Corporate Communications
for The Modern Worforce

DIGITAL SIGNAGE WHITE PAPER

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The Modern Workforce

The word corporation comes from a Latin word meaning "body", which signifies a group of people operating as a single unit, as well as a single individual's physical body. A corporation is a group of people working toward the same goals, under the same rules and focused on the same mission while promoting the same brand.

For a very small business with 30 or fewer people, internal communications are pretty straightforward and often face to face. But as the size of the company grows, it spreads out over a larger physical area, and it becomes more difficult to keep everyone updated and informed – working from the same playbook. Some companies have more than 10,000 employees, and communications for that many people is certainly a challenge.

The modern workforce is changing. Millennials are already the largest part of the workforce and the Census Bureau predicts the generation will peak at 75 million in the US. Their children, the post-millennials (Generation Z, iGen) are close on their heels – already making up 5% of the workforce. These people grew up with the internet and the world wide web, and the younger end of the millennial generation also grew up with smartphones and tablets. As a result, they are used to having a lot of information at their fingertips, and have very different priorities and expectations for the workplace than generations that came before them.

Values and transparency are ranked as very important by these workers. They want regular feedback, want to contribute to the society at large, need to feel like what they are doing has real value in the world, and subjects like sustainability are a priority for them. They also don't have a problem changing jobs if they are dissatisfied, which costs US businesses a staggering amount of money. One major factor for them is feeling engaged at work (lack of engagement is another huge drain on the corporate bottom line – costing over $500 billion a year, according to some estimates).

In the past, many employees operated fairly comfortably within hierarchical structures and expected only certain kinds of information to be available to them, leaving other matters to the "higher ups". But today's employees not only want but expect access to all kinds of information, or they will simply move on. This represents a major shift for internal communications professionals.

Digital signage is a comprehensive tool for communicating a wide variety of information to any audience, whether it's the public or employees. There are many tools and strategies that can be employed to satisfy the needs of today's workforce, keeping them engaged and informed so they are motivated to do their best for the corporation, helping the company remain competitive in today's business environment.

Modern Employees Care About...

Transparency
+
Collaboration
+
Recognition
+
Goals
+
Support
+
Community
+
Sustainability
+
Growth

Transparency is Key

Values are just as important as goals to the modern workforce, especially when it comes to the fastest-growing segment – millennials and Gen Z. IBM reports that a quarter of millennials say their number one career goal is to "make a positive impact" on their organization. Companies should not only have clear targets but should also have a clear sense of doing the "right" thing and improving the world around them. And they need to let their employees know about it.

Transparency is a key factor for success in today's business environment, where employees' expectations can help or hinder a company in very real terms. The word "transparency" literally means "something shown through, as in viewed by light shining through it or by projection." That brings to mind digital signage, and how it can help you remind your employees of just what your organization stands for.

According to a survey from Eagle Hill Consulting, 47% of Americans don't know what their employer's key values are. That's nearly half, and unacceptable to younger generations. The general assumption is that the company exists only to make money, no matter what, which fosters a cynical attitude and results in lower engagement.

Employees want transparency, but past experience has not made them expect it. GeckoBoard says a whopping 76% of employees don't trust managers who don't share company data. RaptMedia, in a report called Detached, Disengaged and Disenchanted, suggests 57% of employees say their leaders are "out of touch" with the workforce, and an infographic by SalesForce.com shows that less than half of US workers believe their organizations are truthful or effective when they do tackle issues. Those are not good numbers.

Sharing information gives positive dividends. HubSpot reports that 50% of employees say that bosses sharing data and information significantly impacts productivity and motivation in a positive way. And Ultimate Software shows that three-fourths of employees would stay longer at an organization that listens to and addresses their concerns.

Encourage Feedback

Messages that succinctly explain the company's overall goals and values help people keep these in mind as they go through their day. Just this one simple thing can go a long way to shifting an employee's mindset.

You also want employees to feel like they are being listened to. Town Hall style meetings have become very popular, allowing lower-level employees and upper management to discuss and share things in an informal atmosphere. But you don't have to limit that type of collaboration to once a month – with your digital signage, this can become part of the daily organizational culture.

Get feedback from your audience about what they want to see on screens, or any other business topic, by creating an online survey or suggestion form. Promote these on your digital signs using a short URL or QR tag that routes to the webpage. You can also have a table near the screen, so people can fill in the questions on a physical copy right then and there (just make sure to also include pens and a box to put the completed forms in, and send people around periodically to make sure everything is well-stocked). Even better – do both.

If a suggestion is implemented, make sure to recognize that person on screens. This motivates others to try out their ideas as well. Use screens to display the most common, most pressing and most interesting input and the responses.

People want to feel like their leaders are taking an active interest in their suggestions, so while initial comments may be anonymous, make sure you assign a specific manager to respond. The American Psychological Association finds that 89% of workers who have leadership support are likely to recommend a company as a good place to work.

