 12
-rw-rw-r-- 1 ubuntu ubuntu 0 May 1 19:22 unity_support_test.1
drwx----- 2 ubuntu ubuntu 60 May 1 19:22 ssh-tPyXfFYqWJiZ
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 12202 May 1 19:38 state.tgz
root@ubuntu:/tmp# tar xzf state.tgz
tar: local.tgz: time stamp 2014-05-01 23:41:28 is 14529.431185279 s in the
e
root@ubuntu:/tmp# ls -lrt
total 24
-rw-rw-r-- 1 ubuntu ubuntu 0 May 1 19:22 unity_support_test.1
drwx----- 2 ubuntu ubuntu 60 May 1 19:22 ssh-tPyXfFYqWJiZ
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 12202 May 1 19:38 state.tgz
-rwx----- 1 root root 12051 May 1 2014 local.tgz
untar the state.tgz file

```

9.untar the local.tgz file and it will create a directory called "etc".

```

root@ubuntu: /tmp
root@ubuntu:/tmp# tar -xzf local.tgz
tar: etc/vmware/.backup.counter: time stamp 2014-05-01 23:41:28 is 14497.6
8 s in the future
tar: etc/vmware/esx.conf: time stamp 2014-05-01 23:40:58 is 14467.69605203
the future
tar: etc/vmware/dvsdata.db: time stamp 2014-05-01 23:36:48 is 14217.695982
in the future
tar: etc/vmware/license.cfg: time stamp 2014-05-01 23:37:08 is 14237.69591
in the future
tar: etc/random-seed: time stamp 2014-05-01 23:40:26 is 14435.695209576 s
future
root@ubuntu:/tmp# ls -lrt
total 24
-rw-rw-r-- 1 ubuntu ubuntu 0 May 1 19:22 unity_support_test.1
drwx----- 2 ubuntu ubuntu 60 May 1 19:22 ssh-tPyXfFYqWJiZ
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 12202 May 1 19:38 state.tgz
drwxr-xr-x 7 root root 300 May 1 19:39 etc
-rwx----- 1 root root 12051 May 1 2014 local.tgz
root@ubuntu:/tmp#
untar the local.tgz file

```

10.Go to the "etc" directory and edit the file called "shadow" using vi editor. You need to remove the strings between first colon to second colon.(which will be encrypted password).

```

root@ubuntu: /tmp/etc
root@ubuntu: /tmp# cd etc
root@ubuntu: /tmp/etc# ls
chkconfig.db      keymap      security    ssh          vmware
dhclient-vmk0.leases  random-seed sfcbl       vmsyslog.conf
hosts             resolv.conf shadow       vmsyslog.conf.d
root@ubuntu: /tmp/etc# cat shadow |grep root
root:$6$khcYgohH$jfHjYXNkLU00KqK9SLTXPgEAzdGikBzenyxxazZpe8Bz2g/aMtpb11q.
jqdoqqp1HALTuYjDx4LDZV.:13358:0:99999:7:::
root@ubuntu: /tmp/etc# vi shadow
root@ubuntu: /tmp/etc# cat shadow |grep root
root::13358:0:99999:7:::
root@ubuntu: /tmp/etc#

```

*clear the root password of VMware ESXi*

11. Here i am updating the "etc" to local.tgz and local.tgz to state.tgz. After updating the tar files, i am copying the updated state.tgz file to /mnt where we have mounted the VMware ESXi root.

```

root@ubuntu: /tmp
root@ubuntu: /tmp/etc# cd ..
root@ubuntu: /tmp# tar -czf local.tgz etc
root@ubuntu: /tmp# ls -lrt local.tgz
-rwx----- 1 root root 12534 May 1 19:50 local.tgz
root@ubuntu: /tmp# date
Thu May 1 19:50:26 UTC 2014
root@ubuntu: /tmp# tar -czf state.tgz local.tgz
root@ubuntu: /tmp# ls -lrt state.tgz
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 12691 May 1 19:51 state.tgz
root@ubuntu: /tmp# date
Thu May 1 19:51:17 UTC 2014
root@ubuntu: /tmp# cp state.tgz /mnt/
root@ubuntu: /tmp#

```

*copy the updated tgz file to ESXi root FS*

12. Unmount the /mnt and reboot it. Please make sure that you need to remove the "ubuntu Desktop" DVD from the server. So that it can boot from local hard disk.

```

root@ubuntu: /tmp
root@ubuntu: /tmp# umount /mnt
root@ubuntu: /tmp# reboot

```

*umount & reboot the ubuntu*

13. Once the VMware ESXi 5.5 is boot up, just login as root without password.

```

VMware ESXi 5.5.0 (VMKernel Release Build 1331820)
VMware, Inc. VMware Virtual Platform
Intel(R) Core(TM)2 Duo CPU E6550 @ 2.33GHz
2 GIB Memory

Authentication Required
Enter an authorized login name and password for localhost..

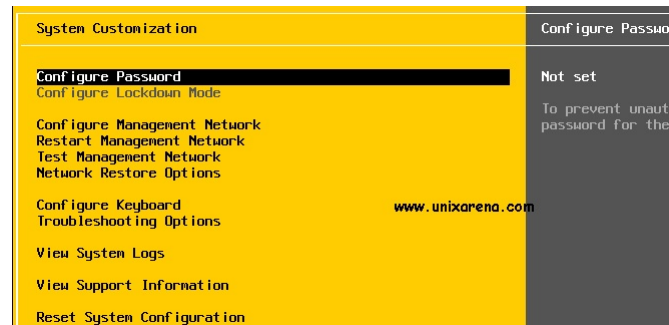
Configured Keyboard (US Default)
Login Name: [ root ]
Password: [ _ ]

<Enter> OK <Esc> Cancel

```

*Login to VMware Esxi*

14. Please make sure that you are setting new root password and store it confidentially. Do not lose it again.



*Change password of VMware Esxi*

We have successfully reset/recover the root password of VMware ESXi 5.5 host.

**Note:** VMware is not responsible if you lose something after the root password reset by following above method. I didn't face any issue after following this method. It may differ to other environment. 😊

Check out below article's as well

How to create iSCSI Datastore using iSCSI LUNS

VMware ESXi & vCenter License Keys

Configure VNC for VMware virtual Machine Console. (vCenter doesn't require to access VM's console)

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