

PDP CASE STUDY:

Condux International

**People Driven
Performance™**



Clearly Condux needed to do something different in order to engage employees.

As the senior leaders of Condux International set goals for long-term growth, innovation and productivity, it was apparent: They would need buy-in from all their employees -- those on the shop floor, in the front office and in the regional offices.

But how to win that buy-in? The company's efforts to communicate with employees had been "hit or miss," says John Hone, distribution marketing manager for the manufacturer of equipment for installing aerial and underground cable. Yes, there had been the occasional employee meeting and announcements posted on bulletin boards, but no consistent effort to inform employees of direction and goals.

A key step would be a communications program to convey relevant news and information, as well as well-deserved recognition, to staff in the plant, the field and office. But what mechanism could enable Condux to reach all employees with the same information and to update that information frequently?

As luck would have it, the solution was close at hand. People Driven Performance, a neighboring firm in Condux' hometown of Mankato, Minn., had already recognized the widespread need to energize and empower employees through more consistent communications -- and it had developed an electronic platform to address it.

With the PDP system, Condux could easily deliver news -- and much more -- to shop employees via free-standing kiosks, and it could send the same information to the desktops of office staff at headquarters and in remote offices.



Through PDP's system, Condux employees could tap into:

- **News:**
A weekly newspaper featuring company and co-worker news;
- **People:**
A directory of company people, that offers the opportunity for each employee to share information about work history, family, hobbies and other details about themselves;
- **Score:**
A series of colorful targets showing at a glance how the company is performing against goals; and

Now, more than a year after Condux installed PDP's system and began using News to publish a weekly newspaper, Hone says he has seen a number of positive changes:

- Employees have a better understanding of what the company is trying to accomplish and the projects that are important, such as LEAN manufacturing or other efficiency efforts. The company's leaders have found that the system allows them to share more information with employees. "We try to share as much as we can and in a timely manner," says Hone.

- Through the People directory and stories about colleagues that appear in the News newspaper, employees are more aware of each other's hobbies, interests, and skills of fellow employees. "It's helped raise the awareness of who everyone is," Hone says. Now, even temporary employees are featured on the system as a way to introduce them to the rest of the staff and help them feel a part of the organization.
- Success breeds success. When employees are recognized in the weekly newspaper for their cost-saving ideas, others are encouraged to offer ideas too. "It's been a good way to get people motivated and engaged in the business," Hone says.
- There's more a feeling of "us" and less "us" versus "them," especially between office and shop employees. "Employees in both the office and plant feel like they're part of the PDP system, and they understand that we have an interest in everybody," says Hone.
- It may not always work out, but often when employees who are seen as hard to work with are recognized in News for a positive contribution, they begin to feel part of things and they warm up to other people. "We've seen a story in News lead to changed perceptions," Hone notes. "When you can create a positive change like that, it's all worthwhile."

To gather content for the weekly newspaper, Hone holds a short meeting once a week with representatives from different departments. What emerges is a mix of human interest and business stories. "We try to keep our stories on a positive note," Hone says. After the meeting, Hone spends two to three hours writing and editing the stories that his cross-company team contributes.

PDP's system doesn't leave Condux guessing about what employees are most interested in reading. Each week, PDP generates reports showing the company where employees are spending their time. "PDP has provided helpful hints about using photos, writing style and other best practices to make our communications increasingly relevant to employees," Hone says.

"A lot of companies say that their employees are their most important asset," said Jeanne Tolzman, Condux controller and HR manager. "At Condux, they truly are. So it's up to us, as leaders of the company, to help our employees understand what we want to accomplish and how they can contribute to what we're doing to meet the needs of our customers. The system is proving to be a wonderful tool for creating understanding and an engaged culture, one inspired to do their best work."