

SambaSafety is now five times faster to production



There has been a 30 percent increase in subscribers



70 percent of developer time is now spent coding

SambaSafety

How SambaSafety delivers customer value faster with VMware Tanzu Application Service



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Cloud native development brings speed and swagger to an industry pioneer

Nearly 30 percent of jobs in the U.S. require driving, according to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics. These jobs translate to millions of people getting behind the wheel to accomplish their work, some in professions you might not associate with driving, such as veterinarians, sales managers or lawyers. It's not surprising, then, that employers rely on driver monitoring services such as SambaSafety to understand the risk profile of employees, enforce policies and mitigate risk.

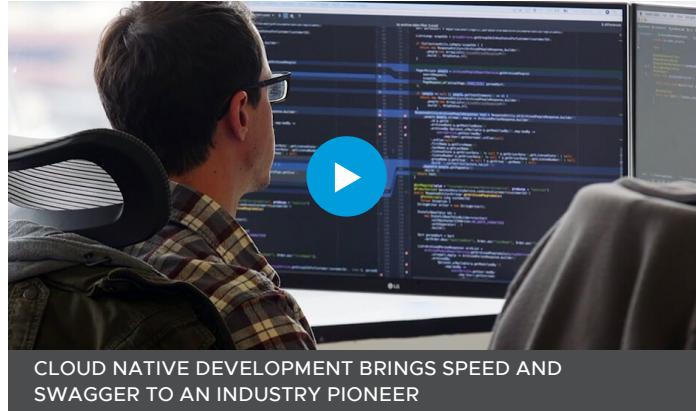
SambaSafety created the driver risk-monitoring industry more than 20 years ago.

Now, its continuous monitoring services cover several million subscribers. SambaSafety's cloud-based, software-as-a-service (SaaS) offerings include real-time analytical insights that help employers make hiring decisions, provide targeted training, and address risky driving behavior. SambaSafety also offers 40–50 million driver risk assessments annually for the auto insurance industry.

"SambaSafety helps to protect our customers from hidden driver risk and America's communities from unsafe drivers," said CEO Allison Guidette. "We're about promoting enhanced visibility into your driver population."

A commitment to improving software delivery

When Guidette joined SambaSafety in 2018, she aimed to re-energize the culture and brand to reflect the company's innovative and pioneering spirit. "We started to talk about making sure we have the correct level of swagger—confidence, excitement and energy that, frankly, we've earned because we're innovating every single day," she said.



CLOUD NATIVE DEVELOPMENT BRINGS SPEED AND SWAGGER TO AN INDUSTRY PIONEER

One of Guidette's primary objectives was to accelerate innovation and get new features and products to market quickly. "This required us to come up with a very different approach to how we designed products, how we developed products, and how we rolled them out," recalls Guidette.

Shortly after starting at SambaSafety, Guidette received customer feedback asking for specific features for Samba's flagship driver monitoring platform, Driver Risk management (DRm). Guidette and the leadership team spotted an opportunity to work with VMware to make significant product changes and set an aggressive deadline. The goal was to have a customer beta in five and a half months, which is "five times faster than any sizable project we had tried in the past," said Guidette.

SambaSafety turned to VMware Tanzu Labs to kick-start an entirely new way of building software.

Building software faster with test-driven development and pairing

"I'd had experience with [VMware Tanzu] and the Spring framework in the past," said Kemble. "I saw a good opportunity for us to take advantage of a partner that was going to be able to help us change the culture and transform not only our product and engineering teams, but the entire organization to be more modern," he recalls.

To get the hang of cloud native development practices and lean product management, a team from SambaSafety worked with VMware Tanzu Labs practitioners at the VMware office in Denver, Colorado. The VMware Tanzu Labs approach involves bringing together small groups of people with skills in development, design and product management. These groups, known as balanced teams, learn to collaborate in ways that foster consistent communication and transparency to create a great software product.

