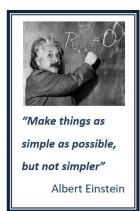# *It all Happens in the Store*
Effective Internal Communications & Task Management

I was inspired by a quote I saw recently from Michael Dell: "Ideas are a commodity. Execution of them is not." Execution, the carrying out or putting into effect of a plan, makes ideas come to life. For a long time, the execution of directives in the store was a "fingers crossed" method, with no real understanding of whether directives were executed on time or correctly. Too many times, ideas stay ideas and are never executed due to several factors including lack of time, resources, accurate instructions and access to what was needed to complete execution.

It wasn't that long ago that most retailers were dependent on mailbags, paper-based documentation, fax, or email, and some still rely on these methods today. However, the need for streamlined communications is no longer a nice to have – it's a necessity to compete and survive in today's retail market. Retailers need better ways to nurture an environment that encourages positive employee engagement, corporate inclusion and higher consistent execution in the stores.

With everyone being tasked to 'do more with less' to contribute to overall cost savings, one way to do that is to do the right things, the right way, the first time. With a solution that is tailored to specific corporate functions, you can maximize the efficiency of your operations and be empowered to accurately and consistently distribute information, plan, schedule, assign, prioritize, automate, communicate and monitor task compliance. The key benefit: significantly reduce expenses while improving the ability to communicate with locations and monitor compliance. By leveraging a cloud solution designed for rapid adoption and simplicity of use, you can skip the extensive training or large system configuration for easy deployment and implementation.

Now more than ever it is extremely critical to have on-demand visibility to confirm that your communications are being read by the right people, that your employees are executing location-level tasks as they should, and that head office executives have the ability to verify that their locations are compliant with company objectives. This is not only critical from a compliance perspective but can also contribute to a company's ongoing success. Companies are looking for better ways to help employees at their various locations to understand their marketing, product-display and management strategies. They realize they need a better way of communicating best practices, product marketing methods, seasonal product availability and other information to their employees to help ensure consistent operations across locations.

"Make things as simple as possible, but not simpler"

Albert Einstein

All retail verticals have similar operational issues of effectively and efficiently communicating strategies that are being made centrally to geographically disbursed locations. The requirement is there to inform and educate employees on such things as health and safety regulations, food/product recalls or just general information and then monitor the completion of tasks and compliance of your corporate directives.

Opterus' solution, *OpsCenter*, is offered as a simple cloud solution and has been specifically developed for retail. This store execution management solution is an on-demand, web-based software that is designed to communicate corporate policy, day-to-day objectives, assign tasks and handle issues between corporate office and locations and manage compliance. *OpsCenter* enables you to rapidly and accurately transfer all information to and from locations more effectively. More and more it's becoming the single point of access at locations where employees go to get all their information.
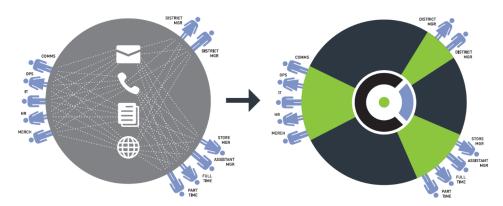
Many of today's most innovative retailers are now experiencing significantly improved financial performance through quicker, more accurate adoption of corporate initiatives through SaaS solutions. Opterus has, for example, made the operations team for one of their customers 20% more efficient utilizing their *OpsCenter* solution. By managing information consistently across the enterprise, you too can more easily build a skilled labor force, enhance employee loyalty through positive company culture, and ultimately reduce turnover.

OpsCenter is a 'one stop shop' solution for retailers that's highly configurable with no development and minimal IT work required!

DRIVE PERFORMANCE, IMPACT EMPOYEE/CUSTOMER LOYALTY & SATISFACTION & INCREASE SALES

Retailers using *OpsCenter*, are taking advantage of the fact that it's very intuitive and multi-modular. They have, therefore, seen cost saving both hard and soft. Having one centralized tool for all communications they have saved on licensing costs of one off point solutions such as survey software, associate training and marketing software. They see cost savings thru reallocating resources required to build and support home grown portal software, i.e. SharePoint, and license and potentially hosting fees that coincide with using and supporting those home-grown solutions.

Retailers that previously relied on email as a way to communicate to stores have eliminated that cost along the chore of maintaining email in a typically high-turnover industry. They now have an easy to manage solution to communicate down to every employee, even part-timers and occasional associates.

