

CASE STUDY STEW LEONARD'S

Overview

- Local grocery store wanted digital signage to communicate with customers
- Monitors around the store were used to stream ads and recipes
- System scaled to include employee break rooms for company messaging

Stew Leonard's®

FARM FRESH FOOD & WINE



Stew Leonard's began as a small dairy store founded in 1969 with just seven employees. Today, Stew Leonard's is still family-owned and operated but has grown to become a nearly \$400 million business with more than 2,500 employees. The company has received worldwide acclaim for excellence in customer service and quality and was selected to Fortune Magazine's "100 Best Companies to Work for in America" list for 10 consecutive years.

Originally opened as a small dairy store in 1969 selling only seven items, the company now has seven locations in Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York, welcoming more than 20 million visitors to their stores every year.

Stew Leonard's came to IDS looking for a digital signage solution to effectively communicate high-quality messaging with customers. Dave Beggs, Manager of Support Services for Stew Leonard's, was tasked with finding this solution, which had to meet some specific criteria. The budget was a high concern for them, but Dave also knew that they needed a product that was going to be dependable as well as scalable beyond the initial intended application. Finally, it had to be easy to manage. "I knew we weren't going to have a lot of time to dedicate to this, so it needed to be something that we could manage very easily," said Dave.

Action

IDS designed a digital signage solution for Stew Leonard's that used technology from VBrick Systems for live encoding and Visix for content management. Cameras located at Stew Leonard's farm in Ellington, Connecticut, streamed live feeds of their dairy cows via VBrick encoders directly to the stores. The live streams are then displayed on monitors in each store using Visix set-top boxes. HD monitors were located at entrances and exits of each store. "It's a fun way to show our customers exactly where our dairy products come from," said Dave. "The live feed has run 24 hours a day for over three years now; we've had no

problems with it. It's very reliable," said Dave.

In addition to the CowCam, each Stew Leonard's store displays advertising information to customers on a monitor at every checkout. Information regarding specials, promotions, and special events are created using the Visix Content manager and displayed through a network-attached set-top box. Monitors are also located in different parts of the store to display information specifically for that department. For example, a monitor in the produce department might display specials for that day or recipes to try with a new herb.

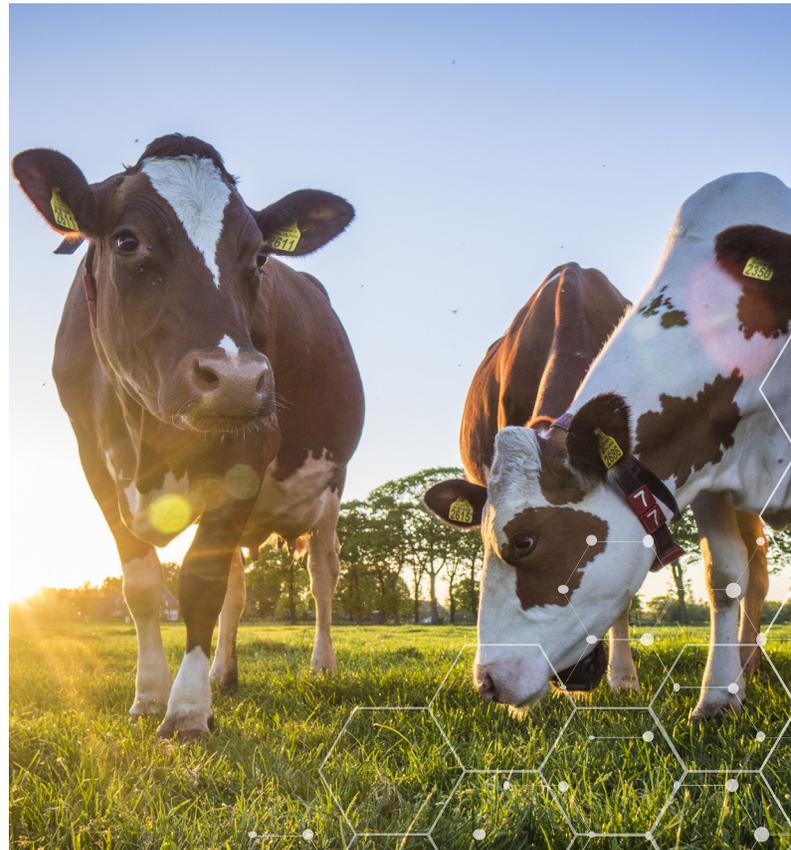
The expansion came quickly after the initial customer-facing deployment. Stew Leonard's management was so impressed with the quality of the system that they expanded beyond the initial scope of the project and deployed an employee-facing component. They placed monitors in each store's break room to display information that was important for each employee to see such as content regarding HR policies, insurance updates, team meetings, company picnics, and more.

The Stew Leonard's team found this method of communication to be particularly effective for showing the same content to each store at the same time throughout the entire workday, covering each different shift. Specific stores can even receive customized content unique to each location. Employee birthdays or employment anniversary messages are displayed with pictures, personalizing the employee experience. Using the solution in this way has improved communication to the team members dramatically.

Results

Before implementing a digital signage solution, Stew Leonard's used bulletin boards, traditional hanging signs, and scrolling LED bars to communicate messages. Now with the new system in place, communication is much more effective. Management can be sure that customers are not missing key advertising messages and team members have easy access to company information in their break rooms. "It's simply a better way to communicate," said Dave.

Controlled at the Stew Leonard's central office, the system is easy to keep up to date. After the initial installation, Dave was able to hand off the responsibilities of continuous updates to the Marketing department. Overall, the entire systems works well for both customers and employees.



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