

March Madness and BYOD Are Double Bonus at Work

Ryan Nakashima, AP Business Writer



LOS ANGELES (AP) —

Every year, the NCAA college basketball tournament gives employees a reason to goof off at their desks and root for their alma maters.

But there's a growing source of potential headaches for bosses. Media companies like hosts CBS Corp. and Time Warner Inc.'s Turner are doing all they can to promote so-called TV Everywhere services, which add value to cable and satellite TV packages by allowing subscribers to watch live TV on smartphones and tablets while on the go — and on the job.

Although people have long been able to stream games live over the Internet, employers have always had the option to block content to keep productivity high. That's harder to do when workers are bringing their own devices and using their cellphone data plans to engage in March Madness.

Turner Broadcasting senior vice president Jeremy Legg says the tournament, which kicks off in earnest on Thursday, is "one of the most significant opportunities we have to promote TV Everywhere" — and the numbers show it's working.

Last year, streamed video viewing of the first two weeks of the tournament more than tripled from the previous year to 14 million hours. The number of viewers using the NCAA March Madness Live mobile app more than doubled to 3.4 million.

Jumping on the bandwagon, Dish Network Corp. started a new ad campaign Tuesday that touts how well its Hopper set-top box can help customers sneak in

March Madness and BYOD Are Double Bonus at Work

Published on Wireless Week (<http://www.wirelessweek.com>)

some game-watching at work. One of Dish's TV spots features the company's stuffed kangaroo mascot, who is streaming NCAA basketball to a tablet while at the office. The marsupial tucks the device away when a manager walks by. "Hey boss, woo! I love working," says the kangaroo.

Dish's chief marketing officer James Moorhead says it's up to companies to trust their employees to get work done, even if they spend time watching the games. Dish is encouraging its own employees to watch games on their mobile devices during breaks at work. And the company has bolstered its Wi-Fi network to accommodate the expected increase in streaming during the NCAA tournament.

"Who better to evangelize this than Dish?" Moorhead says.

Although the devices employees bring to work can present challenges for managers, productivity experts suggest that well-communicated company policies set the right tone for appropriate workplace activity.

"There needs to be clearly defined ground rules," says Robert Hosking, executive director of job placement firm Office Team. Such rules include that deadlines can't be missed, and that real money betting isn't allowed.

But office activities can be a good way of promoting good-natured competition and friendly interactions, he says. A poll the company released two weeks ago showed that 32 percent of the 300 managers found participating in March Madness at work boosted morale, up from 20 percent who thought so a year ago. About 62 percent thought it had no impact on either morale or productivity.

Barrett Coleman, a 30-year-old accountant in Chicago, says his former employer's no-streaming policy had a subtle effect on his behavior.

His employer, one of the big four accounting firms, blocked Internet streams of the tournament to avoid congestion on its network. But it also set up TVs for game viewing in conference and break rooms.

The Texas native didn't technically break any rules when he followed his Longhorns using his mobile data plan to stream live video to the iPhone he kept propped up on his desk. Then again, he sensed that following the action so closely wasn't entirely approved of.

"You don't really want to go to the break room and be standing there for a couple of hours," said Coleman, who now works at a major consulting firm. "I can see why watching the video might have sent the wrong message to the people below me."

Chicago-based Trustwave Holdings Inc., a provider of Web filtering and security tools, says more information technology managers are taking a moderate approach by employing measures such as time limits to keep workers focused without dampening their enthusiasm.

"Let's say you give everybody an hour," says Steve Kelley, Trustwave's vice

March Madness and BYOD Are Double Bonus at Work

Published on Wireless Week (<http://www.wirelessweek.com>)

president of product management. "They clearly state their policy so everybody knows what the situation is, and the employees act accordingly."

For some companies, active March Madness participation on the job can definitely help.

Denise Sawyer, a reporter at WBOC-TV in Salisbury, Md., says her station's \$5-a-bracket pool not only brings employees from different departments together, it helps strengthen the news team's bond with viewers.

"It does produce this intangible profit," she says. "People from our viewing audience love it."

Source URL (retrieved on 08/02/2014 - 3:13am):

<http://www.wirelessweek.com/news/2014/03/march-madness-and-byod-are-double-bonus-work>