

How MySammy Helps Increase Employee Productivity

CASE STUDY

Overview of MySammy

MySammy is a software company that provides businesses, managers and HR departments with a software solution that allows employers to measure employees' productivity without invading their privacy. This software provides detailed information presented in charts and graphics that enables managers to quantify employee performance. The company, which was launched in 2011, is based in Walnut, California.

Problem

Edward Kwang, President and CEO of MySammy, was approached by an employee who was interested in telecommuting from home to avoid a nearly 3-hour commute on busy Southern California highways. Although she was a trusted and valuable MySammy employee, Mr. Kwang was reluctant to allow her to telecommute, knowing that many people who work from home become complacent and their productivity subsequently suffers. Initially, he agreed to allow the employee to work from home one day a week before a measurement tool can be found, but he was concerned about how he would monitor her productivity from a remote location.

“ *I needed a way to measure her productivity while she was working at home.* ”

“I didn't want to lose my employee,” says Mr. Kwang. “So I needed a way to measure her productivity while she was working at home. When I searched for software that could provide this type of productivity measurement, I was surprised to find that no such solution existed in the market.”

MY SAMMY
The Productivity Measurement Solution

There were other options available, including monitoring software—also called “spyware” because of the invasive nature of the tool—and various

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Internet blocking software packages, but none of these presented a true solution to the problem. Mr. Kwang didn't want to block Internet access for his employees since research shows that telecommuters frequently have two computers active at home, one for work and one for personal. Blocking or spying software only discouraged employees from doing certain actions. Mr. Kwang wanted a solution to measure what they did versus what they weren't supposed to do. Without originally intending to do so, Mr. Kwang had identified the need for a software tool that would allow business owners and managers to measure their employees' activity—a tool that would be particularly useful for businesses that employ telecommuters.

Problem

"In the initial stages of developing the **MySammy Productivity Measurement Solution**, we used the basic concept behind a terminal server—where 'idle' and 'active' modes indicate whether or not an employee is actively working on the computer," says Mr. Kwang.

Using the terminal server concept, MySammy software was developed to measure five different categories of computer use:

- 1 "Active," which means the employee has been using the computer within the last 60 seconds;
- 2 "Idle," which indicates that the computer has been idle for over 60 seconds;
- 3 "Extended Idle," which appears after 5 minutes of inactivity;
- 4 "Screen Saver" mode, which indicates that the employee's computer was in screensaver mode based on its desktop settings; and
- 5 "Non-productive," which indicates the employee was going to websites or using applications that's deemed to be non-productive by the manager.

These categories, combined with management’s periodic analysis of the websites employees visit and deciding whether they are productive or nonproductive, help to form a measurement of how much time the employee has spent in productive activity .



With regard to his telecommuting employee, Mr. Kwang compared other employees in similar position and initially established a somewhat challenging but achievable goal of 80 percent active productive time. In other words, if she could actively spend 80 percent of her time engaged in productive work, she would meet the goal, and if she met that goal she would be allowed to telecommute three days per week instead of just one day per week. In a very short period of time, the employee met the 80 percent goal.

Mr. Kwang then established an even more challenging goal of 85 percent. Once again, the employee met the goal, and Mr. Kwang rewarded her by allowing her to work from home four days a week. During the course of evaluating his employee’s work habits, Mr. Kwang noted that there were times when the employee would work nights and weekends in order to meet her 85 percent goal. “I was definitely motivated to meet my goals so I could work more at home. But after a certain amount of time, I also enjoyed

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meeting the goals just because of the challenge involved," says Mr. Kwang's employee.

MySammy software succeeded in providing a measurement of the telecommuting employee's productivity, but it also motivated her to increase her productivity on her own.

Implementation & Training

MySammy software, which presents information in a graphical format, can be easily implemented by companies of any size. Says Weina Hwei, MySammy Human Resource Manager, "MySammy is much easier to use than other software programs. In fact, I would say that it won't take any longer than 20 minutes or so to learn the program." Ms. Hwei also found a surprising benefit to using MySammy: "The software can export data to an Excel spreadsheet and produce reports automatically, so it cuts down on the time I would have to spend doing that. MySammy makes my job easier."



MySammy makes my job easier.

Benefits of MySammy

In addition to providing information regarding the productivity of telecommuters, MySammy also provides business owners and managers with quantifiable performance measurements. Rather than simply blocking websites or "spying" on the Internet activities of employees, MySammy software takes a different approach to the issue of employee productivity. "We looked at other solutions," says Mr. Kwang. "But we didn't want to invade our employees' privacy. They [other software on the market] approach it from a monitoring direction, while we approach it from a management direction."

The software can be a valuable tool in preparing employee performance reviews. By establishing a performance baseline for employees, management can more clearly define what is expected from each employee. While it's obvious that different employees have different levels of computer productivity because of their different responsibilities,

management can use the data from employees in similar positions and set a reasonable performance standard. That standard can then be used as a measurement in preparing employee performance reviews. Once employees meet the standard, managers can challenge employees for an even higher standard by raising the bar.

While the MySammy 1.0 release provided a valuable and innovative tool for management, there was still some fine tuning to do. With the first version, only management personnel were able to view the productivity reports. Because the employees were unable to see their progress from one week to the next, they sometimes were surprised that they did not meet the expected performance standard. Since employees do not want to lose their privilege associated with the expected performance standard, they often requested that certain exceptions be made in order for them to meet their goals. In the MySammy 2.0 release, that situation has been resolved. Each employee now has access to the data, so they know ahead of time when they need to make up time in order to meet their goals.

Mr. Kwang's summary of the benefits of MySammy says it best: "We designed the software to be a quantifiable performance measurement tool. We want MySammy to be a management solution."

 *We want MySammy to be a management solution.*

About MySammy

MySammy is a software company that provides enterprises, HR departments and managers of telecommuters with a feature-rich, results-oriented "productivity measurement" software solution that enables employers and managers to graphically view detailed information on how an employee's time is spent on a computer. The solution provides quantifiable time accountability measurement and collects only the data needed for effective management evaluation of "productive time" and avoids depriving users of their privacy.

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