Improving Corporate Communications with Wireless Digital Signage

Mary Kay* broadcasts targeted messages to employees and visitors using the OpenService* solution running on Intel® processors.

**BUSINESS CHALLENGES**

- **Deliver impactful, targeted messages:** Send tailored information to internal employees and job applicants.
- **Minimize IT department responsibility:** Deploy a solution that wouldn’t create more work for IT.

**TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS**

- **OpenService:** The digital signage solution provides an easy way to create and deliver different content to various audiences, without requiring dedicated support staff.
- **Remote management:** Intel® Active Management Technology (Intel® AMT), enables the media players and displays to be securely maintained and supported offsite by OpenService*.

**Company**

Mary Kay* is one of the world’s largest direct selling companies with more than $3 billion in annual wholesale sales worldwide. Mary Kay was founded in 1963 by Mary Kay Ash with the goal of helping women achieve personal growth and financial success. Mary Kay remains committed to enriching women’s lives, and today more than 2.4 million people of all backgrounds are enjoying the advantages of being Mary Kay Independent Beauty Consultants. Mary Kay’s high-quality skin care and color cosmetic products are sold in more than 35 countries around the world.

**Business Challenges**

Mary Kay sought a simple way to communicate with employees and job applicants at its two large facilities in the Dallas, Texas area. Their goal was to tailor information for different audiences, such as safety, culture and company news messages to employees; and company values, culture and information to job applicants. Having relied primarily on paper, intranet and email to communicate messages, the company was turning to digital signage to extend their communication reach and speed up their time-to-message. For instance, they wanted to issue timely warnings, such as bad weather, fire or safety concerns, and connect with employees who didn’t have computer access and with “meeting warriors” – those who go from meeting to meeting and have limited desk time to read emails. Due to many different factors, the digital signage solution had to be hosted offsite. The IT department supported this option and worked with OpenService to ensure the solution fully met Mary Kay’s stringent technical standards.
“A major factor was the OpenService* solution could be easily extended internationally, which was important because Mary Kay* is a global company.”

Leigh Harrison
Manager of Employee Communications and Recognition
Mary Kay, Inc.

Technology Solutions
Mary Kay selected OpenService because it was a one-stop digital signage solution that satisfied all their needs. This included content creation and management software, media players and displays, offsite hosting and remote signage management.

High performance, yet compact media players
The OpenService solution employs AOpen* DE67-HA media players to render multi-zone content on high definition (HD) displays. AOpen DE67-HA, pictured in Figure 2, is one of the world’s smallest media players, yet it is built with high performance, mobile 2nd generation Intel® Core™ processors designed with power saving features. The processors integrate Intel® HD Graphics, which satisfies the growing demand for dynamic interactive apps such as video conferencing, social media, interactive menuboards, kiosks, HD movies and many more powerful, content-heavy applications.

Remote management
The AOpen DE67-HA lowers the total cost of ownership (TCO) for digital signage through the use of Intel Active Management Technology (Intel AMT). This key ingredient enables OpenService to diagnose and repair Mary Kay signage systems remotely, thus maximizing uptime and lowering support costs by reducing the number of expensive on-site repairs. Intel AMT can also be used to automatically power systems on/off during off hours to minimize overall power consumption or to track hardware asset information without physical interaction, even in a powered-off state. The advanced management capabilities of Intel AMT enabled OpenService to offer the only solution that could be expanded internationally, where Mary Kay has operations in 29 countries.

Software Flexibility
OpenService also made software changes to accommodate special requests. Security was a huge concern; and therefore, content encryption was implemented as specified by the IT department. Mary Kay also requested the number of time slots be increased from three to four, allowing them to have more granular control over turning off the systems during non-peak time to reduce power consumption.

Initial Deployment
Mary Kay’s global manufacturing plant in Dallas operates 24/6 and produces a good portion of the products needed to meet worldwide demand. For the corporate employee communications group, manufacturing was the ‘last mile of employees’, meaning they weren’t getting essential information from the company intranet, revamped print media and email blasts. As a result, a digital signage pilot was started with seven systems, three of which were placed in the global manufacturing plant: in the break room, main cafeteria and a gathering place called the coffee hall, as shown in Figure 3. The remaining systems were located at the global headquarters’ facility in three of the elevator lobbies and the HR lobby in view of job applicants.

