



Reinforcing Safety with an Electronic Message Board Program

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BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKER COMMUNICATIONS in the sanitation industry.

SANITATION WORKERS CONSISTENTLY MAKE IT ONTO

the list of the top 10 most dangerous occupations as tracked by The Bureau of Labor Statistics. It's no wonder since they are often working in the dark, carrying heavy loads, working in traffic, handling hazardous materials, maneuvering large trucks in tight spaces and battling fatigue. Communication is a key factor in reinforcing safe behavior, yet reaching workers can be challenging when they spend most of their time on the road.

Increasingly, solid waste companies are installing electronic message boards at their facilities as a way to improve communication. The need for a mobile communications option is also becoming critical with the rapid growth of smart phone and tablet use. Most companies underestimate what's involved in developing an effective program. There are three components to a successful deployment: identifying your business goals, developing a content strategy and sourcing the right technology for your unique needs.

and influence their behavior. Other objectives might include employee recognition, reducing turnover, improving health and wellness or customer service, reaching workers on all shifts, reducing print communication and delivering consistent messages to everyone.

Consider Your Audience

If safety is your primary focus and you are targeting drivers and crew members, you face some unique challenges:

- Most of their time is spent on the road.
- They're in the drivers' room or breakroom for only a few minutes each day.
- At the beginning and end of each shift, they're likely to be in a rush, distracted or tired.
- A large percentage of sanitation workers are Spanish-speaking.

#2: Content Strategy Made Simple

Content can make or break your digital communication program. With a little bit of advance planning you can ensure that you have both the quality and quantity of content required for a robust program that will engage your employees. Given your target audience, what do your workers need to know? Once you've answered that you can incorporate these proven best practices.

Best Practices for Creating Effective Content

Keep it Visual

The advertising industry has proven that visual communication is a powerful technique for influencing our behavior. Use photos, video or cartoons to engage employees and give your message sticking power. Keep your messages short. Think headline and sub-head.

Make it Personal

Your workers will focus on what's important to them. Recognition is a universal motivator. Use your electronic message boards to celebrate achievement. Whether it's recognizing individuals or departments for achieving company goals, acknowledging milestones, anniversaries and birthdays, or welcoming new employees, everyone is sure to notice.

#1: Your Business Objectives Define the Framework

Before you start thinking about screens, media players and network options, you need to get clear on your business objectives. Screens are merely tools to deliver your messages to employees. Think of your digital signage system as a way to market your messages to your workers in a way that will influence their behavior. So ask yourself, what are you trying to change, improve or measure? In the sanitation industry, making safety top of mind for everyone is the most common objective. Using electronic message boards that display colorful, dynamic content is a great way to grab your workers' attention



Photos courtesy of The Marlin Company.

Pictures like this reinforce safety precautions such as wearing safety gear and reflective clothing and being mindful of vehicles entering the danger zone.

