Using IFTTT (If This Then That) with Focus

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What is IFTTT?

The popular application **If This Then That** (**IFTTT**) is a web based service which allows the creation of simple "recipes" (simple conditional statements) to perform a desired action (for example, send a text message) when a specific trigger event occurs. The number of possible recipes is growing all the time so Egress Systems have had look to see what how users of Focus could benefit from this tool.

Our initial thoughts are to create an IFTTT recipe to send a text message when the Focus Time & Attendance system generates an automated Email.

Using IFTTT with Focus Enterprise

Using Focus Enterprise with the Workflow add-on module enables you to schedule automatic reports to be e-mailed to specific e-mail addresses. For example, an email can be triggered when the number of missing clockings within a particular department goes above a pre-defined value. This is obviously a very useful way of alerting a department manager of a problem. However we can use IFTTT to take this one stage further by also sending an SMS message to the department manager.

The method we have looked at to achieve this is by using a Gmail account to receive the email message from Focus, then using IFTTT to create a recipe to trigger a text message.

Setting up an IFTTT Recipe

Firstly, you'll need to create an IFTTT account. Once it's been created it's time to create your first Recipe. In its simplest form a recipe consists of two parts, a trigger and an action.

New email in inbox from search
for subject:Missing Clocking

Send an SMS to 44xxxxxxxxxx

For our recipe, the trigger (step 1) is going to be GMAIL.

Then Step 2 to will be "New Email in Inbox from Search".

Step 3 will be "**subject:Missing Clocking".** So here we can specify the subject of the email sent from Focus to allow us to be selective about which emails we want to trigger an SMS.

In Step 4 we choose an Action Channel. This will be Android SMS.

Step 5 asks us for an Action, here we select "Send an SMS".

Step 6 prompts us to enter the mobile phone number to send the SMS to. It also allows us to enter the content of the SMS. You can just type in the text you require, or by clicking on the +button you can select details from the actual email to be used as the text, such as the email Subject for example.

Finally Step 7 summarises the Recipe before inviting us to click the Create button.
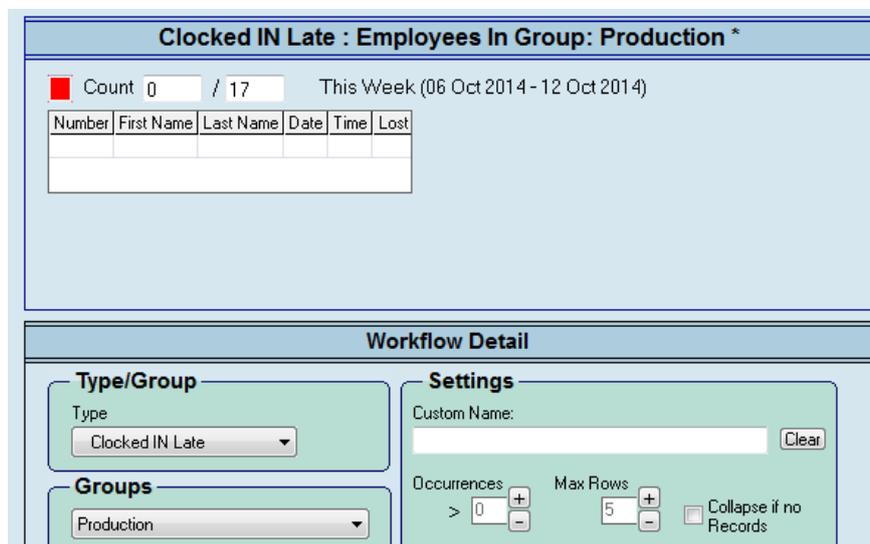
IFTTT normally "Polls" or checks for triggers in Gmail every 15 minutes or so. You can press the refresh button next to the recipe in IFTTT to perform an immediate check.

It may sound a little daunting at first, but the IFTTT interface is simple to use and takes you through the creation of a recipe one step at a time.

Using Focus Workflows with IFTTT

So we also thought about using a single Gmail account for Focus to send emails to and then use IFTTT to link to that single account to send the SMS messages. The problem with this is that usually different Workflow emails need to be sent to different recipients e.g. a Missing Clockings Workflow report in the Warehouse department should be sent to the Warehouse Manager and a Lateness Workflow report in the Production department should be sent to the Production Manager. One solution is to edit the name of each Workflow within Focus so that IFTTT can filter the email subject to determine who to send it to.

When a new Workflow is created in Focus, it is given a default name. That is normally quite descriptive of what the Workflow does. See the example below.

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However we can change the default name by giving it a Custom Name.

So now the Customer Name will be used as the Email subject. So when we create a recipe using IFTTT then we change Step 3 to only trigger when Emails are received with a specific subject, e.g. be "**subject:Production Manager".** We only need to look at the first two words in our example to filter the subject we are interested in. We would need to create a new recipe for each person we wanted to send an SMS to.

New email in inbox from search
for subject:Production Manager

Send an SMS to 44xxxxxxxxx

Improvements to Workflow E-mails in 3.010

We are pleased to announce that a new feature has been added to Focus version 3.010 to improve how an IFTTT recipe can filter and/or include more useful information in a Workflow triggered Text message.

When creating a new (or editing an existing) Workflow within Focus, two new tick boxes are available within the Email tab.

Include Status: When checked, the Green, Amber or Red status is included at the end of the Workflow email subject.

Include Count: When checked, the Count value of the Workflow is included at the end of the Workflow email subject. For example, if the Workflow had calculated 2 instances of the condition the Workflow was configured to monitor, then the Count would be 2. The Workflow also includes the total potential instances, so if a Workflow was created to monitor Missing Clockings within a group of 20 employees, the count would be 2 / 20.

So now that these values can be included within the subject of Workflow emails, an IFTTT recipe can be created to only act on emails that had the correct Workflow subject AND were of status Red for example. The fact that the count and the status will now be included within the SMS Text massage also provides more useful details to the recipient.