Coca-Cola Enterprises Engages Manufacturing Facility Workforce Through New and Converged Digital Signage Platform

Executive Summary

CUSTOMER

Coca-Cola Enterprises

INDUSTRY

Retail-CPG

CHALLENGES

Address limitations with current system:

- Improve user interface to simplify content-creation process, support multiple languages, and refresh content in a timely manner
- Create a better process for creating, managing, and distributing content; enable an enviroment for communication and collaboration
- Establish IT processes to support technology resources

SOLUTIONS

New digital signage platform:

- Back-end system upgrade to a new Cisco-based platform
- Cisco Nexus AppSpace toolset
- 43 new digital displays
- Cisco® TelePresence® EX 90 desktop units

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Improve communications among business units
- Increase employee satisfaction and engagement between factory workers and the company
- Lower total cost of ownership

Background

Coca-Cola Enterprises (CCE) produces, markets, and distributes Coca-Cola products in Belgium, Great Britain, France, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. CCE's portfolio encompasses a full range of beverage categories, including energy drinks, still and sparkling waters, juices and juice drinks, sports drinks, and ready-to-drink teas. In 2007, CCE adopted a strategy to develop a network of factory and warehouse digital signage solutions to communicate and collaborate with all CCE employees in North America and Europe, and had engaged Cisco® Consulting Services to help develop a digital footprint. However, in 2010 when CCE's operational footprint focused solely on the European market, it began to discover limitations within the current system, among other factors amplified by cultural differences within each country location.

Challenges

Given its prior relationship with CCE, Cisco Consulting Services was invited back by the company's Communications Council, the governing body for employee digital communications tools, to study the original solution and then recommend a strategy that would enable CCE to further align communications at the factory level—today and in the future.

To start, Cisco Consulting Services and CCE Public Affairs and Communications (PAC) interviewed senior executives, middle managers, and individual contributors at the headquarters and manufacturing facilities of CCE locations in three countries—Belgium, France, and Great Britain—as a subset and representation of its overall supply-chain business unit. Interviewees included plant managers and supervisors, factory workers (with whom impromptu discussions were held), communications managers, and information technology directors.

These people were selected based on their role in the process of directing, creating, or consuming content, and choosing appropriate solutions. Interviews took place over a two-week period. Questions had to do with the current means of communicating (in-person meetings, signage,

intranet, workshops, newsletters, and email), specific technology used to communicate, and challenges/barriers that arise when communicating (technology ease of use, process, and content).

Cisco Consulting Services then held a meeting with a subset of CCE's Communications Council to discuss preliminary findings from the interviews. The findings revealed four major challenges presented by the current system.

1. System

The current system comprises 227 display screens—a combination of Cisco and non-Cisco screens installed at HQ and factory locations in seven European countries—and display units installed primarily in the Great Britain factories for the purpose of communicating information about the London 2012 Summer Olympics.

The user interface was the primary issue: it was inflexible and required a well-trained person. For example, custom playlists were created to ensure that each country factory received relevant content.