With just a few simple additions to your digital signage playlists, you can turn your company into one that feels open and honest, that recognizes the value of employees' contributions and concerns, and helps break down the barriers between management and their teams.

10 Corporate Teams that Benefit fromDigital Signage

EXECUTIVES
When employees are engaged and informed, your company does better – higher productivity, lower turnover and overall job satisfaction – use digital signage to drive change and impact your bottom line.

SALES
Motivate your sales team to excellence by showing top performers, recent contracts, current sales figures, progress toward quotas, and more.

ACCOUNTING
Keep everyone in the loop with current metrics and progress toward financial goals. Show quarterly numbers, profits and trends over time.

PRODUCTION
Include and encourage your factory floor with safety tips and updates, training opportunities, current inventory information, new delivery procedures and critical KPIs.

CUSTOMER SERVICE
Keep everyone energized and ready to support your clients. Show recent promotions, queuing systems, CSAT levels, call center data, new product or service tips, training and webinar schedules and more.

COMMUNICATIONS
Internal communications can be shown in an attractive, engaging way – much better than printed posters and newsletters. Empower and engage your workforce by grabbing their attention with movement and video.

HUMAN RESOURCES
Extend your influence to everywhere employees congregate – break rooms, shared offices, elevator banks. Highlight employee anniversaries and birthdays, current benefits offerings, deadlines for paperwork and more.

IT/NETWORK
Move your company beyond email to show dynamically-presented data by integrating collaborative apps, social media and webpages, calendar programs – anything you can show on a screen can go on a digital sign.

MARKETING
Inspire your workforce with information on products and services currently on offer or launching soon. Highlight new pricing and distributors, and keep everyone updated on your latest promotions.

FACILITIES
Use digital signage touchscreens with interactive wayfinding and directories, energy dashboards and real-time shuttle mapping to enhance the visitor experience and improve safety.

Engaging Communications

Digital signage allows you to engage people across your organization to reinforce culture, boost morale, increase effectiveness and foster inclusion.

Whether it's a single screen, a corporate campus or screens spread across the globe, you can easily publish HR announcements, company news, product and service updates, safety alerts and more. Anything that goes on your intranet or in an all-employee email should go on your screens. And remember that engagement is the primary goal.

Gallup's State of the American Workplace study shows that companies who engage employees have higher productivity, profitability, and customer satisfaction. They also have less turnover and absenteeism, and fewer safety incidents. With this kind of proven bottom-line impact, it's important that we focus on digital signage engagement instead of just messaging.

Your digital signs are competing with a lot of stimulus and daily distractions for your audience. In order to engage, your content has to stand out and grab attention. Not only that, but it has to have some way to connect and motivate viewers to interact with the information in some way.

Uniqueness

People are more likely to notice something if it's out of the ordinary. Although you may want to incorporate brand standards to coordinate colors or templates for digital signage messages, you need to leave room for creativity and distinctiveness in communications. If you have a message that needs to stand out – make it do just that. Design a unique and stimulating message so your audience will notice and remember it. However, keep in mind that if you do this for every visual, your important messages will get lost in the crowd again.

Personalization

Although it's not practical to tailor messages to each viewer, you can reach out to viewer types or groups that you've classified for certain communications. If you're sales events, be sure to use keywords and visuals that appeal to that group. If you're working on an employee benefits campaign, use emotional triggers like family photos or a retirement home on the beach. You'll get more attention and retention if people connect on a personal or emotional level with your message.

Participation

Sometimes you may have more success telling part of the story than all of it. Audiences like to be part of the narrative. You can let them join in by delivering messages that prompt them to ask questions or seek out more information. Sometimes a teaser is better than a text-crowded announcement. Prompt people to go to a website or touch the screen – any call to action to get them to engage with the content and participate in the story.

Automated Content
You need to show timely, relevant information to keep your audience's attention. In a very short while, your viewers will become used to getting news and updates from your digital signage system. But first you have to grab their attention with visual hooks.

Using auto-updating messages and tickers is a great way to include these visual hooks and lessen the burden on your content creators. After an initial set-up, these continue refreshing the information automatically. Your audience always gets the most current data available, and you can concentrate on using your digital signage system to get your own messages out to them. As they become reliant on screens for this info, they'll be sure to see your other communications:

- Day, date and time
- Weather
- News headlines
- Event calendars
- Local traffic

- Stock updates
- Sports scores
- Health tips
- Flight updates
- Inspirational quotes

- Social posts
- Queuing info
- Shuttle maps
- Countdowns
- RSS feeds

Event Schedules

Every organization has meetings, conferences, training or some event that requires an itinerary or schedule. These are great sources for fast, easy digital signage content, so why not publish your schedules on your big screens?

