How A Global Flooring Giant Is Using Digital Signage To Drive Workforce Communications & Plant Efficiency

Summary

Mohawk Industries, the world's largest flooring supplier, is using UCView's digital signage software platform to improve workforce communications and maximize uptime and efficiency on plant floors. Based on employee feedback and cost-savings, what started as a test is now being rolled out globally.

Challenge

The global recession hit the commercial and residential building industry hard, and the world's biggest flooring supplier was not immune to the slowdown in new building and renovation activity. Shrinking demand forced Mohawk Industries to reduce its workforce by roughly 20 percent, and the company saw morale start to slip as staff worried about their futures.

In workplaces, one of the biggest contributors to employee attitudes is the quality of communications. Mohawk's Human Resources department realized company methods for getting information to all staff, across all facilities, wasn't fully working. Part of the problem was a large percentage of staff working in manufacturing and distribution didn't have access to email at work. Getting local managers to effectively relay to their line staff the emails they got from head office was at best unreliable. There were bulletin boards, but what was posted wasn't necessarily seen.

The communications gap was particularly frustrating because Mohawk has staff benefits and services that are the envy of the manufacturing industry, but a lot of their workers knew little or nothing about them.

Client Profile

Based in rural Georgia, Mohawk Industries has been in business for more than 130 years and is now the world's largest supplier of commercial and residential floor products.

Mohawk produces broadloom carpet, ceramic tile, laminate, wood, stone, vinyl, rugs and other home products, operating under such premier brands as Mohawk, Karastan, Lees, Bigelow, Columbia, Century, Dal-Tile, American Olean and Quick-Step.

Mohawk employs more than 25,000 people in some 500 plants in the United States and internationally.

Solution

Human resources saw an opportunity to use large digital display monitors visible to most or all staff, in common areas, to distribute important messages about benefits, services and critical workplace safety tips. Vincent Grosso, a communications specialist with Mohawk, developed a homegrown trial project that put a pair of flat-screen TVs at a Mohawk facility in nearby Dalton, Georgia, producing his own content and uploading material manually.

That initial programming heavily referenced corporate health and safety websites, so Grosso and his HR colleagues started paying attention to the online analytics that measured traffic. "We were seeing spikes, like crazy, as soon as we turned the screens on," recalls Grosso, "so we knew people were seeing the messages and responding to them."

That was enough evidence to convince Mohawk to move beyond a test and develop a full program. It also meant the company needed to shift to a commercial technology solution that could meet the scale of as many as 500 different facilities, all with unique content programming.

Grosso scanned the marketplace, looking at scores of solutions, before settling on UCView. He liked the solution set, and price point, the ease of use, and particularly the sense that in UCView he had a company that would help tune the solution to Mohawk's needs, and stick with him as those needs evolved.

By fall 2011, the company had more than 100 displays in 53 of its plants, and plans to roll the program out across the company's full manufacturing and distribution estate. Mohawk's central Human Resources department manages the network and develops the majority of the programming, and local plant managers who budget and opt in to the network have the capability to develop and post location-specific messages.

Varied content goals

The core programming seen by staff – on large monitors in break rooms and other areas – serves a range of purposes.

Mohawk has Healthy Life Centers at several of its major manufacturing facilities that provide services such as health risk assessments, monitoring of chronic conditions, access to healthcare coaches and free or reduced-cost prescriptions. The screens are driving awareness and traffic to the on-site centers, which is improving general wellness levels among staff and reducing long-term health care costs.

Programming also drives awareness of the wide range of other health and financial benefits available to Mohawk employees. "We drive them to a flood of benefits on our websites that a lot of our staff, until we started doing this, didn't even know were there," says Grosso.

The sheer size of Mohawk's workforce also introduces other benefits for staff that get promoted on screens, such as significant discounts for mobile phone plans from the nation's largest carriers.

Safety tips are also steadily developed and refreshed to reinforce the risks always present on busy manufacturing and shipping floors. The screens run news and local weather apps, as well as local real-time traffic maps that help plant staff plot their easiest routes home at night.

Huge cost savings

An unexpected, but powerful spin-off benefit of the UCView digital signage software platform is the integration developed with the tufting machines – essentially huge sewing machines – that make carpeting. UCView's software engineers developed the necessary interface to read and dynamically display the efficiency levels of each machine as they run. A display centrally mounted on the plant floors, within easy view of operators, shows a color-coded roundup of all the running units, offering real-time video cues of any looming problems.

Grosso says UCView's relatively simple integration work warns operators of falling efficiency levels on the machines, preventing costly breakdowns before they happen and prompting adjustments before the machines start producing flawed, unmarketable carpeting. "Company-wide, we think we'll be saving millions of dollars."

Impact

The bottom line impact will just build with the real-time efficiency reporting on the plant floor, but Mohawk is also paying close attention to how employees are reacting to this new form of communications. Awareness of benefits programs is up, and local plants are using the screens for their own notices and staff recognition.

Grosso says the HR team collectively felt if 80 percent of Mohawk staffers were receptive to the program, that was a clear indicator of a successful program. Surveys are suggesting the buy-in level is actually in the 90th percentile.

A combination of a commercial and residential building industry that's showing signs of coming back, and steady reinforcement that their employer has their back, makes a difference, says Grosso. "This is one step that makes our people feel a little bit closer to things getting better."

Working With UCView

UCView has been with us from the beginning," says Grosso. "When I was looking for a solution, I honestly felt in my conversations with the bigger software companies that they would not provide the attention that we needed."

Mohawk uses UCView's turnkey Software as a Service (SaaS) managed service option, which allows server maintenance and upgrades to be controlled by the vendor and minimizes Mohawk's day-to-day IT needs. The cloud-based service allows clients the ability to easily scale up without hardware investments or additional development, while paying a low, predictable monthly fee per site.

UCView's responsive development team has also been very important to Mohawk. "We've asked a lot of them … special things we needed," says Grosso, "and they've always responded really well, and really quickly."

About UCView

UCView is a worldwide digital signage solutions provider providing top-quality digital signage application solutions and content management software that is not only reliable, but easy and efficient to use, and affordable to operate. The objective of UCView is to allow for the convergence between display owners, the advertisers, and consumers. UCView is responsible for the installation and support of thousands of systems across the spectrum of business industries, including retail, supermarkets, government, education, hospitality, and financial. UCView is a private company and its international headquarters and main manufacturing facility is located in Northridge, California.