At the start of this engagement, VMware practitioners helped SambaSafety's balanced team identify and prioritize a project. Originally, SambaSafety had intended to start small and develop

new product features based on customer feedback. But in the end, they decided to go big and completely reimagine how they deliver their driver monitoring products.

"As we began to ideate with [VMware] on where we should start with the DRm enhancements," said Kemble, "we realized we could be far more audacious in our goals. Instead of feature enhancements on a legacy solution, we opted to build an entirely reimagined, modern platform that was going to take advantage of new capabilities and deliver it in a much more clean and cost-effective way to the customer."

SambaSafety engineers remained at VMware for three months to hone their skills in agile, test-driven development. They worked side by side with VMware developers, writing code in pairs (a practice called pairing). The developers used Spring Boot to build a completely new version of SambaSafety's SaaS monitoring products, integrated into a single platform called Qorta™.

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CEO, SAMBASAFETY

After learning how to pair and follow best practices, such as test-driven development, SambaSafety's software developers returned to their own office with a fresh way of working.

"We saw them continue to do the pairing and the same exercises and ceremonies that we had taken from the [VMware] engagement, and so today, we're still actively pairing with each other," said Kemble.

SambaSafety's team quickly noticed the benefits of their new way of working. "The [VMware Tanzu Labs] process of pairing gives you two sets of eyes all the time on that code. Whether it be for bugs or whether it be for compliance reasons and holding each other accountable—it really just motivates you," said Tommy Cordova, a software engineer at SambaSafety.

Building a sustainable competitive advantage with modern tools and processes

The teams at SambaSafety were initially skeptical that they'd be able to deliver a complete redesign of their flagship monitoring platform in just five months. But with help from VMware, they met their goal and released a beta five months after the start of the engagement with VMware Tanzu Labs. They've kept up the pace of software releases ever since.

"We've been able to change our product delivery from once every five years to once every month," said Lacey. "When we hit our first significant release milestone and were able to show it to our employees and customers, there was universal excitement. It's a beautiful user experience that addressed, even in that very early iteration, so many of the features that our customers had been requesting for years."

"It's easy to have swagger about the Qorta product," he said. "It's a simplified yet super high-functioning product that takes full advantage of Samba's legacy expertise and presents data and insights to customers in fresh, new ways. I think the organization is walking a lot taller since the launch of Qorta."

Looking ahead

Fast forward to today. Qorta is the single platform for all of SambaSafety's monitoring solutions. The Qorta platform allows SambaSafety to bring new capabilities and data to market rapidly. They can also integrate past and future acquisitions into a single platform of solutions, providing a better customer experience. Samba has already launched several newly designed solutions within Qorta, and the company has a robust plan for new Qorta modules.

"Customers that have migrated from the legacy system [give us] raves. They're very excited about it, they comment about how easy it is to use. New customer training has gone from one hour to 10 minutes for almost all customers," Kemble said. "The enthusiasm of Samba's customers is reflected in a 30 percent increase in the number of monitored drivers, and we are now on track to double our total monitored drivers by the end of 2019."

"The processes we've gained through the engagement with [VMware Tanzu Labs] and our project for Qorta has allowed us to really start to get better at customer engagement, customer feedback, and do that in a much more iterative and shorter timeframe. So now we're able to get that feedback, turn that around, and give that visibility to those customers in months or weeks. Not years or decades," said Kemble.

Reflecting on the partnership with VMware, Guidette said, "Our product and engineering group is energized by the partnerships that they had with [VMware] and the methodologies and techniques and also the technologies that the partnership brought to Samba. It's allowed us to effectively recruit some superb talent. It allowed us to increase the productivity of existing excellent engineers and just generally drove a lot of excitement, enthusiasm and confidence in the project."

When asked, Guidette offered words of advice to CEOs facing changes in technology strategy and digital transformation: "Set ambitious goals that aren't restricted by legacy limitations of the business. There are great partners out there like [VMware]...that can allow you to deliver different kinds of results than you may have had in the past."