Event schedules posted to digital displays allow for real-time updates that printed notices can't economically match. You can organize your schedule messages by date, topic or room – whatever system makes the most sense for your facility and your audience. You can pull data straight from your calendar and scheduling programs to automatically update displays throughout the day for timely and convenient delivery of agendas.

Expand your ideas of event scheduling. Instead of just posting meeting times, consider posting significant benchmarks and entertaining content:

- Visitor itineraries
- Speaker bios
- Wayfinding information
- Break schedules

Remember to keep schedules clear and concise. If you have event descriptions or instructions, deliver these in separate messages or refer viewers to a webpage.

Employee Recognition

Regular feedback is crucial to employees, and using your digital signage to give some of that feedback can provide what they need while also saving managers time. Instead of telling every member of the sales team that they are on target for quotas, show a message on your displays so everyone in the company sees it. Even departments that have little to do with one another will start to feel like they're all part of the same team. This drastically increases engagement.

Temkin Group's Employee Engagement Benchmark Study says highly engaged employees are three times more likely to do something good for the company that was not expected of them.

The "Why"
"Good job!" Two little words that can make all the difference to an employee. Employee recognition is one of the hot topics these days in all business sectors, and with good reason. Studies and reports from many different sources show over and over again that people want to be recognized and valued for their work:

- 91% of workers say they feel motivated to do their best when they have leadership support (American Psychological Association Work and Well-Being Survey)

- Employees who report feeling valued by their employer are 60% more likely to report they are moti-vated to do their very best for their employer (American Psychology Association, Center for Organiza-tional Excellence, Workplace Survey)

- 75% of employees receiving at least monthly recognition (even if informal) are satisfied with their job (BambooHR)

- 68% of employees who receive accurate and consistent feedback feel fulfilled in their jobs (Clutch)

- 67% of employees are happier and more productive when managers focus on the positive aspects of their performance (Gallup)

- When asked which recognition initiative has the biggest impact on employee engagement, HR pros cited performance awards (33%), anniversary awards (20%) and personal notes (10%) (Michael C. Fina)

- Nearly one-third of employees would rather be recognized in a company-wide email from an execu-tive than receive a bonus of $500 (BambooHR)

- According to employees, the most memorable recognition comes from an employee's manager (28%), high-level leader or CEO (24%), the manager's manager (12%), a customer (10%) and peers (9%) (Gal-lup)

- Employees who believe their managers can name their strengths are 71% more likely to feel engaged and energized (The VIA Institute on Character)

- 26% of millennials say recognition motivates them to do their best at work (Staples and about a hun-dred other reports and surveys)

- 27% of workers strongly agree that the feedback they currently receive helps them do their work bet-ter (Gallup)

The "How"

If you want your employees to be engaged, then employee recognition needs to become a priority. Just paying lip service to employee recognition with automatic praise is not going to be enough. In fact, recognition that feels false or like a manager is simply ticking boxes HR has given them can do more damage than saying nothing at all. The key is recognition has to be:

- **Visible** – Everyone needs to see that an individual or team has been singled out for their efforts.
- **Frequent** – There should be a culture of recognition in your organization so that the praise doesn't seem out of place, fostering jealousy.
- **Fair** – Everyone has to have a chance to get recognized. Just singling out the sales team for meet-ing targets kind of leaves people in accounting out of the loop. Get everyone engaged by giving everyone a chance.
- **Specific** – The praise should be about something specific, the more specific the better. Telling people "nice work, keep it up" gives them nothing to focus on. Even something like "great energy this week" at least tells them something.
- **Sincere** – If it seems false, or rote, then your recognition will actually feel more insulting than if you'd said nothing at all. Making things specific helps make them seem authentic.

Just as the last two items go together, visibility and frequency also go together. This is where your digi-tal signage comes in. There is nothing that is as visible as your digital signs. Your employees are used to looking at them for anything from the date and time to announcements, performance metrics, dead-line reminders – even what's on the menu at the café.

Putting some recognition messages into your playlists guarantees the largest possible audience for them, and they can be scheduled to appear as frequently as you like.

The "What"

What should get recognized? More traditional ideas are things like milestones – birthdays, years of service, anniversaries of when they first came to work there, etc. Meeting or exceeding targets is an-other one that fits comfortably with any company management style. Having employee appreciation days, or team appreciation days, is also something that could have a positive effect, and gets more people involved.

Peer recognition is also valuable. Some companies have regular, weekly recognition shout outs to oth-er teams and departments, so everyone gets involved in the process. They nominate who went above and beyond the previous week. This not only recognizes those who deserve it, but knits everyone to-gether into a single cohesive unit.

