

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR EMPLOYEE BENEFITS FIRMS WITH MYTOOLS

INTRODUCTION

MyTools is a simple product for users: an app and accompanying web site that provides information instantly on a smart phone, tablet, or personal computer. No more chasing down different benefit provider web sites or hunting for manuals stuffed in file folders. It makes life in HR easier and hopefully employees and their family members happier. And it's delivered at a simple cost per user per month.

This white paper addresses strategic considerations for benefit providers and isn't a description of MyTools and its feature set. To learn more about MyTools, readers should go to the website and view the product video or read other materials. This document is designed to explore the "so what's" for benefits providers and while some of the comments will include descriptions of benefits to HR departments, this is part of the value proposition and is strategic to benefits providers and advisers as part of the task is to continually improve these operations for clients.

BACKGROUND ON PROXIMITI

We integrate communications services with applications. Our services range from replacing your phone company and office phone equipment to specialty applications for medical offices, law firms, and now with MyTools, HR departments and benefits consultants. The proliferation of the Internet and smart devices has changed communications forever---your desk phone may be as obsolete as a payphone in five years, and apps are now appearing that will change the concept of a card in a wallet or purse.

Communications services as stand alone products are likely to fade in importance and value. Communications services are increasingly embedded in applications, both in direct and subtle ways. While communications service providers like ourselves are interested in preserving or increasing communications spending, it is likely that traditional means of communicating will decline (like picking up a phone and dialing an 800 number) and instead smart apps will take on more of a role with their unique ability to provide both services and content in a simple and fast to use service.

Packaging communications and content into useful products for end users is an accelerating business trend. While this can benefit companies like Proximiti with subscription and license fees, end users benefit typically with much lower administrative and telecommunications costs. Not as evident, perhaps, is the ability for those in the supply chain to adapt or adopt these new ways of doing things into their own business

processes for strategic advantage. We believe MyTools in its present form and also as we expand the platform could be a game changer for the delivery and support of many benefit programs and management of HR functions.

We are a Tampa based company with a management team that has worked together for over 15 years and has taken two companies public. Many of our services are highly innovative: automatic time tracking on the phone or PC for professionals that bill time, integration of smart phones with salesforce and Microsoft CRM, and health oriented applications designed to cut readmission risks of health care organizations. The point here is simple but powerful: the integration of communications with software services can drive important business results.

HR MANAGEMENT AND BENEFITS MANAGEMENT

Benefits are a key component of employee compensation and insuring that employees and their dependents can use their benefits effectively and reducing support costs is a key objective of HR programs. Compared to other business processes, HR management is still often paper based from the sales process to enrollment to even end user services. Web sites of benefit providers are often service oriented designed to reduce costs of support. Each benefits provider offers their own sites, log in requirements, and usability learning curve. As a result, users often don't know user IDs and for the sporadic needs, often, never bother.

For the benefits adviser, they often do front end analysis and aggregation but comprehensive data management of services used and electronic communications capability with end users and on behalf of companies is a painstaking process if done at all. The risk is being disintermediated entirely from the process: also, the productivity gains sought by HR clients can't be delivered with five to fifteen different providers for various benefits and varying take rates from end users.

Marketing can often be enhanced via packaging and information management processes and the growth of integrated applications and communications provides the HR advisor/benefits management firm to take the leading role instead of a back seat to these needs. That in a simple sentence is the real strategic advantage of adopting MyTools as part of a benefits management company overall solution.

MyTools is a natural product integration strategy that is controlled by the benefits adviser. The flexibility of the platform allows for easy plug ins for new benefit programs or alternatives. MyTools also compiles useful information about employee accessing different benefit options and supplements actual usage data delivered from benefits advisers.

Consider these benefits of MyTools for a benefits provider:

- The client company embeds information into the application about all benefits, whether provided by your firm or not. Future bidding and needs analysis of clients is clarified;
- You will know as much if not more than your client on attractiveness and interest in other benefits
- The MyTools branding allows your company to be part of the icon launch every time MyTools is accessed—whether from the web, a smart phone, or tablet.
- You get a **permanent presence** for each user and family member user on devices that users keep with them at almost all times:
 - Your “face time” is no longer limited to employee meetings
 - Depending upon your arrangements with your client, you can professionally engage not just company managements but also all employees with important benefit information
 - Up selling individual accounts both in cafeteria plans and also employee paid benefits is easier and not limited to employee meetings
 - The app is highly interactive and is more than simply a logo but is also a valued utility
 - It’s the focal point for all information requests about any benefit and provider web sites **now have a front end app that is controlled by you and your client**
- MyTools includes a built in bulletin board and calendar that can include important matters for employees or simple information including other services from your firm (with permission of client). Group access to benefits often drives the best rates for end user---and the leverage of an always on application to identify, learn more, and acquire those services can be transformative to traditional business models
- MyTools includes a My Information application that can be used for many purposes:
 - Keeping employee information up to date
 - In the future, it could also “pre-fill” information for service applications and so on
 - You can obtain clearer demographic information about employees, thereby improving the value of your offer
- The combination of MyTools with your other data sources can be combined to **greatly improve your IT infrastructure** allowing you to better anticipate the needs of clients, their employees, and families

MyTools is more than a smart app and server software. It's also a platform that can deliver existing services as noted in the product literature but also an electronic interface that can be expanded for additional current and future needs. MyTools is simple and intuitive to use: the back end powerful to be very useful and accommodating to today's changing needs.

THE MYTOOLS PLATFORM CAN BE EXTENDED

For those readers with a technical interest, some of what follows will be intuitive. More normal business people may not be surprised with some of the observations that follow.

- MyTools could be an adjunct or even stand alone communications service. Voice is moving to the web (Skype, internet telephony). MyTools could include a communications toolbox and an office phone could be any device (tablet, smart phone, or PC)
- We could create a "Personal Benefits Record" like a health care record that also better supports consumer choices
- Service for end users could even be video enabled. Click on MyTools, pick a benefit, and don't just place a call, start a video session or webinar.

Existing Proximiti partners are already requesting that the platform be reviewed for full electronic provisioning and integration with benefits providers, explore tie ins with HR management and payroll systems, and even as a control point for the delivery of employee centric services such as cell phones, software, and other per user licenses.

CONCLUSION

Proximiti has built the MyTools platform both with technology development but also with important contributions of its initial partners in the employee benefit adviser industry. Response to MyTools has been exciting and the participation of our partners in improving the user interface, the process for deployment and management of the service gratifying, and the ideas for the future compelling. Companies need both solid counsel but innovative technology and operational expertise to improve HR and also leverage the benefits provided to employees. We welcome your feedback and participation.