



## **TOYOTA MALL** **MALL OF GEORGIA**

## Auto Dealer Regains Control, Simplifies IT Asset Management with SAM Engagement

### Overview

**Country:** United States  
**Industry:** Retail—Auto

### Customer Profile

Toyota Mall of Georgia is part of the Southeast Automotive Group based in Atlanta, Georgia, and is the state's largest volume Toyota dealership with more than 225 employees.

### Business Situation

The auto dealer used an IT consulting company to purchase, implement, and manage all of its IT assets. Looking at license renewal in 2007, the dealer realized that its needs were not being met.

### Solution

Toyota Mall of Georgia embarked on a Software Asset Management (SAM) consultation to regain control of its IT assets, move IT daily management in-house, and improve licensing purchase decisions.

### Benefits

- Gained confidence in compliance
- Saved thousands of dollars by ending license overspending
- Saved \$60,000 annually on IT support costs
- Streamlined infrastructure
- Justified new IT hire

“Our technology investments are optimized for what we need, and it is a relief to know we are not spending any redundant money.”

Ron Friedel, Chief Financial Officer, Toyota Mall of Georgia

Buford, Georgia–located Toyota Mall of Georgia employed an outside IT consulting group for IT acquisition and management. When some of the dealership's software licensing came up for renewal, the Toyota Mall chief financial officer began to question license records and the strategy behind software and hardware acquisition and management. Microsoft suggested a Software Asset Management (SAM) consultation, providing an opportunity for the auto dealer to gain control of and insight into licenses and additional assets. Toyota Mall worked with Microsoft® Certified Partner Soft-Aid to conduct a SAM engagement including a license inventory and reconciliation. The dealership now has control of its licensing programs and software assets, as well as a new IT management structure that provides greater oversight and peace of mind.



“Toyota Mall is very interested in being compliant. The root of the problem was that the IT consultant that Toyota trusted failed to maintain records and media, and follow overall SAM best practices.”

David Mansfield, Consultant, Soft-Aid

## Situation

Toyota Mall of Georgia is one of three dealerships that make up the Southeast Automotive Group. Toyota Mall has U.S.\$190 million in sales annually. The dealership employs more than 225 individuals with 19 servers and a client network of 120 computers. Employees use technology to process sales and service transactions, perform administrative tasks, as well as to address customer inquiries through e-mail correspondence.

Toyota Mall had been contracting with an independent IT consulting firm to run the dealership’s IT department. The consultants had set up a complex network, and the dealership was plagued with downtime and equipment failures that cost additional consulting fees to remedy.

The auto dealer had trusted that the consulting firm was acquiring and implementing hardware and software assets strategically and with Toyota Mall’s best interests in mind. Toyota Mall managers realized that their trust may have been misplaced, and they decided to contact Microsoft concerning the dealership’s licensing renewals.

“When I could not get a definitive answer on what licensing we had from our IT consultants, I became a bit concerned,” says Ron Friedel, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) for Toyota Mall. “I worried that we could be underlicensed, and I also wondered if we had overspent on unnecessary licenses. We wanted to be compliant, and it came as a surprise to me that it might not be the case. We needed to regain control.”

Microsoft suggested that Friedel work with Soft-Aid, a Microsoft® Certified Partner for Licensing Solutions, to conduct a Software Asset Management

(SAM) consultation. As Soft-Aid and Toyota Mall began trying to understand the dealer’s licensing, the extent of the situation became apparent. Licenses that could be verified had been purchased under a number of different license agreements. Because the IT consultant was responsible for keeping those records current, Toyota Mall had little information about its software assets. The IT firm eventually provided partial documentation of licensing that had been acquired on behalf of Toyota Mall; however, the documentation was confusing.

“Toyota Mall is very interested in being compliant,” says Soft-Aid consultant David Mansfield. “The root of the problem was that the IT consultant that Toyota trusted failed to maintain records and media, and follow overall SAM best practices. The consultant’s apparent neglect left Toyota Mall vulnerable.”