Recognition may be enough, but perhaps some sort of reward is also in order (especially in organiza-tions that use gamification techniques). Many people think of rewards in terms of money. But studies have shown that recognition is more important than money and throwing a dollar amount at some-thing someone has worked hard on can have the counterintuitive effect of cheapening the praise. Ex-periential and individually-tailored rewards work best. If the rewards feel worthwhile and special, people will appreciate it more.

Use your digitals to showcase the possibilities – high-quality photographs of potential rewards can be quite an enticement. Even if the reward is something intangible, like extra vacation days, a picture (like a person relaxing on a white sand beach) can really get them interested. You can even have testimoni-als from people showing how they used and enjoyed their rewards. These can go up on your social media, which in turn can be shown on your digital signage.

Digital signage is a cornerstone to any comprehensive employee recognition initiative. The screens are everywhere and looked at frequently. They can be used to show praise for a job well done, and to en-tice others to behave likewise by advertising possible rewards. Before you know it, you'll have an in-credibly positive, productive workplace, where everyone feels valued.

Profiles & Spotlights

A profile is a simple message that highlights a particular employee. You still want to follow best practic-es for digital signage design, so don't cram everything you know about the person into a single mes-sage. Select one to three items to highlight.

Employee of the month is certainly one way to single someone out for praise and positive attention. The same goes for welcome messages spotlighting new employees. But there's a lot more possible with digital signage profiles – each employee is a complete person with their own history and achievements at the organization as well as a whole life and series of interests outside of work.

Even a small organization that uses digital signage has a reasonable number of people working for it, and larger ones can have literally thousands of employees. So, there's plenty of raw material to use for creating profiles. And each person can probably have two or more profiles, each with different infor-mation. For example, let's say a company of 30 employees gives each person two profiles. That's 30 weeks of content if they put two new ones up each week. It's probably a good idea to include at least two people in your playlist at a time, so there isn't too much attention focused on one person. Plus, other people won't have to wait too long before they see themselves up on the screens.

You should certainly make sure that everyone in the company gets their turn in a profile message – try to imagine how Joanna would feel if she were the only person in her department left out of the fun. And while the vast majority of people will happily participate, there might be a couple of truly shy people who really don't want their picture and information up on the screens. Try to get them inter-ested, but if they are adamant, respect their wishes. Otherwise, all the positive benefits digital signage profiles can bring to an employee will be reversed, creating feelings of anxiety instead of belonging.

You'll need a picture of the person, some professional data and some personal data. Employees can supply their own pictures (people almost always choose flattering photos of themselves), or you can standardize the look by taking pictures in house. Try to make sure the person is recognizable in the picture – part of the point of profiles is to create a sense of community, where everybody knows eve-ryone else, or can at least recognize them. If you want to have some fun by showing baby pictures or lifestyle shots, just make sure you follow up with a current pic.

Professional data can probably be gotten from HR or their manager – like when they started with the organization, which department they're in and their job title. That's a bit dry, though, so consider add-ing at least one fun or personal bit of info – like "Kamal is Project Manager for Development. He start-ed working here April 14 seven years ago, and he loves frisbee golf." Suddenly Kamal is more than just a face in the cafeteria, or the guy that sits in that one office.

For personal information, you might go out to managers and ask them to gather it. You could also cre-ate a fun questionnaire with a few funny or unexpected questions for employees to fill out them-selves. Things like what part of town they live in, where they grew up or went to school, some of their interests and hobbies, a short quote they try to live by, a ten-word bio they write themselves, the punchline to their favorite joke, etc. The more of the person's personality that can come through, the better.

You can add these profiles to your blog or intranet, maybe giving more information than what's in the digital signage message. This is a good way to drive traffic to these portals. You can even make profiles public- or customer-facing by adding them to your social media – a quick Facebook post, a tweet, a pic-ture on Instagram. This helps integrate all your information dissemination efforts into a cohesive whole. Plus, it helps out the people and departments responsible for coming up with content for these other offerings.

You can color-code profile messages, so your audience knows it's a profile on the screens before they even start reading the text. In fact, color-coding can be used to create different kinds of profiles. The most common way is what is outlined here – a picture and some brief info about a person. But maybe it turns out that a whole lot of people in your organization are into running, or come from the same city, or are interested in wine. In that case, you can have a series of profiles messages about the Wine Club, with a nice wine-red background, maybe an interesting fact about wine, and a list of people in your organization who say they're connoisseurs. Joe in Accounting might be pleasantly surprised to find out that Harold in Operations also loves wine (or running or the Batman films, or whatever). Creat-ing these sorts of bonds and connections is really the main point of doing employee profiles in the first place.

You don't have to stick to profiles of people. Initiatives, projects, products and services can also get a spotlight message on your digital signs. Personalizing non-human elements of an organization can also create a bit of fun and a feeling of connectedness. "Meet our new widget" (or whatever it is) is a lot more effective than "We have a new widget".