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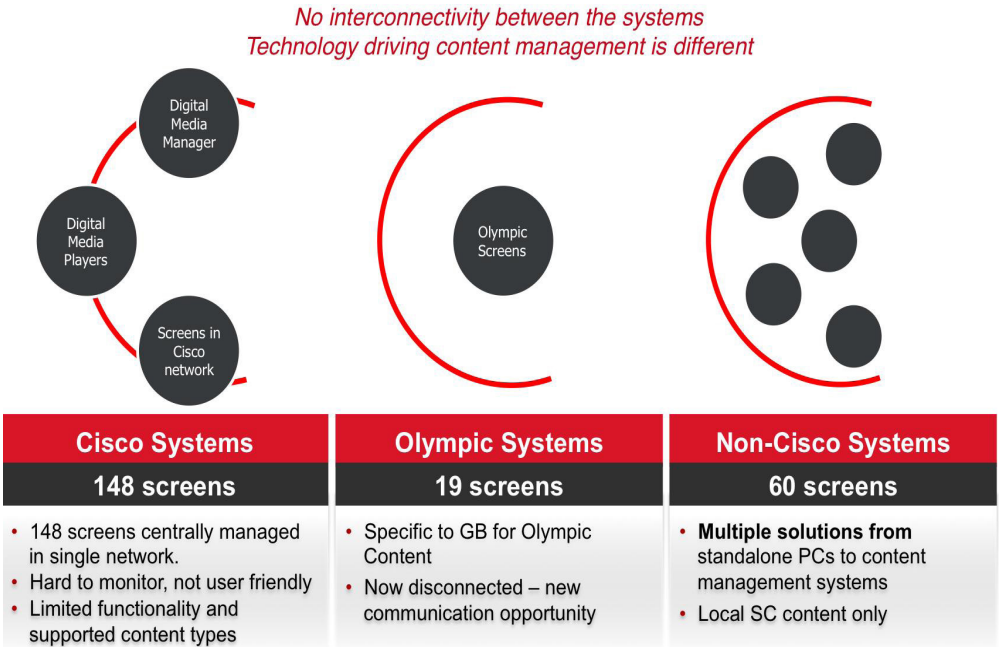
The process for creating the lists was complex, time-consuming, and did not easily allow for the inclusion of different types of media and/or file formats. For example, video used a specific format that required conversion work before it could be added to the playlist. While static slides or JPEG files were acceptable, they were not as interactive or as eye-catching as video.

Also, the interface did not support each country location's language or have the ability to automatically translate content such as videos, which often required subtitles because some screens were situated in noisy locations within the factories. These processes had to be done by a third party, which was time-consuming (adding a week to the content-production schedule) and costly (US$2,000 to $3,000 to process an executive video).

Furthermore, content refreshes—which were needed more than once a day, particularly at the local level—were restricted to a 24-hour window. While such delays did not impact the overall business, they did affect CCE's ability to provide information in real time. "It [refresh times] meant complex editorial planning, and we couldn't use the display screens as sort of a breaking-news channel," said Jonathan Phillips, senior manager of digital communications, adding that this process has slowed down the company's ability to take the factory team into the digital age.

Figure 1. Current System Lacks Ability To Provide Connectivity Among Various Systems.



Source: Coca-Cola Enterprises, 2013

2. Process

CCE's operations were fairly autonomous and had their own processes for deciding which content to share and which medium was needed to distribute it. Factories used newsletters (published at different times), email, face-to-face meetings, and digital signage as their primary communications vehicles. There was an opportunity to create a clearer process for content creation, management, and distribution.

Furthermore, decisions regarding content were often made independently by location. To address this, a process was required that would enable a community of content creators and managers to communicate and collaborate.

3. Content

The current system supports content primarily at the corporate/country level, with less support at the local site level. Corporate/country content includes brand commercials, new product announcements, and special events. Local content encompasses safety information, plant production line utilization, upcoming events/meetings, job postings, local/major initiatives, and personal content such as new hires and birth announcements.

Given the emphasis on corporate-/country-level support, related content is not always shared across all CCE country locations. So, balancing content in terms of what employees wanted locally versus what was being provided nationally was a challenge. Employee satisfaction surveys revealed that workers needed a

greater sense of belonging, wanted to be valued, and needed to understand and contribute more to the company's direction. Therefore, they wanted to receive engaging and entertaining (not just static) content such as videos from corporate executives, plant managers, and supply-chain leaders; human-interest stories about what their peers are doing outside of their jobs; employee and customer success stories; information on the success of other CCE plants; and so on.

Cisco Consulting Services recommended evolving the communications strategy to a "pull" versus a "push" method to increase employees' engagement and prepare them for a future work environment where some level of programming skills or computer interaction will be required.

In addition, Cisco Consutling Services recommended placing tablets near digital displays in break rooms and other locations where workers could browse and gain access to deeper levels of content and provide input to important topics on demand. These suggestions complemented CCE's launch of "iConnect," the company's intranet, along with a mobile version that allows workers to access CCE content and human resources transactions on their mobile phones if desired.

Figure 2. iConnect Is Accessible from PCs, Mobile Devices, and Smartphones.

Source: Coca-Cola Enterprises, 2013

4. Resources

The PAC organization has a digital communications manager within each country location as a key component of the overall internal communications team. Each digital communications manager publishes national content, whereas site-specific communications at each factory are largely the responsibility of the plant manager executive assistants who 1) have the added responsibility of updating local content, and 2) often work independently of the country's digital communication managers. Because of this "siloed" way of working, the sharing of best practices in communications was sometimes absent.

