



Understanding Effective Communications

*Are you working under the assumption that communication is important? In reality, only **RELEVANT** communication is important.*

It's becoming more and more apparent that retailers are feeling the pressure to run their stores more efficiently in the information age. There are also continued pressures from market and regulatory forces that cause compliance to remain an important topic that has to be addressed. It is widely accepted that there is a huge amount of information that flows from head office to the stores and retailers need to find the right technology to support their efforts to communicate, to develop the right culture, to provide visibility and to manage compliance.

One of the goals of this technology should be to reduce the cost of compliance. Without the investment in an effective solution, retailers will continue to experience the high costs of trying

to manage compliance, the loss of revenue due to non-compliance, have no way to manage the pace of changing compliance requirements and struggle with the complexity of managing compliance globally.

Opterus' solution, *Store Ops-Center* (SOC), is offered as SaaS 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. SOC 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.

SOC is a tool that provides a way to create or improve visibility into operations. It helps you simplify, standardize and streamline processes for managing compliance. It provides a way to create or improve visibility into your operations that will help everyone find information in a timely manner and ensure regulations are complied with across the enterprise. It also gives you a way to measure results and improve your business.

Some retailers are trying to take advantage of technologies such as SharePoint or Oracle's WebCenter. However, in our experience we have found these tools to be pretty good for posting information, but cause store overload because of the tendency to post everything. There is no compliance, no accountability, no prioritization and you don't have that greatly needed visibility into your organization.

Custom development projects designed to tackle these issues also fall short in many other areas. Besides the fact that a retailer's IT staff should be focused on and support existing projects and internal needs, a long term project like this becomes a maintenance solution that requires continuous support for adding new features, fixing bugs, etc. Are you always going to have a resource(s) available that will be required to develop and improve functionality when needed? You also shut yourself off from a solution that continues to grow in functionality taking into consideration current best practices that other retailers are implementing.

Custom platform development project costs rarely come in on budget and there can be costs associated with licenses for every person who wants to access the system. You also have to consider the lost ROI, you could be deployed with Opterus before the functional specs are written, much less having the platform solution developed and deployed to your stores.

To be a great retailer you have to have great communications. The job of the Operations team is to find ways to increase sales, improve customer experience, improve employee satisfaction and reduce costs. The strategies you develop to do this are only as good as the execution. A real advantage in today's marketplace is having the tools in place to effectively and efficiently communicate to the stores and track compliance on that communication.

Part of effective and efficient communication is managing what gets communicated to the stores. Best run retailers manage the amount of information sent to stores, when that information is sent to stores and what the information is that's going to the stores. Having one or more gatekeepers to help manage that process increases productivity and can cut costs in your organization.

Head office personnel in all departments such as merchandising, IT, HR, training departments, even third party vendors can, with specific role based permissions, all consistently communicate with the stores, who have a single centralized place to get all the communications targeted to them, whether it is personal, to their role, to their location, or to their specific type of store.

Roles govern who in an organization require gatekeeper approval before that information becomes visible to its intended recipients; it also governs what specific content may or may not require gatekeeper approval. The gatekeeper can be monitoring something as simple as a consistent look and feel or safeguard against redundant or irrelevant information and monitor if your stores are over capacity with the amount of work you have asked them to do.

You can simplify, standardize and streamline your communications process and enjoy the benefits that increased visibility and compliance will bring to your organization. Initiatives will deliver their promised benefits only if they are being read, and gain acceptance from front line associates and are executed.

Hope is not a strategy. A strong communications approach, which includes the right technology, is necessary to communicate a compelling vision. To be successful in the information age you need to have a solution in place that allows you to remain flexible and focused on results.



Create or improve visibility into your operations. SOC facilitates the creation of new sales promotions, the communication of strategies for up-selling and cross-selling, and the empowerment of your associates with the information they need to execute your strategy.

Store Ops-Center Benefits

Increase Store Productivity & Improve Communications

- Opterus allows a retailer to communicate with each store, and if necessary, each employee within the store from one centralized solution.
- Retailers will drive financial performance through quicker, more accurate adoption of corporate initiatives.

Improve Visibility and Control

- Current retailer environments where multiple corporate departments are using various communication methods to gather information from the stores without any type of governance causes conflicts and confusion at the store level.
- Opterus enables retailers to streamline initiatives and make better decision with improved data and reporting from stores giving them a 360° “eye in the sky” view of the enterprise.

Mitigate Compliance Risk

- Compliance monitoring that reduces operating expenses by having a standard set of workflows that optimize operational efficiencies across all stores.
- Ensuring compliance and alignment with all corporate initiatives and objectives.

- Monitoring store compliance and increasing accountability at the store level and monitoring which stores are compliant with their tasks.
- Link store issues to tasks; find ways to improve and receive feedback tied to, and independent of, specific tasks.

Improve Overall Quality of Workforce

- Today's employees have been immersed in technology almost since birth, and based on their experiences as students and consumers, they have come to expect it in the workplace as well. The pervasiveness of social media and social computing is a big part of that.
- These expectations have to be factored in when trying to recruit, retain and motivate young employees.

Increase Sales

- Opterus allows stores to have clarity of instruction.
- Retailers will be following best business practices.
- Key store personnel will be spending more time on the sales floor.
- Drive consistent customer experience.
- Studies show 2% to 5% of revenue is lost when store-level employees aren't compliant in executing strategy.

About Opterus: Opterus Inc. is the leading provider of a cost-effective, easy-to-implement store information and execution management solution that increases productivity and improves retail enterprise communications. Opterus *Store Ops-Center* software is an on-demand, web-based retail portal designed to communicate corporate policy and day-to-day objectives between corporate office and store locations. This 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. Opterus is based in Toronto, Ontario and was founded in 2006 by a group of seasoned retail industry technology veterans. For additional information about Opterus, please visit <http://www.opterus.com>.