So, technology can actually emphasize the humanity of a workplace. With not much effort, organiza-tions can go the extra mile for their employees, giving them some positive attention and building community. Profiles on your digital signs remind your audience that the organization is made up of people – people who are as complex and varied as they are themselves. That's a way to help turn people from co-workers into colleagues.

Metrics & KPIs

Another great way to keep employees in the loop in to display metrics. These are measurements of the activities and performance within an organization. Your workers want to be kept in the loop and want to do their best, and today's workers expect a certain level of transparency from the companies they work for. Digital signage can be a powerful tool in getting your employees involved in how pro-cesses are performing and improving overall productivity.

Productivity statistics are one thing you can share – display progress toward goals on a daily or weekly basis. Have teams compete against one another to see who can meet their quota first, or who can ex-ceed quota by the greatest percentage in a given timeframe? Putting these messages into your playlist reminds everyone of what overall targets are and lets them try their best in a friendly competitive at-mosphere.

Short-term milestones are good to display – they let your workers think of their jobs in manageable chunks of time and create a sense of urgency. Show customer service queues and calls completed so your reps have a constant sense of what they've accomplished and what's ahead. Display inventory and parts on hand so workers know what's available and what needs to be ordered.

Employees can also set their own metrics, and then see each quarter if those were realistic and achievable goals. They can then work with their managers to alter goals as need be. Another idea is to evaluate teams rather than individuals. When team goals are set, these can be displayed on your digi-tal signs, letting everyone know what's happening and inspiring them to think of new heights to aim for themselves.

Good metrics also add to a positive work environment. They help create a common purpose and re-move the intimidation factor – instead of the boss gathering everyone together to give them the lat-est figures, it's all up on the screens. Even though "the bosses" put the information up on screens, people feel like they "discovered" it themselves. This leads to a sense of ownership, boosting intrinsic motivations.

Leveraging your digital signage to keep workers engaged and motivated to constantly improve and do their best is a simple way to see real measurable results in productivity and job satisfaction. Simple tricks like these will do far more to make your employees happy than an end-of-year bonus. And, it will keep them looking at your displays every day.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

These are performance measurements that look at progress towards specific strategic goals or achiev-ing various levels of operational targets. They define a set of values to be measured, then those values are fed into systems that summarize that information, where they become "indicators". KPIs should always be SMART:

- **Specific** – the measurement has a specific purpose for the organization
- **Measurable** – able to be converted into numbers and compared with goals or past performance
- **Achievable** – something that individuals or teams can actually do in the time allotted
- **Relevant** – tied into the overall goals and success criteria of the organization
- **Time**-**Targeted** – the values cover a predefined and relevant time period

Because KPIs are linked to target values, it's easy to see if expectations are being met or not. Choose something important to measure, find a way to measure it, and then display that on your screens for the target audience. When employees see how the company is doing in an area that is relevant to their jobs, they feel included and create their own intrinsic motivations to do more to reach that goal.

If you integrate your digital signage with a data collection system (an inventory system, etc.), your KPIs can be updated automatically by the software, with no need for a person to take time to enter the stats. You can also display data from Excel spreadsheets, or SharePoint and other online collaboration software. And because the data is updated in real time, everyone always has the most current picture of how the organization, or their department, is performing. This also allows a quick response to a sudden downturn, allowing efficiencies to be increased and corrections made the moment something goes amiss.

Dashboards

Dashboards are a powerful way to present large amounts of data quickly and easily to your audience, engage employees and even encourage changes in behavior. Anything you can measure can be pre-sented on a digital dashboard – energy consumption, CSAT rates, current lead generation, sales tar-gets, just to name a few.

Dashboards give context to content – there's a lot of data out there to sift thought, but you and your team have carefully curated the most important factors to present, saving your audience time.

