

Screen-saver messages can act as an unobtrusive digital sign post to more detailed information

## USING SCREEN SAVERS TO GRAB ATTENTION

**It's one thing creating great content or developing important strategic messages. But sometimes it's tough getting employees to take notice without nagging or adding to the noise. Which is why companies like Jaguar and Sony are using employees' screen savers to keep key messages front of mind.**

There's a few basic rules when it comes to using screen savers as an internal communications tool, says Steve Osborn, UK managing director of software solutions company, Netpresenter. They make sense, obviously, in environments with more than just a few PCs – Osborn suggests 150 and upwards. A minimum font size of 25mm should always be used or it's unlikely people will be able to read messages easily. Information should be updated regularly to avoid it becoming "stale" and the more eye-catching the imagery or headline used, the more likely they are to be noticed. Outside of that, the sky's the limit in terms of how they can be deployed.

"The main reason companies use our screen-saver software," says Osborn, "is they get around the problem of, 'Oh, I'll read this when I have time,' which is what happens with a corporatewide e-mail, for example. If they're designed effectively, people don't have to focus on taking in the information, they take it in almost like scenery."

### Building brand pride

Jaguar Cars found this to be the case when they tried out the software a few years ago before introducing it into their large assembly plant in Liverpool. "We ran a pilot and surveyed it and found people did use it," says

David Crisp, manager, employee communications and brand pride at Jaguar. The software was originally installed in the manufacturing areas of the plant to keep production employees up to date with key metrics used to monitor quality, production levels or health and safety. It's since been rolled out across the sales and marketing organization in other Jaguar and Land Rover sites.

"We find it useful for information linked to the brand itself and the products," says Crisp. "Jaguars look good in pictures so using images on screen savers are great for product launches, for example."

The screen savers also act as a digital signpost, linking employees back to an intranet or pdf page for more information. For example, Jaguar's sales and marketing messages encourage employees to click on a link to find out what journalists and customers think of their cars (see Figure One). "They shouldn't be used to convey large quantities of information," says Crisp, but rather to point people in the direction of more detail.

### Creating a digital signpost

Sony Europe also uses screen-saver messages to point employees to useful or important information. The Netpresenter software runs on 5,000 PCs in 200 Sony locations, as well as on 200 plasma screens located in public areas.

When new content is posted on the intranet, headlines can be created and quickly posted on the screen savers, pointing users to more detailed articles, feature stories or other websites. Sony also uses the software to stream video outputs on the intranet, enabling employees to watch corporate videos at their convenience. The advantage of this, says Osborne, is

the broadcasts don't overburden the network as employees watch the videos at different times.

According to Jane Sparrow, general manager communication and change at Sony Europe, the software has had good results so far. "The feedback we've received is that employees remember news and product information when having conversations with clients," she says. Sparrow also puts this down to the tight editorial process behind all the company's internal communications and a team of top-notch writers who are able to produce content and headlines that resonate with employees.

In addition to corporatewide messages, information can also be tailored to individual teams and markets, enabling employees to receive only those messages most relevant to their job function or location. Companies can also use the software as part of a crisis or emergency alert program.

Perhaps most important of all, the screen-saver messages provide an unobtrusive way of repeating key messages. As external marketers already know, repetition is key to getting your message across. But it can be rather annoying if you're on the receiving end of it. [scm](#)

Figure One: Example of a screensaver message at Jaguar Cars

