



Ashton Financial Employees Stay On Task with Veriato Investigator

Ashton Financial

Industry: Financial Services

Location: Brookfield, Wisconsin

Employees: 50

Ashton Financial bills itself as a “technology-based Mortgage Bank”, specializing in a range of mortgage lending services. Chuck Benedon, a senior executive with the organization and the de facto Network Administrator, manages a single-server, 25-user network running Windows.

Ashton Financial was challenged by concerns over apparent inappropriate employee behavior, and the resulting potential for loss of valuable company documentation.

The Challenge

After being caught off guard by an embezzling bookkeeper, Ashton Financial senior executive and de facto Network Admin Chuck Benedon resolved to never again be a victim of insider threat.

“Certain employees, when they think they are not being watched, will engage in very inappropriate business behavior. This is especially true when they are on the internet,” said Benedon. “As a boss, you are naive if you believe that nothing bad is happening just because you don’t know about it.”

Benedon believes a sharp lookout is the first line of defense in effectively minding the business. A small company with 25 users, Ashton Financial wanted a lightweight, easy to install employee monitoring tool. They needed a tool that would help protect the company, its data, and its bottom line from harmful employee actions such as fraud, IP theft, and inappropriate behavior.

“If I had today’s technology at the time, things would have been different,” said Benedon. “You can prevent a lot of problems, and an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. What you want to do is keep it from happening in the first place or stop it in its tracks before it has a chance to get out of control.”

Search for a Solution

At Ashton Financial, Benedon said watching and noticing variations in employee habits indicated a new problem. The problem was certainly big enough to warrant an investigation, complete with computer and internet activity monitoring software.

“Among other actions, we started to see an individual staying after hours when they hadn’t been doing that,” said Benedon. “One thing we didn’t want to do was wait until it was too late.”

Benedon’s search for a computer and employee monitoring solution was short and sweet. By paying close attention to the computer networking world, Benedon knew comprehensive monitoring software existed. Benedon reached out to a friend in the business, and they recommended Veriato Investigator.

After a round of due diligence, Benedon was convinced the Veriato product would do the job well.

“When we had suspicions, we decided not to wait until the damage was done, and bought Veriato Investigator to help,” said Benedon.

Discoveries

Perfect for immediate, focused, temporary investigations, Veriato Investigator was up and running minutes after being purchased.

“When we got the software we had an investigation going on,” said Benedon. “The very first day, using Veriato Investigator snapshots, I watched someone producing documents that were an obvious major liability to the company.

“I went to our VP with a printout of a screen shot. He showed it to the employee and asked her for the corresponding file. All she could say was ‘where did you get that?’ That was the beginning of the ‘stuff’ hitting the fan. The findings reverberated throughout the office.

Once they saw all the capabilities of the software, even their facial expressions changed.

“On the first day we were able to discover problem activity. The boss said it was worth every penny we paid, and it wasn’t even 24 hours old yet.”

Veriato Investigator uncovered subsequent insider threats at Ashton Financial. An employee was getting ready to leave the company and began transferring files via email. After reviewing the data collected, Benedon was able to confront the employee.

“This was important data, like the customer list,” said Benedon. “We caught her dead. It’s against the law. It’s company property, not the employee’s.”

Employee productivity was also a concern at Ashton Financial. However, after installing Veriato Investigator, Benedon noticed significant changes in employee behavior.

“If people are not working, they’re costing you money,” said Benedon. “They’re stealing out of your pocket. The program is worth every penny, every dollar.

“I guarantee your production will increase,” said Benedon. “There’s no more porn surfing, all surfing is down. What we have seen (is) this place is ON TASK. Having this software is like insurance.”

Working with Employees

In the Ashton Financial employee manual, a section covers actions that are cause for dismissal. Basically an Acceptable Use Policy, the process permits two reprimands. However, the third infraction is cause for termination.

“With Veriato Investigator, we changed our computer use policy,” said Benedon. “We added a clause that said employees understand we monitor computer activity. At the point of second infraction we have a meeting, like an intervention. We let them know that if they don’t change their behavior, if they are involved in the same purposeful act, they’ll be let go. With Veriato Investigator, we have proof of inappropriate activity and that makes the process a whole lot cleaner.

“If computer users get a message on their screen saying Ashton Financial Does Not Permit Access, they know not to come to me about it.”

“The threat of being caught red-handed is powerful. That is what the law does. And to some degree, this software lays down the law. Certain employees, when they think they are not being watched, will engage in very inappropriate business behavior.”

*Chuck Benedon
Ashton Financial
Brookfield, Wisconsin*

Veriato Investigator: The Software of Choice

The management team at Ashton Financial is pleased with their purchase of Veriato Investigator.

“It’s a good product. (There are) no bugs, no issues. (Just) plug it in, turn it on, and it works,” said Benedon. “I especially like the silent install. Overall, the install was easy. Time to install: negligible. Time to learn: fairly fast and easy. Upkeep: nonexistent.”

“Up front we didn’t really consider the investment versus the savings,” said Benedon. “It was a matter of employee compliance, and obtaining a way of keeping the employees on task. However, with minimal investment, you potentially save tens, even hundreds of thousands. I mean how much is your company worth? Just think what it’s worth if you catch the right guy doing the wrong thing. ”

“With Veriato Investigator, you can learn a lot,” said Benedon. “It’s very easy to use, easy to see the information recorded. It’s empowerment. To be able to control your business with that software, to know what is going on, that’s powerful.”

ABOUT VERIATO

Veriato is an innovator in actionable User Behavior Analytics and the global leader in User Activity Monitoring. More than 36,000 companies, schools, and government entities worldwide have relied on Veriato solutions to gain insight into the user activity on their network, and enjoy the security and productivity increases that come with it.

The Veriato mission is to provide world-class software and support that enables our customers to protect their most valuable assets, reduce their risk, and gain unparalleled visibility into their operations. Veriato’s award-winning solutions include Veriato Recon (behavioral analytics based insider threat detection), Veriato 360 (enterprise-grade User Activity Monitoring), Veriato Investigator (employee investigation tool), Veriato Log Manager (event and security log management) and Veriato Server Manager (server management solution).

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