

# Advancing Business Performance, Safety, and Corporate Culture through Improved Communications



Tom Noonan, Director of IT

Located in a suburb of Buffalo, New York, IIMAK (International Imaging Materials, Inc.) is a manufacturer of printing, imaging and marking consumable supplies such as printing ribbons and direct thermal films. Its customers include some of the most recognizable brands in the commercial imaging industry. Founded in 1983, the company employs over 400 in its Western New York facility as well as additional staff at manufacturing facilities located throughout the world.

## Communications Challenges

As with other companies, management at IIMAK faces the ongoing challenge of communicating corporate news and objectives to employees while also creating a positive work environment. The company utilized traditional forms of communication - namely e-mail, quarterly newsletters, and bulletin board posters - yet wanted to find a new solution that would create enthusiasm and improve the corporate culture.

“E-mail is a key to communications, but it is also a big problem as people are overloaded with messages,” said Tom Noonan, director of IT at IIMAK. A recent addition to the management team at IIMAK, Noonan and his supervisor, Vice President of HR Susan Stamp, often discussed the need to improve the communication programs at the company and had been exploring new technologies to better communicate the upcoming benefits changes during annual open enrollment. Noonan shared that a primary concern centered around the upcoming benefits selection because of its manual process. “We are always looking for better ways to get the word out and ensure that our employees get their forms done on time.”

## Building Cross-Functional Support

At a local technology event in 2011, Noonan attended a presentation on a new interactive desktop communication solution called eScreenz. The technology is similar to digital signage but sends messages throughout an enterprise to desktop PCs and laptops as interactive slide show messages. The technology also provides the option to display corporate news and information as a screen saver.

“I was relatively new to the organization and we were looking to find a way that would allow to us to improve our overall communications, especially in regards to benefits administration,” said Noonan. “At the end of the year, it’s a lot of work for us to get all our people informed of their choices and signed up. My first thought was, ‘This desktop messaging technology would be great for people to fill out forms for their benefits.’ Then I saw the functionality of eScreenz, how it links to internal or external sites, and



IIMAK is a manufacturer of printing, imaging and marking consumable supplies.

started thinking about other things we do here at IIMAK, and where we could use this technology. I thought this would be a nice win for the organization.”

A major feature of the technology is its patent-pending ability to incorporate hyperlinks within the desktop messages. With this powerful capability, both the on-demand and screen saver messages link employees directly to internal (or external) resources, such as new benefits information located deep within a corporate intranet. Organizations experience a reduction in e-mail to all employees and a more efficient usage of their intranet. Employees find it to be a time saver since they don't have to search for the information they need.

After learning more about the technology, Noonan presented the concept to his VP of HR who became very excited about the technology and the impact it could have on the organization. “One of the cool things about this solution is that it's very simple and it's already built,” said Noonan. “As an IT person, I don't have to worry about it.”

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Employees can access eScreenz messaging from various common area desktops like this one at a Safety Station.

Noonan assembled a large group of employees from various departments within the company that included HR, IT, and manufacturing to review the technology and discuss its uses for the company. He shares, “there was instant support and acceptance

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for this product across the whole group, with a lot of ‘Wows!’ during the meeting.”

The project was quickly approved and the technology installed not only on desktop PCs throughout the company, but also on a number of designated machine PCs where employees could view information on the plant floor.

### **Results in Less than One Year**

The two major themes for the company in using eScreenz were employee engagement and safety. In less than one year, IIMAK experienced a number of significant improvements including successfully communicating company news and information to employees as well as creating and sustaining a more positive and engaging corporate culture.

### **Focus on Safety**

“A lot of our bulletin board poster signs dealt with safety,” said Noonan. Safety has been and will always be a primary focus for the company in order to ensure a safe work environment for its employees. While the company has experienced a very strong safety record, several incidents occurred that caused management to re-evaluate how they communicate safety information. Utilizing the new visual information system recently installed, the company's HR department created ongoing safety campaigns, focusing attention on tips and procedures to avoid accidents. “eScreenz enabled us to focus more concisely on safety communications and in a new way,” said Noonan. “We haven't had an incident since setting up these new messaging campaigns dealing with safety reminders.”

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### Employee Wellness

As part of the management’s commitment to its employees, the company holds an annual Wellness Fair. Using eScreenz, the HR department was able to promote the event as well as the company’s weight loss challenge. Employees were encouraged to set up teams and have weekly weigh-ins. Team results were broadcast on eScreenz, and at the end of the contest the team with the highest percentage of weight loss was awarded prizes. Noonan shared that employee engagement was high and the competition was intense.

### Benefits Administration

IIMAK’s human resources department is the primary source for the eScreenz messaging running on desktop PCs. Karyn Mongold, administrative assistant in HR adds, “in the beginning not many people paid attention to it. But now I hear a lot from people in the plant that they look to eScreenz for updates on news and info. We used to create posters and go throughout the plant posting the info, but now we use eScreenz.”



An employee views corporate messages on demand using the eScreenz Quick View feature.

Using eScreenz’s hyperlink capabilities enables employees to view messages on 401(k)s and benefits enrollment and then instantly access more data. “The information is much more visible with eScreenz and is more direct,” says Noonan. “For example, on messages on our 401(k), using the link, we can take employees directly to our provider.”

### Employee Engagement

The speed of today’s instant, social, and digital communications sets the bar for companies to find new ways to utilize digital media to keep their employees actively informed and engaged. eScreenz enables IIMAK to more effectively engage its employees with high-impact visual messages that capture and maintain employee attention. IIMAK’s use of the digital desktop messaging technology engages all company departments on such topics as upcoming training programs, safety meetings, HR communications, picnics and events, employee recognition, and awards.

### Conclusion

A year after adopting the new technology, employee and management acceptance of the new communications tool is high, employee safety and wellness are up, and the employees are more actively informed of the company’s goals and objectives. The applications for eScreenz continue to evolve as it is being used. “It’s not getting stale, that surprised me,” said Noonan. Future expansion plans for the eScreenz technology include message display on TVs in high visibility areas as well as incorporating more departmental messaging and business metrics into the system. □

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