## Solution

Soft-Aid consultants began working with Toyota Mall to tackle the daunting task of sifting through the incomplete and confusing licensing records. In addition, Soft-Aid deployed a temporary inventory tool throughout the Toyota Mall’s network. The inventory tool scanned each computer and reported on the applications loaded. Soft-Aid then worked to determine if Toyota Mall was in need of additional licenses or if the company was using unlicensed software.

Toyota Mall realized that it must play a larger role in the oversight of IT management. “Based on what we learned from the SAM consultation,” says Friedel, “we decided to get better control and move IT management in-house. We decided to hire an internal network specialist for day-to-day support.”

The auto dealer has chosen to outsource some work to a new IT consultant. However, to avoid repeating past problems, this consultant works on larger, strategic IT projects such as the installation of a network traffic monitor and a full diagnostic monitor. These help the company address potential network bottlenecks and any critical problems that could affect its network. The IT consultant also works closely with the internal network specialist.

CFO Friedel and the dealership's general manager have oversight of all IT acquisitions and have established new processes since the SAM engagement. Now computers primarily are purchased directly from Dell; software is preloaded and the corresponding license details are provided at time of purchase. Toyota Mall is keeping all records from the inventory readily available and is researching a permanent inventory tool for its network.

### Benefits

Through the Software Asset Management engagement, Toyota Mall of Georgia has been able to increase its confidence in its compliance status and make better licensing decisions. Even more impressive, the SAM engagement led Toyota Mall to bring its IT functions in-house, which has resulted in significant savings and an improved IT infrastructure.

### Improved Compliance, Better Licensing Decisions

Because of the inventory tool deployed by Soft-Aid, Toyota Mall was able to come to an understanding of its software assets despite incomplete and confusing records from its previous IT consulting firm. "Microsoft and Soft-Aid were supportive throughout the SAM process and helped us gain confidence in our compliance," says Friedel.

The dealership has taken steps to remain in compliance, including improved acquisition processes and stronger asset management policies. "Since the SAM engagement, we have the staff and processes in place to have stronger control over our licensing," says Friedel. "We are no longer making unnecessary acquisitions of hardware or software. Our technology investments are optimized for what we need, and it is a relief to know we are not spending any redundant money." Friedel estimates that the company previously spent many thousands of dollars unnecessarily.

### Saved Money on IT Functions

Since cutting ties with the IT firm that was handling IT purchasing and management, Toyota Mall has hired a full-time on-site person to manage daily activities. While the auto dealer still retains an IT consultant, the daily management is handled internally. "With these changes, we are saving approximately \$5,000 to \$7,000 per month in IT support costs," says Friedel. "We credit the SAM engagement with helping us save \$60,000 annually."

### Improved IT Infrastructure

Through the SAM engagement and corresponding review of IT functions, Toyota Mall was able to identify ways to streamline its IT infrastructure with a simplified network. The dealership did not require all the equipment that the consulting firm had purchased, so it has retired some older servers. The network has been simplified to run more effectively. And with internal IT support, Toyota Mall now experiences far less downtime and fewer equipment failures, as well.

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Ron Friedel, Chief Financial Officer,  
Toyota Mall of Georgia

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For more information about Soft-Aid products and services, visit the Web site at:

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For more information about Toyota Mall of Georgia products and services, call (678) 546-1212 or visit the Web site at:

**[www.toyotamallofgeorgia.com](http://www.toyotamallofgeorgia.com)**

## Software Asset Management

Software Asset Management often referred to as SAM, is a vital set of continuous business processes that can assist your company to control your software assets, optimize your licensing investments, and grow your business. A fully implemented SAM program plays an integral role in keeping your business agile, confident, and prepared for growth and change. This can help you to manage and reduce costs, minimize security risks, and empower your people by providing them with the tools and technology they need to be more productive.

For additional information, including complimentary tools and resources, visit:

**[www.microsoft.com/sam](http://www.microsoft.com/sam)**

### Software and Services

- Software Asset Management

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