This is a lot more effective than simply pointing people to a series of reports, spreadsheets or webpages that are filled with dozens of graphs and tons of statistics. People might intend to review it, but they just won't get around to it since the task seems so daunting.
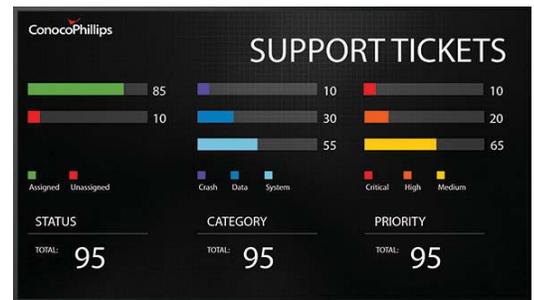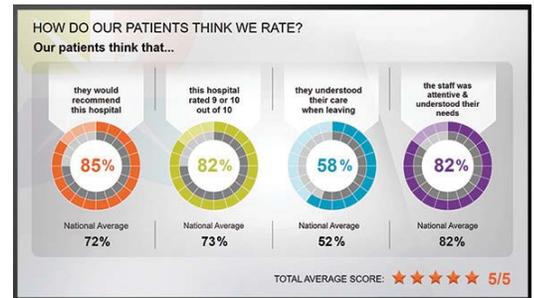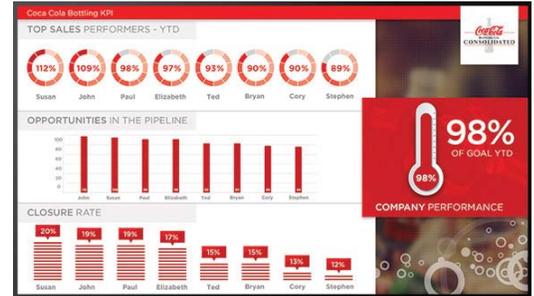
Dashboards pull in data from CRMs, spreadsheets and multiple other sources, presenting that data graphically so all the information needed can be taken in at a glance. This is key to good dashboard de-sign – keep it simple, just the most relevant and illustrative data streams. If you overload your screen, you'll also overload your audience, and they'll stop paying attention.

When choosing a design, consider how it looks and where the eye naturally goes when looking at the display. Make sure your key information is obvious and clear. And use space well – don't overcrowd your message with too much data. Just enough to get the job done. Using charts and graphs lets you show a lot of information in an easy-to-digest visual.

Just about anything that can be measured can be displayed as a dashboard. If you are having a healthy lifestyle campaign, show FitBit data from different groups. If you are trying to more people to open their emails faster, show that data.

And carefully consider how you want to present the information – use creative digital signage to be the most effective you can be. First off, think about whose behavior you are trying to change. Then choose a dashboard style that will be most effective – do you want to show daily or weekly data, or real-time operational information (like energy dashboards use)? Think about how often you will want to refresh the information you share.

By showing your dashboard data on digital signage displays, you'll get more people doing what you want them to, and, if you do it right, they won't feel like they're being made to do anything. They'll change their behavior all on their own. And since dashboards can update data in real-time, people can see the effects of their efforts immediately. No more waiting for the quarterly report to see progress – it's right there on the screens, every day.

Professional Development

Companies that offer professional development will get a better range of applicants, and applicants today are starting to require this before they will seriously consider hiring on at a company. New digital tools already exist to make this a more interesting, varied and cost-effective experience.

A Gallup study says 87% of millennials say career growth opportunities are "very important". The American Staffing Association finds that 55% of employees across all currently working genera-tions say that, if they were offered more training opportunities, they could advance professionally.

Edenred went further, discovering that 68% of workers say training and development is the most im-portant workplace policy, followed by working hours flexibility (74%) and promotion of health at work (72%). More skills mean more employment and advancement opportunities for people, especially if they work on a freelance basis.

A company that offers learning opportunities is likely to attract motivated workers who want to im-prove to increase their own prospects in the future. And companies are starting to get the message – CareerBuilder says that 68% of employers offer training programs; 71% offer soft skills and 72% offer hard skills.

In recent years, there's been a lot of talk about Professional Development (PD) or Learning and Devel-opment (L&D). One thing is certain – the old mindset that PD is just an occasional lunch-and-learn or workshop is gone, being replaced with more dynamic ideas:

- **CPD (Continuous Professional Development)** – an approach to L&D that views skills development as an ongoing process that integrates into the daily work flow, to help professionals not only do their jobs better, but keep abreast of new ideas and innovations, and future developments in the industry. Includes:
    - Daily input and interactions with others in the same field, often via the web
    - Sharing insights and both successes and failures with others, adding to the collective knowledge pool

- **MPL (Modern Professional Learning)** – Mainly self-led on-demand problem solving and continuous development, often outside of work hours and on the web. Includes:
  - Career Planning
  - Continuous improvement
  - Keeping up to date with innovations and new ideas in the industry
  - Solving performance and learning problems
  - Maximizing each day's work

- **MWL (Modern Workplace Learning)** – modern approach to training and e-learning that considers how people learn today, and helps foster a social organization that values learning that comes from cooperative work. Includes:
  - Flexible resources
  - Social learning and collaboration
  - Developing skills relevant in the modern context

- **ELL (Employee-Led Learning)** – supported by the organization, professionals manage their own learning aligned with organizational goals and share the results with others. Includes:
  - Professional networks and events
  - Online communities
  - Leveraging and sharing external resources
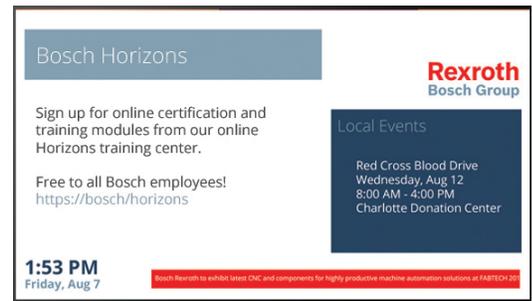
All of these different approaches interconnect and can even support one another. And all of them can give at least some control to the professionals themselves, which increases their focus and satisfaction at work, as well as their productivity.

