

+ Initiative

Initiative is a performance-led media communications company that transforms media exchanges into marketing results through a commitment to performance. The firm's strategically placed 89 offices in 71 countries allow them to service their clients effectively in an increasingly global world.

Connecting an Organization to Create Spontaneous Value

Initiative used SharePoint 2007 to build its corporate intranet but never saw significant engagement with the tool. Seeking a better collaboration solution, Initiative identified Yammer in early 2011 as a tool that would allow employees to collaborate through multiple channels with a low barrier to entry. With Yammer, Initiative has become a more collaborative and efficient company through the serendipitous connections that occur on Yammer every day. Experts are connected, employees save time, and Initiative gains spontaneous business value.

Industry

Professional Services

Employees

2,500

Founded

1975

Region

North America

An Inactive Corporate Intranet

Before exploring the possibilities of enterprise social networking, Initiative's collaboration suite consisted of their corporate intranet built on SharePoint 2007. After a significant amount of customization, SharePoint's core functionality was slightly harder to access through the intranet, and the tool never saw large adoption from employees. While SharePoint 2007 works well for predefined teams working on specific projects, it didn't allow the spontaneous innovation and value created through unknown teams doing ad hoc work together. Initiative's SVP and Chief Technology Catalyst Lawrence De Voe first heard about Yammer in early 2011 and saw huge potential for connecting previously disjointed parts of the business and creating spontaneous business value. Within a few months, Initiative upgraded to Yammer's Premium service in order to gain administrative control of the network, embed Yammer into Initiative's existing business systems, and integrate international employees that have traditionally had limited access to Initiative's collaboration resources.

Executive Mobile Connectivity

Initiative executives spend a large portion of their time on the road visiting with clients and partners. Because the executives are such a mobile group, the ability to connect with their coworkers while away from the office is critical. They've found Yammer's iOS

applications to be the ideal solution for mobile connectivity, regularly sharing updates via Yammer's iPhone and iPad apps. An added benefit of the iOS applications is allowing executives to switch between Yammer networks with the touch of a button, making it easy to switch into an external network with customers or partners within seconds.

Lawrence De Voe notes, "Initiative executives love Yammer's iPad app. Executives are on the road over half the time, so having a tool that lets us keep a pulse on what's happening on the ground floor of the business is incredibly valuable."

Connecting Experts for Spontaneous Value

Employees share relevant articles, post updates about clients, ask questions, and share presentations. Because of the increased knowledge flow across the business, Initiative regularly sees business value come from the spontaneous and serendipitous connections that couldn't have been planned. For example, a business development employee posted about his progress in pitching to a large, multinational firm. Within hours, he got a response from an advertising professional in a different business market who had worked with the prospective client in the past. Good friends with the prospective client, the advertising professional offered to help close the deal, leading to a signed contract later that day. This connection wouldn't have occurred without Yammer, as the two professionals work in different business markets and in different departments.

In Germany, an executive posted a question about a specific social media toolset he was not familiar with to respond to a client's question. Within ten minutes, a person from the US replied, @mentioning another colleague from Mexico who had worked with that specific social media toolset with another client. The @mentioned person replied, "Let me give you a call and I'll tell you about it," closing the loop for the German executive within 20 minutes.

Executive Vision into the Business

Initiative executives have a direct line to the ground floor of the business through Yammer. Particularly with constant access through mobile clients, executives can check in on the daily employee buzz and participate in the conversation. Because executives engage on Yammer regularly, employees feel their opinions are heard and that executives genuinely care about engaging with all levels of the business.

Integrating 20% More Employees

With Yammer's premium tools, Initiative has incorporated over 60 email domains into its global Yammer network. With many partners across the globe, the company has been able to provide a place to collaborate under one roof.

Initiative's traditional intranet, which only allows access for Active Directory authenticated



Lawrence De Voe
SVP and Chief
Technology Catalyst
Initiative

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As soon as you start exposing the underlying knowledge of your whole network, you start seeing connections made that translate to huge value for the business. Yammer has an incredible value to cost ratio.

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users, was unable to support the business need for more flexible engagement models that allowed employees, partners, and clients to collaborate together in a secure, shared environment. Using Yammer, Initiative has created a single extended collaboration ecosystem to streamline processes and make sure that everyone is on the same page all the time. Yammer Premium has allowed Initiative to merge users from multiple mail domains and create secure and managed external networks with clients and partners where internal users are authenticated through Active Directory and external partners can authenticate without AD.

Product Spotlight: Twitter Integration

A big part of life as a media professional is thought leadership, demonstrating that you're on the cutting edge and on to what's next. Many Initiative employees are prolific tweeters, sharing industry news and thoughts on the state of advertising in today's digital world. While these employees are demonstrating thought leadership to the public, they're also stimulating important business conversations within Initiative by using the #Yam Twitter integration. When a publicly shared article is brought into Yammer, Initiative employees have a forum to discuss the content in a private setting internal to the company.

THE RESULTS

- **A better bottom line.** Field reps close deals faster because of the information they can access via Yammer while on the road.
- **Greater visibility and communication.** Initiative benefits from better engagement across all levels of business, from senior executives to front line teams.
- **Quicker answers and insights.** Employees can connect to experts in a matter of minutes, making the whole company more efficient.



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Executives get to see conversations that either wouldn't have gone on at all, would've gone on in private emails, or would've gone on in face-to-face conversations and not been captured anywhere. Yammer allows a huge flow of information upward.

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ABOUT YAMMER

Yammer (<https://about.yammer.com>) is a best-in-class Enterprise Social Network (ESN) used by more than 500,000 organizations worldwide – including approximately 85 percent of the Fortune 500 – to connect and communicate. Yammer brings together employees, content, conversations, and business data in a single location. Founded in 2008, Yammer was acquired by Microsoft and is available with Office 365, to deliver a comprehensive, seamless social experience across the applications people already use.

For more information about Initiative: www.initiative.com

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