

Ahold Delhaize USA Streamlines Communications and Improves Productivity with Reflexis Task Manager

BACKGROUND

Ahold Delhaize USA is a sales division of the Netherlands-based Ahold Delhaize Group. Ahold Delhaize USA operates approximately 2,000 stores in the United States under the banners of Food Lion, Stop and Shop, Hannaford Supermarkets, and Giant.

Ahold Delhaize USA's success is based on its tradition of offering customers quality products at great prices and neighborly service in clean, conveniently located stores. By providing high customer service levels and quality products, Ahold Delhaize USA is able to differentiate itself from its competitors – customers do not have to go to high-end supermarkets to have an enjoyable shopping experience. The company is able to maintain great prices and quality assurance through technology investments.

In addition to technology, Ahold Delhaize USA invests in its associates through ongoing training programs and continuing advancement opportunities. To further improve customer service and increase the efficiency of its store-level operations, Ahold Delhaize USA implemented Reflexis Task Manager™, the task management application from Reflexis, first at Food Lion, and then at Hannaford. The two separate implementations took less than 21 weeks for both banners. Both implementations involved integrating Reflexis solutions with the companies' respective portfolio of retail systems.



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-Business Relationship Manager, Delhaize America

COMPANY CHALLENGES

Like many other retailers, prior to implementing Reflexis, both Hannaford and Food Lion relied on a variety of methods including phone, fax, email, and traditional mail to send tasks and other communications from headquarters to its stores. Because anyone in corporate could send an email to practically any employee at the store level, stores received thousands of emails a week. This resulted in many problems:

- Communication overload resulted in confusion — managers struggled to determine which tasks had the highest priority
- Inefficiency — managers spent too much time reading and replying to emails and determining priorities — time that could have been spent on the sales floor, helping customers and store associates
- No closed loop feedback — corporate struggled to pinpoint root causes of execution failure and prevent future missteps
- Lack of visibility into completion status — headquarters could not tell which tasks had been done, including high priority tasks such as Class 1 recalls
- Inconsistent execution in employee onboarding and other Human Resources processes

Another challenge for the company in achieving store operations excellence was reporting. The problem was not a lack of reports, it was too many of them. An internal study determined that stores were being gauged on their performance in more than 1,400 metrics, many of which were similar or duplicate. Stores received paper reports, which did not include next steps for managers if they didn't reach a certain goal.

SOLUTION

Reflexis Task Manager solved the store execution challenges at both corporate and in stores. Planners at headquarters now have a system to coordinate planning and optimize workloads. When planning a new task, they can see the workload impact on stores. If the task will overload stores, they can shift tasks around so the most important things are done at the right time. Hannaford created a new communication team to evaluate and control the amount of work the corporate office was sending to its stores. Reflexis Task Manager enables planners to coordinate their plans and prioritize tasks in alignment with company goals. When tasks are launched, upper management can see who had read communications and completed tasks. They can also analyze causes for non-execution using the closed loop feedback and post-completion survey functionality of Task Manager.

Task Manager was also implemented in company distribution centers for complex, multiple-step processes such as employee onboarding. With each new hire for its DCs, the company has almost 40 different steps that had to be completed in the right sequence.

Reflexis ensures that for each new employee, important certification steps did not fall through the cracks.

Store managers no longer had to spend time reading and processing emails and other communication. Instead they viewed a prioritized daily planner dashboard. The dashboard told them what they had to do, when, and how. If information for a project changed, it was updated and flagged within the same project — no more searching for the latest information. With Reflexis Task Manager, Ahold Delhaize put a tool into the hands of corporate and store managers that provided the following benefits:

- Streamlined communication — managers view daily, prioritized tasks in a role-based dashboard
- Improved productivity — managers spent less time reading emails and could spend more time on the sales floor, helping customers and store associates
- Closed loop feedback — corporate captured and analyzed causes of execution failure in support of continuous improvement

- Real-time visibility into completion status — headquarters monitors which stores did what and when. Time to execute important tasks was reduced from days to two to three hours, 100 percent, in all stores
- Consistent execution in employee onboarding — in stores and company distribution centers

BENEFITS

The Reflexis solution's flexibility was an important reason Ahold Delhaize USA improved its operational performance. Another important reason was the Reflexis professional services teams helping to guide the company through other aspects of the implementation such as change management. "It's really interesting to me that Reflexis is able to get into the DNA of the customer, really understands and listens to the customer, and is able to take the business opportunities that you have and really be able to show you what this technology can solve," said Jim Walton, Business Relationship Manager for Ahold Delhaize USA.

"We immediately saw an increase in our execution rate, in major initiatives. We were running in the 65-70 percent ranges. Within a month we were at a 90-95 percent measurement in compliance, which helped our sales," according to Walton. "Another benefit we saw was through the KPI piece. Our shrink in year one was 20 basis points below the year prior. Year after year, and we've had this for nine years, so far we've seen a 10-basis point improvement."



SUMMARY

- Consistent execution of new product introductions, promotions, and other merchandising activities in all stores
- Increased efficiency, streamlined communications, and optimized workloads
- 100 percent compliance, product recalls in two to three hours
- Manage by exception and focus attention on stores and departments that need it most
- Role-based task assignment ensures task completion by qualified employees while leveraging cross-training investments
- Corporate can coordinate planning and monitor key operations trends
- Monitor KPIs in real time and automatically assign tasks based on best practices when metrics fall out of defined tolerances

REFLEXIS AT-A-GLANCE

Reflexis has helped over 275 global retailers, restaurants, banks, and hotels simplify operations, optimize labor spend, and improve work execution. The Reflexis ONE™ real-time work platform streamlines task and workforce management, improves visibility for managers, and empowers a superior customer experience.



For more information, visit www.reflexisinc.com.