Many organizations outsource training to external HR companies. And many of those companies report that the majority of an workers remain unaware of professional development opportunities available to them.

Even if some or all of L&D is outsourced, the idea is to create an atmosphere in which professional improvement is valued and woven into the very fabric of the organization. This is where digital signage comes in handy. It's already everywhere, and employees are used to looking at the screens to get all kinds of information – from company-wide and departmental announcements to progress towards goals to weather and traffic updates.

Just add some professional development messages into your playlist, and suddenly the whole tenor of the workplace changes. Several times a day, employees will be reminded of training options they can access, while seeing that it's a priority for the organization. Digital signage messages can be used to reinforce what's already out there and promote new initiatives.

If a company has a training hub on the intranet, messages on digital signs can remind people of this, and new courses and opportunities can be highlighted. Reimbursement schemes are also becoming more popular – some companies have a certain amount of money per employee for PD, but the employee decides what to use it for.For example, a company that does a lot of international business might offer to reimburse employees who take language lessons and pass a test certifying a certain level of proficiency.

If you have interactive screens, you can offer quick training modules, videos and quizzes that people can complete right at the screen. Something as simple as tablets in a break room can entice people to participate when they have a few spare minutes.

And don't forget to recognize those who achieve their goals – put up a list of courses completed, certifications and other congratulations for those who participate.

Social Networks

Social media meets all the criteria of engaging employee content: It's modern. It's social. It's real-time. If you're trying to build community in the workplace, why not leverage your existing online communities?

"Social" is a concept that can be reinforced throughout your organization by tying online and offline communities together. Whether it's Twitter, Facebook, YouTube or Google+, you can build community and boost participation for one or all your social media sites by incorporating them into your digital signage strategy.

By advertising your social media efforts, you not only create buzz and excitement around your posts, but can attract more followers and entice people to follow your pages. It's also another great source of content that you don't have to maintain since it's auto-updating on digital signs.

You can start very simply – just posting "Find Us on Facebook" or "Follow Us on Twitter" messages with the page name or handle will let people know that you're active on social media and remind those who haven't visited your pages for a while to check in. You'd be surprised how much attention you can draw to the screens just by showing a Facebook, Google + or Twitter logo.

If you use an interactive screen to show your social media sites, people can scroll through your pages to catch up on the latest posts or tweets. They may not check your sites when they're at home or on their smartphone, but the attraction of a big touchscreen is sure to draw attention. (Don't worry – you can specify how much interactivity you want. You may not want people posting or touching links that go to another page, so you can limit the interactive areas on the screen.)

Whether you're using your signs to promote your social media pages or using social media messages to hook viewers so they see your other communications, remember that the content should always be relevant and targeted to your audience.

Sustainability & Activism

Another thing that is very important to modern workers is sustainability. Things like energy and water conservation have direct financial benefits – less electricity equals a lower bill from the power company – but there are more long-term goals as well. Companies that implement sustainability practices also have better employee engagement, retention and productivity. These all lead to substantial savings across the board.

The Staples Workplace Index shows that 63% of workers say sustainability is a priority when considering employment. 86% of new professionals or soon to be college graduates say it's important that a company they work for behaves in a socially responsible way, according to a Nielsen study. So, to attract high-level talent, it's valuable to have some green initiatives.

Once you have the best and the brightest, you want to keep them. Replacing an employee costs the company 70-200% of that employee's salary (different studies give different figures). A white paper from Ultimate Software shows that 85% of current employees are more likely to stay with an employer that exhibits a high level of social responsibility.

Apart from a comprehensive recycling program, your digital signage is already your number one green solution. It replaces printed signs, so no outlay for paper and ink. The messages automatically go up and retire from the playlist when outdated, so no one has to spend time going around taking down the signs and recycling them. Displays today are very power-conscious and have power-saving protocols in place to shut down and use less energy in off hours. And screens that are already on, like desktop computers, can switch to a screensaver mode that shows your digital signage playlists, greatly increasing your signage real estate at no additional cost, and with no waste.

You can even directly affect behavior with digital signage messaging. For example, you might display an energy dashboard with current electricity usage in the building, along with an optimal target. People will see the goal, see the current usage stats, and act to meet the goal – turning off lights in unused rooms, putting computers in sleep mode, etc. They can immediately see the effects of their efforts right there on the screen, as energy usage goes down towards the target.