OpsCenter enables everyone to work more effectively and efficiently. District and Regional associates can save time managing by exception and having a real time-bird's eye view of their stores. The solution allows easy, intuitive searching of tasks and documents so tracking progress or issues on any given tasks is done easily. The system cuts down on confusion at store level because associated login in uniquely and only see information, tasks, messages, etc. that are targeted specifically to them. Ad-hoc issues and any issues related to a specific task can be handled seamlessly giving retailers a 360-degree view of their

organization. It's very important to ensure the stores are being supported so they can execute as designed.

OpsCenter forms and surveys functionality standardizes surveys sent to head office and to the stores. The document library will enable important policy & process documents to be easily accessible and always up-to-date. The knowledge base module can give retailers the opportunity for more hands-on participation and two-way communication with stores on product knowledge.

User-created custom reports will eliminate the need for head office team members to do a ton of one-off reporting which will free up that time to be spend on other projects. *OpsCenter* ensures that the most important tasks are completed to standard, not just marked as done. The mobile app encourages field based leaders to engage with the solution regularly when travelling.

Being a cloud solution, means retailers do not have to invest in hardware to implement the solution. Through Opterus' modular approach, *OpsCenter* solves the entire retail communications problem, not just pieces of it. The solution has seen very strong user adoption at all levels of retail organizations. Upgrades are fast, free, and easy and custom workflows can be created with no development effort required.

IMPROVE TIME MANAGEMENT
To plan, schedule or arrange when something should happen or be done is not always possible when there's a lack of insight or an incomplete view of what's happening in the store. Scheduled associates can become unexpectedly busy or find themselves with a lot of time on their hands and managing this can be difficult, especially if associates and management are going to multiple sources for information and instruction. Providing them with centralized access, through *OpsCenter*, to a clear picture of what employees at any level need to be doing can confirm that their time is spent effectively and efficiently. Ensure associates in the store know what needs to be done, let them be productive and spend as little time as possible interfacing with systems and as much time as possible engaging with your customers.

ACCESS TO STORE RESOURCES
Store associates are the most valuable resources retailers have as they serve as the front line to customers and represent the brand. Creating a 360-degree view of the retail enterprise, along with a feedback loop, ensures associates will receive clear and accurate instructions to help them do their jobs better. Associates are responsible for every aspect of executing the store experience you want to give to your customers, so it's essential to provide them with a simple and centralized communication tool, like *OpsCenter*, where they can receive all information relevant to them, depending on title, role and location. More engaged associates will outperform, and more informed associates will lead to decreased turnover, increased productivity, and a renewed focus on driving sales.

ENHANCED EXECUTION ACCURACY
Retailers require a tool other than email as it's expensive, hard to manage with turnover and provides a far too big a chance for things to get missed, filed or deleted before the message can be read by it's intended audience. To improve associate compliance and accuracy of executables, retailers could turn to the *OpsCenter* tool to host documents and product knowledge in the same place where associates get daily information and tasks. Providing a "one stop shop" allows retail operations to communicate the right information to the right people in an efficient and productive way. Reporting on the head office side offers a real-time, precise view of what is going on in stores, districts, regions or the entire

enterprise. Communication via *OpsCenter* allows retailers to ensure important information has been read, executed and understood.

With *OpsCenter* you'll see significant execution compliance improvements because of better traceability and accountability. As well, it can increase store revenues due to higher conversion for on-time markdown compliance, higher associate satisfaction and more efficiencies that allow them to be more productive and effective retailers.

It's time to uncross your fingers and ensure your ideas are being properly executed by the right associates at the right time, to provide a consistent and elevated experience for your customers. Execution, after all, happens in the store.

About Opterus Inc.

Opterus Inc. is a leading global provider of a cost-effective, easy-to-implement information and execution management solution that increases productivity and improves retail enterprise communications. Opterus OpsCenter software is an on-demand, web-based retail portal designed to communicate corporate policy and day-to-day objectives between corporate office and retail locations. Deployed in over 45 countries in 30 different languages, the solution is specifically designed for retail operations, and provides store personnel with clear, concise and timely direction, along with the proper tools to best do their jobs to support corporate initiatives. technology veterans. For additional information about Opterus, contact Gary Stonell at (416) 884-4924 or gary.stonell@opterus.com