

Improving Performance through Better Employee Communications

Suquamish Clearwater Casino

Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort is a destination in Suquamish, WA for tourists and locals alike. The resort is nestled among the pines and cedars of the scenic Kitsap Peninsula. This expansive, luxurious retreat offers four-diamond amenities and a wide array of indoor and outdoor pleasures including a full-service spa, zero entry pool and of course, the endless excitement of video slots, blackjack, poker, craps, keno and roulette. Port Madison Enterprises is the corporation that manages the casino and resort, as well as various other retail establishments in the area including the Angeline Spa, Kiana Lodge, White Horse Golf Course, two Shell Gas stations and mini marts, one Texaco gas station and mini mart and the Agate Pass Business Park.



Background

Port Madison Enterprises needs to communicate to over 750 employees between its various establishments on a daily basis at all hours of the day and night. PME operates on multiple businesses that are open 24 hours a day. From customer promotions, to special events, to employee benefits, to corporate communications and community outreach, there is diverse information that needs to be quickly and effectively conveyed to all employees. Barbara Griffin is the Human Resources Director for all of the PME business and, in addition to overseeing employee training and development, she is responsible for managing internal communications. "We have so many employees and new things happen so quickly in our business that we need a way to share the news with our entire staff and do so almost instantly."



Prior to implementing a digital signage solution, Barbara and her team would use a combination of email, printed fliers and, chain of command messages. The preferred method to tell 750 people at once about a 2 for 1 promotion in the lounge, or about an upcoming golf tournament for guests, is email. But not every PME employee has email, and many of the employees who do have email aren't sitting in front of a computer all day. So Barbara turned to the only other two methods available – paper fliers and managers speaking to their staff. The human resources team would create hundreds of fliers and post on bulletin boards throughout every employee area in every location--sometimes as often as every day. The department would also provide updates for managers to share with their team, but it could be a few days before a manager saw everyone that reported to them.

Various departments often require different communications so Barbara was creating different kinds of fliers and updates and distributing them to the various locations quite often. This communication strategy came with several inherent challenges:

- Risk of communications being ignored or not received – paper fliers are easy to dismiss and missing a staff meeting means missing information.
- Risk of communications being displaced – paper fliers can easily fall on the ground, or into the trash.
- Difficult to keep communication current – If a new piece of information came up quickly, there is not a way to let everyone know instantly.
- Printing and hand distributing fliers and corporate communications for managers is time consuming and not a productive use of time.

Additionally, there are only two graphic designers on staff at the casino, and their time is focused on external marketing initiatives, not on creating internal fliers. “I need to be careful with how we use the resources that are available. It does not make sense to have a designer creating these fliers every day. At the same time, it doesn’t make a lot of sense for my staff and I to spend time on this. It takes away from other HR functions, which ultimately hinders productivity.”

Process

Port Madison Enterprises decided to purchase a digital signage network throughout the casino, resort and its other properties for internal employee communications. Path411, a digital signage consultant, was engaged to recommend, design and install the signage network. Path411 provided a solution based on 3M digital signage schedulers, players, and Flypaper as the content creation platform. PME chose Flypaper because of the affordable cost of entry, ease of use, the ability for non-developers to easily modify content and because it seamlessly integrated with 3M software and hardware. There are a total of eight screen locations through the properties:

- Screens 1 and 2 are in the back of the house at the casino in the employee dining room and by the time clocks at the main employee entrance. These screens play the same content.
- Screen 3 is in the casino basement where maintenance and housekeeping employees spend most of their time and is installed next to the time clock. This screen has its own dedicated media player and a customized playlist.
- Screen 4 is installed at the Texaco gas station between the back of house area by the offices. This screen plays content both general to all employees and specific to the Texaco location.
- Screens 5 and 6 are located in the employee break areas at the two Shell stations. Each Shell station plays content both general to all employees and specific to their location.



- Screen 7 is installed in the kitchen at the Kiana lodge. This screen plays content both general to all employees and specific to the Kiana Lodge location.
- Screen 8 is installed at the hotel by the employee time clocks and plays content both general to all employees and specific to the hotel location.