Furthermore, IT resources (as well as processes) necessary for dealing with issues that affected the delivery of content were not in place, sometimes leaving digital screens "dark," without any guidelines on how to fix them.

Because of these four main challenges, CCE plants had implemented their own technology solutions, resulting in approximately 14 different solutions across 17 sites. Each solution had to be administered independently—affecting the company's ability to communicate and manage the platforms consistently.

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Strategy and Solutions

Two months after the interviews were held and the findings were analyzed, Cisco Consulting Services recommended to CCE's Communications Council a solutions strategy that would convert the company's current digital signage technology onto one Cisco solutions platform.

The first priority was to address the issue of how to support multiple content creators and local languages, and enable content updates on-demand. An enhanced Cisco digital signage solution was proposed to upgrade the back end of the current Cisco technology already in place, as well as convert other local solutions onto the new Cisco-based platform.

Cisco Nexus AppSpace was also recommended to significantly improve the user interface. AppSpace is an online toolset that allows users to create, manage, and publish digital media applications in a single system. In this way, CCE content providers from corporate, country, or even the local level can easily update information at any time using a common template. Most important, AppSpace provides flexibility—which was not possible with the previous solution—in creating content. For example, "applications" that include content not just from PowerPoint but also from external sources—as well as rich media such as video—can be built by the content creators themselves.

Furthermore, new capabilities such as porting applications that track production-line efficiency in the template (a process previously done on separate screens at each factory) is now possible, with the potential to extend messaging to other panes of glass, such as PCs.

Second was developing a process for determining which content was important to factory workers and if there was a common baseline for content that would be relevant across all country locations and factories. Then a collaborative content-creation process was recommended so that corporate, country, and local resources could co-create and update information at any time, with the ability to eventually translate content from CCE's executive leaders. To address the issue of translation in the short term, the use of video was recommended at the local level where the local language is used so that plant managers could communicate to people working different shifts. For instance, a manager could create a video on his or her PC, and then have the supervisor(s) on duty distribute the video during a given shift.

Finally, Cisco Consulting Services recommended that CCE adopt a push-and-pull communications process where content is pushed to the factory floor via digital screens. The role of the factory worker will change in coming years due to the increased use of automation and robotics on the factory floor. Because of this, a push-and-pull strategy will demonstrate the value CCE places in those employees, give workers the ability to access content important to them, allow them to engage and respond to the company in key areas, and help them build their skills through processes such as "gamification," which engages users to solve problems through the use of game thinking and game mechanics in a non-game context.

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Neil Jenkins
Director, Internal and Digital Communications
Coca-Cola Enterprises

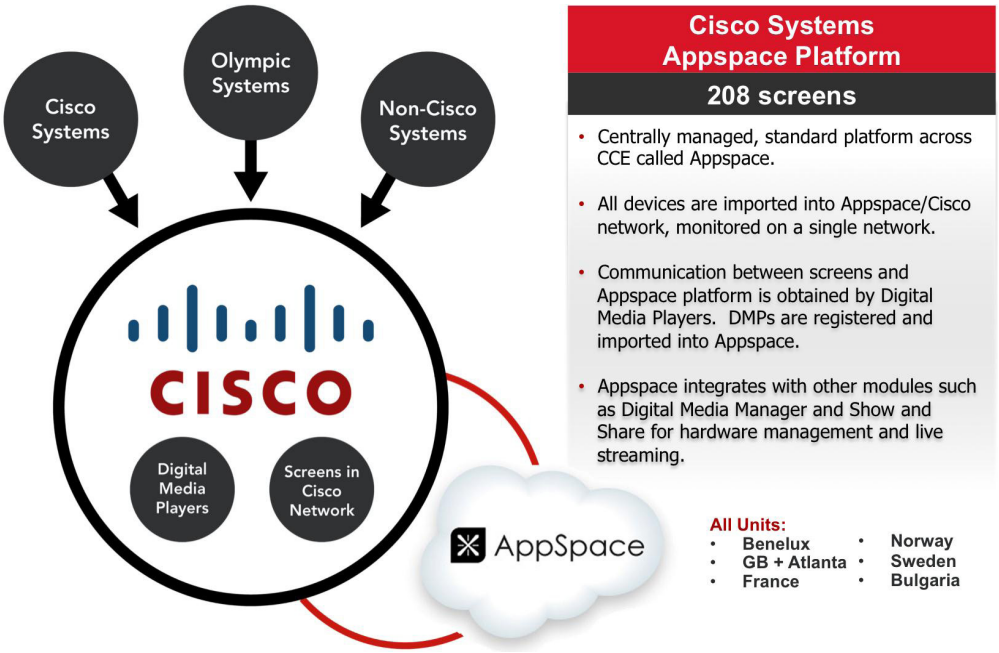
The push-and-pull approach can also be deployed across tablets and smartphones provided to employees in the future, evolving the communications process from one-to-many to one-to-one.