On the job, people also want to feel engaged and like they're doing something worthwhile. A study by the Society for Human Resource Management says that 94% of millennials want to use their skills to benefit a cause. Perhaps that's something that can be incorporated into their jobs. But if not, having company outreach initiatives or offering paid volunteer time can give employees an outlet for these impulses, while increasing their loyalty to your organization because you've provided them with the opportunity to do something meaningful.

You can advertise all your initiatives, show off the newest ergonomic chairs, promote a blood drive, display detailed information on healthy and fresh food available in the cafeteria, and even drive traffic to an online sustainability portal you maintain on the web.

The more options, opportunities and information you supply your employees, the happier they will be, the longer they'll stay and the more productive they'll be. And your digital signage is at the heart of it all.

Gamification

Flow is a concept by Mihály Csíkszentmihályi – a state of mind people enter when they're totally immersed in a task; you don't notice the outside world, lose track of time, feel in control, feel happy or like you are having fun, and become more creative and productive. It's a focused motivation. Gamification is an attempt to stimulate Flow in people by introducing traditional game design elements, like rules, scoring, achievements and competition, in non-game contexts to foster a sense of play while people are actually doing something productive. Work doesn't have to seem like work all the time, after all.

Gartner says that organizations that use gamification techniques have 250% more growth than those that don't. Aberdeen Group found that companies with good gamification solutions have 35% less employee turnover and a workforce that is 48% more engaged.

Since digital signage is unparalleled for grabbing people's attention, it's the perfect place to advertise games and rewards. Because people must interact with your messages to "play", there's already built-in ROI. The more people participate, the more effective your message is. It's easy:
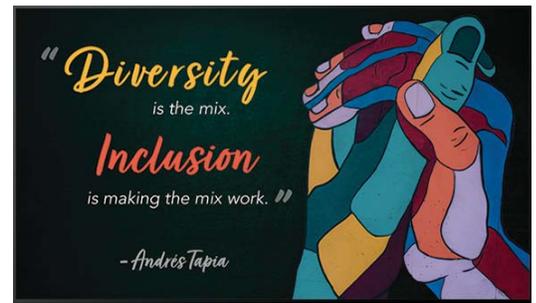
1. Create your game – make sure it aligns with a goal.
2. Advertise it on your screens with instructions and rules.
3. Show progress on screens using easy-to-read graphics.
4. Recognize winners throughout the facility, along with what they've won, encouraging others to participate in future games.

The incentives need to be tangible and attractive. Things like prize drawings, food trucks for a special department lunch, and discounts at local or on-site venues are all things people would like. Some companies create a progressive system, with winners receiving points they can accumulate over time that can eventually be traded in at a virtual "shop" for real-world prizes and rewards. A few tips for creating gamified solutions:

- Before creating a gamified solution, think about the goal. Make sure the goal is something specific and tangible. "Be green" is too vague – make it something like "recycle 75% of all paper in a single week".

- Give points for each task that needs to be finished. This allows progress to be measured and gives you immediate ROI. It also gives you data to display as incentive along the way.

- Have clearly defined rewards, so people know what they can get if they win. And make it more than just something abstract like points. Have actual things that people can use in the real world.

- Don't delay rewards – hand out the prize as soon as possible once a game ends. If you dally, people won't feel the satisfaction and may not participate in future contests.

- If there are repetitive tasks involved, create a level system that gives the illusion of progress. Unlock rewards and bonuses for people who reach certain levels.

- Make sure that your gamified tasks aren't too easy, but also not too hard. Always think of your audience, and experiment, evaluate and adjust.

- Make it easy for people to participate – either by pressing buttons right there on an interactive screen, using their mobile device to go to a webpage, or send a text, or snap a photo.

With a little gamification, you can transform your digital signage from something that just pushes information out to your audience into something that encourages them to interact with your organization in real, measurable ways.

Remote Workers

Remote work is here, and here to stay. So, every communicator has to be thinking about engaging remote employees and how they'll fold new tools, technologies and techniques into their strategy.

To keep remote workers engaged, you can publish your digital signage playlists to webpages, intranets, collaboration apps, or even embed a link to an HTML5 playlist in emails.

This lets your remote audience choose the way they want to interact and engage with your messages, and bridges communications between your in-office and remote workforce.

Conclusion

Employees who have easy access to information feel more integrated into the corporation and their community within it, so they work harder to further that organization's goals.

The workplace is changing because the workforce is different. A corporation may act as a single entity, but it is made up of individuals. A modern workforce deserves a modern internal communications solution, one that recognizes their unique needs and priorities.

Digital signage is an immensely flexible, scalable tool for internal communications that can do much more than just push out digital memos to employees.

With just a little effort, an organization of any size can give employees what they want – more information about company goals, how they are impacting those goals and their community, a sense that the company cares about more than just profit, and that there are opportunities for improvement and advancement.

Want to learn more? Contact us at **salesteam@visix.com**.

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