

# Skype as a business tool – a swot analysis

Business



Skype as a Business Tool for Mudskipper Business Limited Name: Lauralynn (Elle) Pearson Module: The Business Environment Tutor: Steve Tidball

Submission Date: 16 Jan 2012 Academic Integrity Statement: I have read and understood the Academic Integrity guidelines for Kaplan Open Learning and the University Of Essex, and declare that this assignment conforms to all of the rules and regulations contained therein. Please note: the guidelines can be found in the Student Handbook (see section 6. ) Introduction Skype is a new technology that has potential to influence how Mudskipper operates and affect productivity.

Specifically, how internal and external meetings are held. By using a SWOT analysis, this report aims to outline the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats using Skype as a new technology and how Mudskipper operates. For purposes of this report, the conferencing facility will be examined since it is the main means of communication internally and externally. What is Skype? Skype is a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) communication application using voice, video and instant messaging via the internet. Founded by Niklas Zennstrom and Janus Friis in 2003, Skype was originally designed for domestic use to save money making long distance phone calls to stay in touch with friends and family by either calling Skype to Skype or Skype to phone at substantially lower cost than traditional telephony. However, as popularity grew, Skype has been incorporated into the business world and widely recognised as a valuable business tool to increase productivity and save money.

Such uses include: \* Audio and video conferencing with capabilities to record meetings \* Real time, face to face collaboration internally as well as on a

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client level \* File sharing and transfer during meeting sessions \* Interviewing potential candidates reducing travel costs \* Ability to be used on

Smartphones and iPads

Who is Mudskipper Business Limited? Mudskipper is a rapidly growing medical communications agency with offices in Manchester, London, Shanghai and Chicago and is comprised of two main disciplines; the bioscience team engages in technical medical writing and commercial analysis of drugs while the strategies team focuses on the development and marketing of upcoming drugs and therapies for clients such as Novartis, AstraZenica and LeoPharma and covers a global arena. Both teams depend heavily on telecommunications between their Manchester and London offices as well as with clients in other European and American markets. Additionally, the management team is spread between all four offices, and are also heavily dependent on telecommunications for holding management meetings on a weekly basis. The need to find a solution to increase productivity for these teams has been discussed with regard to communication and budgetary considerations. SWOT Analysis Strengths:

Cost effective for meetings opposed to traditional telephony and BT Meet Me facilities \* Travel costs significantly reduced between Manchester and London \* Better communication within teams spread between all office locations \* Higher team morale leading to higher productivity from faster collaboration Skype's cost effective technology rivals other technologies such as BT Meet Me and Adobe Connect used for conferencing.

Mudskipper currently uses BT Meet Me and landlines to conduct meetings at a substantial cost. Additional costs for meetings include travel between the Manchester and London offices for training sessions, internal meetings and

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client conferences. The management team is spread across three continents and use these facilities as well. With the use of Skype, not only are costs of travel between the offices diminished if not eliminated, but with the video capacity team morale increases with 'face time' and real time collaboration by sharing ideas thereby increasing productivity. However, there are weaknesses that Mudskipper faces when considering Skype and its effect on productivity. Weaknesses: \* Failure of employee or management commitment \* Bandwidth issues due to a less than robust network

Introducing a new technology to not only the current staff, but convincing higher management to come on board is a challenge in any organisation.

In his book *Leading Change*, Kotter[1] (1996) sites that in a change management process the final phase includes a corporate culture of embracing change, especially to key management in the company. If the corporate culture does not change and people continue to use the current meeting facilities instead of Skype, there is the possibility of productivity staying at current levels. Another internal weakness is bandwidth issues that Mudskipper's IT department constantly face. If concurrent meetings are held, especially if there are large files being shared, this will cause a strain on the network and outages or significant slowing of email and intra/Internet speeds thus, slowing productivity. Next, external opportunities will be examined to help see how Mudskipper can benefit from the use of Skype and how the company operates. Opportunities: \* Mudskipper gains a better reputation as an agency thus, \* Acquiring new business \* More efficient methods of productivity discovered Mudskipper can utilise Skype as a means to make its

mark as a technology innovator and therefore from that utilisation, an agency that has an up-and -coming reputation that rivals its competition.

Pharmaceutical companies look for agencies that are able to respond quickly to changes and using Skype would be beneficial for real time client meetings. For example; instead of passing Power Point slides back and forth for editing or revising, a visual meeting would allow clients and prospective clients to show the teams at Mudskipper what it is they envision by making revisions and showing the team right then and there, on paper what they are looking for. By having ideas instantly shown and understood, Mudskipper can be in position to acquire new business by delivering quickly and accurately. Also, seeing how another company works can allow Mudskipper to discover new and innovative methods of productivity to incorporate within the working culture. However, there are some threats that Mudskipper faces when it comes to client communication. Threats: \* Other agencies unwilling or unable to use Skype in conjunction \* Security issues still are not one hundred percent resolved making third party hacking still possible \*Microsoft' s acquisition of Skype could alienate other technologies currently being used Not every agency is willing to use Skype for meetings and collaboration. Some reasons are that their organisation has banned its use or that the countries they are in have censorship laws governing the use of Skype. Other reasons have to do with the lingering security issues Skype has with hacking and the sensitive nature of the development of drugs and marketing. Research conducted by Le Blonde, Zhang, Legout, Ross and Dabbous (2011)[2] concluded that with basic hacking experience and modest equipment set up, it is possible to determine other Skype users IP

addresses and file sharing history. Conclusion: Using a SWOT analysis, it has been demonstrated that Skype is a business tool that can not only increase productivity for Mudskipper with its strengths and taking hold of opportunities, but is a simple and cost effective way to conduct meetings and improve how the company operates communicating with each other and more importantly, clients.

Difficulties still lie in addressing and tackling the internal weaknesses and external threats. However by doing so, Mudskipper has a greater opportunity in growing to be a leader in the medical communications industry.

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