Neil Jenkins, director of internal and digital communications, commented, "Digital communications and its potential to enhance employee communication, collaboration, and engagement continues to develop, and it's critical that all areas of CCE can benefit from these opportunities. By providing in-depth analysis and strategic guidance, Cisco Consulting has identified a sustainable solution that will ensure our employees become increasingly connected, wherever they work for CCE."

Results

The Cisco digital signage solution will serve as the single digital communications system for CCE's manufacturing facility workers. The system upgrade will undergo various phases. Existing Cisco technology (including the 19 screens used during the 2012 Summer Olympics) will be upgraded at all CCE factories and headquarters during Phase 1 of the project, which will take place in the third quarter of 2013. The upgrade also includes the deployment of 43 displays at the newly built headquarters in Uxbridge, London, which opened in February 2013, with the remaining conversion of non-Cisco digital signage solutions taking place at CCE plants once the processes, resources, and content for Phase 1 have been established.

Figure 3. New Digital Signage Platform Integrates Digital Displays and Content.



Source: Coca-Cola Enterprises, 2013

Public Affairs and Communications has also established a community of content creators and facilitators within each country location, supply chain, and local plants to support a holistic set of processes that will deliver heightened value to both the factory and headquarters digital signage systems. The community has already benefited from having a tighter connection. "In the past six months, we have seen an improvement in the connections being made, primarily in the Benelux, Great Britain, and France locations," said Phillips. The team meets in-person to discuss communications processes, foster collaboration, and share best practices, not just in the area of digital signage but across other communications vehicles. In addition, the national communications team is looking to provide writing, editing, and graphics support to the local factories so that they can operate more autonomously.

Just as important, CCE now has the flexibility to customize the playlist per display screen—whether on the factory floor, in the break room, at corporate headquarters, or elsewhere. Previously, playlist content for headquarters and the factory floor was the same even though information needs were different.

Actual results of the new system have not been realized because Phase 1 of the upgrade is currently in process. However, CCE expects that the new digital signage system will:

- Improve communications among business units
- Increase employee satisfaction and engagement between factory workers and the company
- Lower total cost of ownership

"Supply-chain operations leadership has shown enthusiasm over the new digital signage system," said Phillips. "They recognize the power of the interface and signage, and understand what we are trying to achieve. Digital signage will become a broad channel businesswide because it is an example of how the working environment has improved. Digital signage is not just a supply-chain system; it is a unified channel available to the entire enterprise."

Next Steps

Digital signage is proving to be the most important medium for communicating with manufacturing facility employees outside of face-to-face meetings with their direct managers and leaders. As CCE's facilities continue to develop in coming years, the company believes that evolving the solution into a unified communications platform and embracing Cisco Consulting Services recommendations will improve the effectiveness of the medium.

"It's important we constantly re-evaluate our technology platforms to ensure that we have the right digital capabilities to connect all of our employees," said John Key, director, of information technology. "Cisco Consulting Services is a valued partner in that discussion. We know they will bring the right solution, regardless if it's a Cisco solution or not. For us, that's the definition of a strong partnership."

After Phase 1 is complete, CCE will upgrade the rest of the digital signage estate. Additionally, the plan is to push certain messages to desktop screens, cell phones, iPads, IP phones, or any pane of glass simultaneously, as well as add applications that let managers view the status of a production line.

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