

Mars Petcare Boosts Factory and Training Efficiency with RealWear



RealWear HMT-1 gives workers on the factory floor safe, fast and hands-free access to equipment files and off-site coaching.



Mars Petcare is a leading provider of high quality, science-backed nutrition and therapeutic health pet products. It's portfolio of pet food, care and treats is designed to meet the individual needs of pets around the world.

The Challenge

The Global Mars Supply Excellence Team was tasked to streamline its production facilities, including minimizing maintenance downtime and increasing workers' skills and safety.



The Solution

RealWear HMT-1 running Microsoft Teams gives workers on the factory floor safe, fast and hands-free access to equipment files and off-site coaching.

The Results

- Coaches' work travel is expected to reduce by more than 35%.
- Factory workers can collaborate with multiple remote experts at once.
- RealWear HMT-1 devices have been rolled out to all 14 U.S. factories.

Core Use Case: Knowledge Transfer and Training

Mars Petcare produces some of the most recognized pet brands, including Pedigree, Nutro, IAMS, Greenies and more. A core reason for its market dominance and success has been its continued mission to increase efficiency and output across all levels of the organization.



The Global Mars Supply Excellence Team is tasked with helping operators — or Associates — gain the skills needed to operate and maintain their automated equipment with the sites. Their objective?

“We train and support our firstline teams to become true equipment owners responsible for the long-term reduction of losses,” says David Oswald, Global Autonomous Maintenance Pillar Leader.

“Our goal is to free up time on the shop floor to do the proactive work and make sure the equipment stays in a healthy condition.”

Through preventative maintenance, Mars Petcare Associates are able to keep the autonomous equipment running at high capacity to ensure factories are efficient and maximize their output.

“We say stop the stops,” says Oswald. “We target the short stops, such as resetting a machine or clearing a jam. We want an operator to run 240+ minutes without any intervention on their machine.”

Choosing Tools that Support the Vision

In their pursuit for efficiency, Oswald's team wanted to reduce maintenance downtime and travels associated with training its Associates. Like the other coaches, Oswald's responsibilities required him to spend 80% of his time visiting factories all over the United States. He needed a highly mobile, hands-free device designed specifically for the high-distraction reality of a manufacturing facility while enabling workers to connect with equipment files and off-site expertise.

The Global Mars Supply Excellence Team found the perfect solution in the RealWear HMT-1 hands-free headsets.

The RealWear HMT-1s allowed Mars Associates to access equipment maintenance files while on the factory floor. And with Microsoft Teams available out-of-the-box, workers can instantly contact maintenance experts for troubleshooting and training.



While improving efficiency was top of mind, keeping workers safe was paramount. The RealWear HMT-1 was designed specifically to safely support industrial workers in distracting or high-risk environments.

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The headset's high-resolution micro-display made it easy for workers to view content without impeding line of sight or taking attention off of the machinery. And with 100% voice-activated controls, associates can continue working with their hands while navigating RealWear HMT-1's dashboard. The capability of using Microsoft Teams with RealWear was integral to Oswald's decision to go with RealWear.

“After evaluating other wearable devices, RealWear and [Microsoft] Teams emerged as the best option to support our ongoing commitment to autonomous maintenance and keeping our firstline teams safe and productive, says Oswald. “This allows us to connect associates on the shop floor with large numbers of people and collaborate in real time. Plus, the noise-canceling aspect of the ProBuds hearing-protection headphones and the hard-hat make it safe and ideal for the kinds of environments we work in.”

Enhancing Existing IT Infrastructure

One important step to implementing new tools was getting internal buy-in from Mars Petcare's IT department. "We had to go through a fairly structured enterprise architecture review," Oswald recalls. "There's a whole host of hoops we have to jump through to make sure we're doing the right things and have the right safety and security."



Solution Highlight

Microsoft Teams on RealWear empowers first line workers with situational awareness when using Microsoft Teams in loud and hazardous environments.

Get Teams at RealWear.com.



But because Mars Petcare already relied on the Microsoft 365 platform, Oswald knew he had a compelling case for RealWear.

"The fact that the RealWear device works with Microsoft Teams was a big selling point for us," says Oswald. "We were already using Teams, and it was a big advantage to not have to deal with a third-party software application to store photos and videos in places that aren't controlled by Mars. Any time we can use standard platforms like Teams, the better off we are from a safety and security standpoint."

The IT team approved and rolled out RealWear HMT-1 devices to all 14 factory locations across the U.S.

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Driving Efficiency with Purpose-Oriented Technology

Firstline Associates were hooked and quickly became enthusiastic users.

“We are able to pull up a document on the RealWear display and connect to Microsoft OneDrive, which has been so empowering,” says Oswald. “Associates can access files on the factory floor while connecting with colleagues in real time.”

Coaches can also focus on their mission of training and supporting associates — not wasting time traveling between sites.

“I knew training was critical for the long-term success of the Mars Supply Excellence program,” says Oswald. “We had to adapt to new ways of working to do that, which is where connecting with hands-free devices on the shop floor has been extremely helpful. RealWear with Teams allows our associates to coach and allows operators to safely use their hands and do tasks while the team is working with them.”

Other sites in the Mars Petcare organization noticed the successes The Global Mars Supply Excellence Team were having. It didn’t take long for word to travel. Others quickly adopted RealWear into their own processes. Today, multiple Mars Petcare teams use RealWear to drive safe, hands-free collaboration, efficiency and training.

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Collaboration During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Global Mars Supply Excellence Team’s foresight to streamline processes couldn’t have happened at a more impactful time. When COVID-19 struck, Mars Petcare developed a “COVID-19 Playbook” — to do whatever was required to keep associates safe while continuing to run operations at nearly full capacity.

RealWear aligned perfectly to the COVID-19 Playbook and allowed Mars Petcare’s factories to continue to operate despite a newly socially distanced — and often remote — workforce.

“In the past, I spent three weeks of the month on the road visiting various factories around the country, but today I work from home 100%,” says Oswald. “Microsoft Teams and RealWear devices have become an essential part of how my colleagues and I continue to collaborate remotely and get work done.”