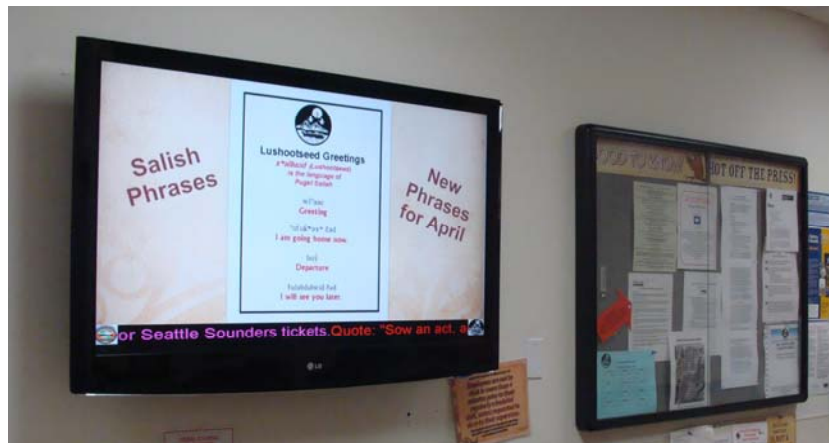
While all “customer facing” screens for PME are controlled by the marketing department, these 8 screens are exclusively dedicated to internal employee communications. They are managed entirely by the HR department and the content for these screens is also created by Barbara and her team. “I am not a graphic designer. But Flypaper is so easy that my team and I are able to create all the content ourselves and quickly make edits on the fly. This is very important because we don’t have access to our graphic designers for internal projects.” Occasionally the marketing department will provide either static or animated content that Barbara can use, but most of the content creation is handled by her and her team.

The HR team uses Flypaper to create content to communicate the following:

- Details and up-to-the-minute changes for special events, so staff may convey the messages to guests.
- Special promotions at all properties, again, so all staff can communicate the information to guests.
- Administrative announcements
- Employee announcements
- Administrative instructions and changes to processes
- Community outreach

Barbara creates and distributes much of the same Flypaper content to all of the locations at once using the 3M system, but finds it very easy to create specific messages that go to specific areas.

“It’s incredibly easy to customize content for each location and create a customized playlist for a specific screen. I no longer worry about the wrong flier going to the wrong location anymore, or worse, not being seen by everyone at that location because it’s small and not noticeable.” All in all, about 80% of the content is universal and 20% location specific.



The first phase in the transition to digital signage was to get something up quickly. After the initial training by Path411, it took PME about two weeks to learn how to use the combined Flypaper and 3M solution to create the content and distribute it to the digital screens. The first pieces of content

were daily cue cards that were previously printed on paper. Now Barbara and her team are using more and more Flypaper components and effects to build content that grabs an employee's attention. "It has been gratifying to be able to be more creative in our communications. In the past it was just about just getting a piece of valuable information up there. Now we are able to think about the best way to get the employee's attention. We really like the Airplane and Fortune cookie components."

Barbara has used the digital signage system to engage the employees more than she could before. She'll send out fun things like a "thought of the day," trivia questions, employee news, and even hold contests among the staff. "I've found that the entire staff is much more engaged with this type of communication than with what we were doing before. We are able to capture attention quickly, and keep it, in a way that was not possible with our previous communication system."

Results

Using Flypaper as part of its digital internal communication system has empowered Port Madison Enterprises to make employee communications more effective, simpler and less time consuming, and less costly. Employees are more aware of events and cross promotions between locations and more engaged with the guests and customers.

PME conducts ongoing market research and performance evaluation through a mystery shopping program. Mystery shoppers pose as normal customers and perform specific tasks—such as purchasing a product, asking questions, registering complaints or behaving in a certain way—and then provide detailed reports or feedback about their experiences.

The mystery shopping program measured direct improvements in communications between the staff and guests. Now every employee is quickly made aware of information that needs to be shared with guests, and can help be part of the customer service engine that makes the PME businesses stand out. The number of employees receiving an incentive bonus as a result of their improved customer service performance scores increased by approximately 40%.

And Barbara is also able to engage the employees more by sharing fun and encouraging information, leading to a happier and more productive workforce.

More Information



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