



MM4

Improves Efficiencies and Profitability



Industry: Technology

Company Size: Large

Products Used: Client Billing and Time & Attendance

Challenges

- Superfluous and complicated process for entering hours worked
- Simplified federally-mandated payroll system coding
- Employees tracking time in a limited and tactical manner
- Limited understanding of resource utilization to drive greater workforce efficiencies
- Limited ability to use reports to support company-wide profitability goals

MM4 provides procurement professionals with software that integrates eSourcing, spend analysis, benchmarking, contract management, market data and other company information to improve their buying decisions. MM4 has a large global footprint, with employees located in Australia, China, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Singapore, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States.

A gold mine for improving efficiencies

As a leading e-sourcing technology company, MM4 has customers in a wide range of industries, with a particular focus on the manufacturing and retail sectors. When the company was acquired by Xchanging plc, a business process, procurement and technology services provider, it prompted MM4's senior leadership team to evaluate its investments, and how it could drive further efficiencies and profitability to the business.

MM4 had recently implemented Polaris so that its office-bound and remote employees could capture billable and non-billable hours worked against client projects and activities. While the system adequately tracked time, following the acquisition MM4 realized that greater value could be derived from using the solution.

According to Adriana Zalloni, Business Performance Manager at MM4, the information housed in Polaris was considered a gold mine for improving efficiencies and profitability across the organization.

"Previously, people had been entering their hours into Polaris each week, but when we scrutinized the data, we found that there was limited information on how people were actually spending their time. There was no clear data into what tasks were being worked on, and therefore limited insights we could glean on how efficient and profitable we were against specific projects," she said.

A cultural transformation in assessing time and projects

MM4 kicked off a company-wide initiative across its offices worldwide to improve its efficiencies, including a deep analysis of how Polaris was being used by its employees. MM4 uses Polaris' client billing and time tracking systems to track time against various client projects, and use this data to invoice clients.

"Polaris is a very simple and robust solution to use, and it's easy to become a habit for people to enter their time day in and day out. But once we started to look at the system as a core system for understanding our productivity and profitability, we realized that we would only truly benefit from it if we embraced it as a more strategic tool across the business," Zalloni said.

MM4 reviewed the data across its various client activities and projects, and found that it needed to simplify how it listed employee's roles, billing rates and tasks for greater clarity and ease-of-use. Working closely with Polaris' implementation and customer service team, MM4 was able to revamp these lists for more accurate and insightful information into resource utilization and project profitability, and train its employees on how to categorize their hours worked.

"At first there was a bit of hesitation into the changes being made within the system from our staff. However, we were able to combat any concerns very quickly by educating people on the value that the updates would bring in helping them do their jobs more efficiently, and its importance to the business. People have become really excited in telling us how they have directly supported the company in meeting our goals," Zalloni said.

MM4 staff need to enter their hours by the end of the week, which is then approved by managers the following week. Polaris provides automatic updates, including email notifications, to both employees and managers if time is not entered completely by deadline.

The next step was to educate project managers and senior executives on the reports that could be obtained to gain greater visibility into hours worked against projects, the tasks which are taking the longest to complete, budget versus actual spend to date, team bandwidth, and other measures of efficiency. MM4 could use this data to then ensure enough time was being spent on high impact activities such as strategy and planning. Polaris provides highly configurable reports, which can be extracted across virtually any timeframe and category.

"We rely heavily on Polaris' built-in reports, and another standout feature for us is the progress bar that visually represents how a project is tracking against a client's budget. Using these functionalities, managers can pull a report in seconds on how a project is tracking. Our teams can more quickly and confidently negotiate budgets with any client if required, ahead of finalizing the invoice," Zalloni said.



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*Adriana Zalloni,
Business Performance Manager, MM4*

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Adriana Zalloni,
Business Performance Manager, MM4



To ensure that all MM4 employees embraced the nuances in how Polaris was being used, Polaris' customer service team worked with Zalloni and several executives to develop training that would be rolled out to all staff. Zalloni spearheaded the training internally, and additional guides were developed that outlined the value of Polaris to the company goals.

“Polaris' customer service team did an impressive job in helping us make this slight transition in how we used the solution. They were very responsive, took time to talk us through any questions, and showed us different capabilities of the system, which has helped us generate very positive feedback from our employees,” Zalloni said.

An integral piece to the business bottom line

As MM4 continues to amass more comprehensive data on how its employees are working on different projects, Zalloni sees this information helping the company continue to improve how it scopes and forecasts client activities in the future, and support decisions in hiring and managing talent.

“We still consider ourselves in the early stages of reaping the benefits of Polaris, but the rewards have been clearly evident already. Initially, a big part of the challenge was that nobody really understood the true value that Polaris could bring to the business. Today, it's an integral aspect to driving efficiencies, and witnessing greater profitability to the organization,” Zalloni concluded.

Results

- Strong recognition of time tracking as a strategic tool to drive profitability and growth
- Higher individual and team productivity levels
- Immediate visibility on project budget versus actuals
- More comprehensive time tracking entries and improved resource utilization

- Improved client discussions and negotiations on project scope and budget
- Highly configurable, built-in reports to support efficiency goals



About Polaris

Polaris, the world's first Self-driving PSA, has created a new category for Professional Services Automation. For the first time, leaders get intelligent help with decision making as Polaris does the heavy lifting, analyzes real-time data, and delivers live recommendations on the best possible choices for them to decide from. Polaris is created by the team at Replicon, the Time Intelligence company, with over 25 years of industry leadership in enterprise time tracking. Replicon supports thousands of customers across 70 countries, including PwC, SAS, NTT, NSC Global, Omnicom, and Aon.

To learn more, visit www.polarispsa.com

Want to try it for your business?

Watch a live demo now. Free one-on-one support is available throughout the trial:

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