When the system went live, OpenService transmitted the content wirelessly over the Sprint* network to the displays (via OpenService media players) located throughout Mary Kay. The wireless connectivity allowed Mary Kay to place the systems where they would be most effective and without installing hard-wired network connections. In addition, OpenService securely managed the digital signage using Intel AMT. This technology enables the remote diagnosis and repair of many issues over the wire, regardless of the system’s hardware or software state.

Figure 2. Compact AOpen* DE67-HA Media Player

Figure 3. Display in Manufacturing Plant
A major portion of the project was content creation, for which OpenService worked together with Mary Kay to develop forty screen templates that automated the production and playback of content. According to Leigh Harrison, OpenService was the only vendor capable of providing content direction through all facets of the project. Consultants guided the process of setting up the templates, suggesting how long content should sit, how much content should go on the screen and how to organize the enormous amount of content. “OpenService brought a vast amount of knowledge to help us understand what we were getting into,” said Leigh Harrison.

The templates were divided into zones to accommodate graphics, videos, photos, text, RSS feeds, news tickers, traffic and weather feeds and the like. Since different groups, like manufacturing and HR, wanted to broadcast specialized content, some of the templates were customized. The work was captured in a “digital media blueprint” – a 100 page document stating what content is on each panel, font sizes, file naming conventions, etc. OpenService’s graphics expertise helped Mary Kay develop an internal brand image, called ‘Inside MK TV.’ Custom graphics and backgrounds were created to highlight the various company programs, such as wellness, social responsibility, green activities, corporate responsibility and the culture committee. Another visual element was a “photo story” that rotated through a series of images using a special template. The artistic and creative contributions by Mary Kay and OpenService made the large amount of content look unique and inviting.

Knowing its actions today will affect the quality of life for future generations, Mary Kay continuously seeks opportunities to improve their environmental performance. The company is proud of its many sustainability programs, including tree planting, the use of renewable materials and efforts to be classified as Zero Landfill at the manufacturing and distribution facilities, among many others.

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Consistent with these green values, the OpenService solution enables Mary Kay to automatically power-off systems after business hours, such as Sundays in the manufacturing plant, and weekdays between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m, as well as weekends, in the global headquarters building. The system uses Intel AMT to reliably power on/off displays and their associated media players.

### OpenService* end-to-end services include:

- **Consulting Services**: A consulting team will facilitate the process of creating a customized solution and developing a long-term strategy to meet business needs.
- **Remote Management**: Advanced Intel technologies are used to update, maintain and repair systems remotely, lowering the overall total cost of ownership.
- **Content Management**: Unique and customized content can be developed by OpenService to keep messages fresh and viewers engaged.
- **Analytical Services**: The effectiveness of digital signage can be measured using Intel® Audience Impression Metrics Suite (Intel® AIM Suite).

### Content Production

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### Sustainable and Green

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Already Paying Dividends

In a short time, the digital signage solution is having a positive impact. Employee participation is increasing at corporate events, including volunteer activities, and manufacturing workers seem to have a better understanding of what’s happening in the organization. The displays convey important safety messages, track progress on minimizing safety incidents and communicate expected behavior.

In the corporate office, the displays rally employees to cheer for notable visitors when they enter the building – imagine looking up eight floors and seeing hundreds of folks clapping from the rails. The displays also keep employees informed about all sorts of things: Earth Day events, the schedule for Mary Kay Day or when the latest corporate magazine hits the newsstand.

The digital signs also improve the visitor experience by giving them a feeling about the corporate culture and information they need to know about the company. Job candidates see recruiting videos of employees talking about Mary Kay, allowing them to get a better sense of whether or not they would be a good fit for the company.

From a system support perspective, Mary Kay has seen the benefits of Intel AMT. OpenService can see the digital signage network and make sure everything is working; thus, the IT department doesn’t get calls to service the digital signage solution. On one occasion, a unit required service and OpenService used Intel AMT to quickly remedy the issue remotely, avoiding a more costly on-site repair visit.

To learn more about OpenService, visit www.open-service.org.

For more information about Intel in digital signage, visit www.intel.com/retail.