

Make the most of digital signage options

The power of digital signage is increasing, as offices, retail settings, hospitals, hotels, and even schools use this technology to communicate messages and information. Digital signage displays can be connected to your organization's network via media players to convey different messaging based upon display location (and who walks by the displays).

Digital signage content can be managed from web-based software, allowing multiple people within your organization to access it and post updates as necessary. For example, the HR department may want to post reminders about paperwork and upcoming deadlines; the marketing department may want access so they can post employee news or welcome messages for visitors.

Incorporating interactivity into your digital signage system can take it to a whole new level. From interactive maps and directories to informational videos, the visitors to your building or campus can use digital signage touchscreens to lead themselves through your facility, locate restrooms and exits, learn about the artwork on display, etc. And when the user is ready to walk away from the screen, he or she can choose to have directions sent straight to a mobile device.

Displays can be customized in several ways, allowing for almost any combination you can imagine. Multiple messages can be displayed on one screen at the same time (a meeting room's weekly schedule on the left side of the screen and weather updates on the right, for example).

A variety of content types also be displayed: text, graphics, video, audio, PowerPoint slides, web pages, etc. Customized content schedules also can be created for each individual display, and can change throughout the day. For example, a retail store may display different messaging to employees as they get ready to open. Once the store is open, messaging can switch to target patrons instead, advertising specials, promoting new products, etc. Messages can be scheduled in advance or created and posted on the fly at any time.

As digital signage becomes more prevalent, it also becomes more affordable, but there are newer ways to approach it even more affordably. In many cases, you have the option to invest in hosted digital signage. Instead of purchasing a premise-based digital-signage solution, hosted digital signage lets you harness the power of digital signage software without having to worry about routine maintenance, data back-up, or software updates and upgrades. Energy-efficient screens and players can reduce operational costs for these systems as well.

Digital signage systems can also be integrated with other building systems to display real-time content based on changing situations. For example, a restaurant may integrate its digital



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signage solution with its inventory management system to make sure the displays automatically stops promoting food items that are no longer in stock. Manufacturing facilities can integrate digital signage into logistics applications to display workflow performance and progress toward goals. Digital signage can also be integrated with security and fire systems. Based on alarms or emergency situations, screens can display customized messaging that offers employees and visitors instructions on what to do and where to go.

Here are just a few of the ways that all types of organizations are using digital signage:

Messaging/communications

- Welcome messages for visitors
- Meeting schedules
- Company-wide messages or updates
- Reminders about upcoming events or deadlines
- Employee recognition
- Motivational messages
- Wayfinding

Public information

- Local weather/traffic reports
- Real-time news, stock, and sports updates
- Social media/RSS feeds
- Live TV feeds/streams
- Building energy use levels

Advertising

- New product information and updates
- Sales and specials
- Quizzes and surveys
- Menu items

Emergency communications

- Severe weather alerts
- Security threats within the building
- Fire alarms and other emergencies

Before implementing a digital signage solution, it's important to investigate the software and bandwidth requirements to make sure your network is ready to handle the new system. It's also important to ensure that the digital signage solution you choose can be integrated into other existing building systems for true message automation.

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