

An Inside Advantage: Apria Healthcare's Proactive Communications Engage Employees

Apria Healthcare, LLC provides healthcare services right where its patients need it most: in their homes. This leading company leverages a team of more than 9,500 trained professionals from 450 branches to provide home respiratory, sleep apnea, and negative pressure wound therapy products and services to more than two million individuals across the country.

Apria seeks to educate and motivate its employees by opening channels of communication to help them understand and achieve the company's business strategy. Providing proactive, targeted internal communications ensures that Apria's staff stays focused on achieving the company's mission of improving the quality of life for patients at home, as well as delivering its yearly goals.

Effective Email Communications Clicks Through with Staff

When Rick Christopher joined Apria as a Senior Communications Specialist for Organizational Effectiveness and Change Management, he knew just how to strengthen the company's employee communications function. Having worked with EmailOpen at a prior firm, Christopher realized that the technology solution could help him transform a static program into an online communications platform that promoted interaction and increased engagement. **"My prior experience with the EmailOpen solution and the exceptional service provided by the account team, graphic designers, and technical support staff made this solution an easy option to choose,"** says Christopher. He transitioned a PDF newsletter, which staffers had to launch from their email, into a company email newsletter that provides unique URLs for each article, commenting capability, and robust reporting tools. Apria Insider News, which launched in February 2013, is distributed to the company's entire workforce each month.

Christopher has developed a yearly editorial calendar to provide consistent, compelling messaging on the company's three core product areas and current enterprise initiatives. Each email newsletter features a rich mix of content, providing updates on company news, training and education, health and safety, and management insights, as well as an employee spotlight. Since Apria operates in a highly regulated industry, Christopher reviews newsletter content with the company's legal team prior to publication and makes sure to seed issues with tips on how employees can contribute to the company's strong compliance culture.

Service at the Speed of Business

Christopher values the fact that the EmailOpen tool is intuitive and easy to use. When he does need technical assistance, Christopher finds the EmailOpen team extremely helpful. **"The service and responsiveness from the EmailOpen team is exceptional. Unlike most companies, the employees are genuinely eager to provide their clients with the support they need to maximize the capabilities of the EmailOpen solution,"** he says. Christopher says that the examples of EmailOpen going "above and beyond are too many to share," but that he remembers help with "an eleventh-hour glitch" as particularly memorable. EmailOpen provided the right fix Christopher and the Apria IT team needed so that he could distribute a newsletter issue to its U.S. readership on schedule and without a hitch.

Apria Insider News has definitely had an impact on increasing employee engagement by providing open, candid communication on the company's performance, vision, and strategy. In the 2013 Employee Engagement survey, Apria employees responded that they've seen a marked improvement with communication, both at the company level and especially at the workgroup level.

Pleased with the success of Apria Insider News, Apria launched a second email newsletter, Make It Matter Today, in May 2013. This new corporate email newsletter, which is published six times a year, stresses the measurable difference employees can



make by letting Apria's values and mission guide the decisions they make every day. Make It Matter Today shares best practices from individuals and teams. Recent examples include the IT organization providing a step-by-step process to reset network passwords, saving the company time and money, and the Sales Training group implementing a no-frills approach to cut costs while energizing employee participation.

Christopher gets to see the measurable difference Apria Insider News and Make it Matter Today are making every time he uses EmailOpen's reporting tools to assess employees' responses to the issues and news he writes about.