MOOD:MEDIA

5 FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL RETAIL DIGITAL SIGNAGE

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Technology presents a bit of a contradiction when it comes to retail customer experience. Thanks to technology, online shopping continues to increase and foot traffic gradually decreases as we point and click deeper into the ocean of the digital age.

However, as we're beginning to learn, technology is also one of the keys to increasing in-store dwell time and engagement via the visual appeal of digital signage, video walls, touchscreen technology and even digital shelving solutions.

Why? Because experiences are just as important as convenience to today's tech savvy consumer – if not more.

Consider this stat: **78% of Millennials say that they would rather spend money on a desirable experience than buying something they want** (Eventbrite / Harris Survey, 2014).

In other words, experiences matter to shoppers - big time.

Here's another stat: **43% of consumers around the globe have been inspired to make a purchase based on digital content they viewed while in-store** (Mood Media, 2019).

In other words, digital signage can significantly drive sales.

Here we are with a target customer that prioritizes experience and convenience. They also highly value the appeal of technology, which can heavily influence their purchase decisions. On paper, retail digital signage checks off all of these boxes.

However, effective digital signage requires much more than just screens, media players and content. Whether you're operating an independently-owned local shop, a global retail brand or a business in between, you need to have a comprehensive strategy in place to ensure that your signage specifically addresses key business initiatives. In this article you'll learn about the five foundations for designing such a strategy, so that you can better position your business for success with this important technology.

#1: KNOW YOUR DIGITAL SIGNAGE STRATEGY

Deploying signage just for the sake of having it is a recipe for failure. Your signage needs to be designed with specific goals in mind if it's going to achieve the results you're looking for. In short, you need to document your digital signage strategy.

When it comes to retail, signage has three primary purposes:

+ To enhance the in-store atmosphere
+ To strengthen brand image
+ To create customer engagement and drive revenue

Each business will prioritize these purposes differently. For example, if you're a small boutique apparel company, you'll likely want some ambient signage to help bring vibrancy to your space. On the other hand, if you're a large grocery store, then you probably prioritize leveraging signage for more promotional purposes. You may also want some touchscreen applications to enhance convenience and the level of customer engagement in your stores. As such, you'd likely have a variety of touchpoints for signage, such as full-service departments, the coffee shop, or even the new endcap signage that is beginning to pop up.

Additionally, more businesses are beginning to put digital signage to work for internal communications. Workplace digital signage is an incredibly effective way to boost training initiatives, motivate staff and further enhance the experience for employees.

No matter what type of business you own, make sure you understand the intended purpose behind retail digital signage before you make the investment. Also, when you first implement your solution, prioritize what is most important to the success of your business – aesthetic appeal, product promotion and customer or staff engagement. Doing so will help you determine your placement and content strategy.

#2: START SMALL AND TEST

When you're flying towards the bright lights of the world of digital signage, it's natural to want to cover your entire store (or network of stores) in screens right off the bat.

However, we highly recommend pilot testing your new solution for 90-180 days. Doing so will help you fine-tune your strategy. For a business with a single location, it's a good idea to pilot the signage in a select location before implementing in multiple areas. For regional, national or global retailers, we recommend testing in a single location or across a group of your highest volume stores. Common test variables include:

+ Medium - e.g., signage, video, touchscreens
+ Content focus - e.g., product promotion, education, social media awareness
+ Content - e.g., headlines, copy, images
+ Time of day, week and season
+ Placement

The provider you choose should be able to help you implement a pilot program, while helping you define specific goals during the pilot period. Once you learn what works, you can apply the same strategy as you scale throughout your store or across your footprint to truly make the most of your digital signage network.

#3: YOUR CONTENT MUST DRAW ATTENTION

Incorporating digital signage into your in-store experience makes a big statement to your customers. It can vastly improve customers' perception of your business and demonstrate that you care about their experience. In short, they will notice.

With those considerations in mind, make sure that you're incorporating content that demands your customers' attention and addresses their needs. You need to put yourself in your customers' shoes and ask yourself:

- What kind of signage would I want to see?
- Why is that signage relevant to me?
- Where would I want to see it?

Here are a few examples of retail applications and types of signage that will captivate viewers:

+ Hardware Store - Educational videos, product demos
+ Clothing Store - Ambient visuals in the color scheme of the brand, video walls
+ Sporting Goods - Lifestyle videos promoting sneakers, sports equipment, etc.
+ Mall-based department store - atmospheric signage and video walls near entrance

If you want really captivating content, it's always a good idea to work with an experienced content specialist. These professionals can work with existing assets and create new content to ensure that your signage is effective, alluring and fully-branded.

#4: UPDATE YOUR CONTENT FREQUENTLY

Again, your content needs to be as relevant as possible with respect to both time and audience. For example, if you're still promoting the best swimwear in November, you're going to lose the attention of your guests. Your lack of attention to detail can reflect poorly on other aspects of your store.

Furthermore, if you're promoting the same thing week after week, regular customers will eventually begin to ignore your digital signage. Try creating multiple layouts or versions of the same message in different looks. You can also create a large library of "evergreen" content that can be swapped in and out often. Even the smallest changes, such as changing a background or the color of text will keep your audience engaged.

As a rule of thumb, aim to update your digital signage content at least once every 4 weeks, with major changes applied every season.

#5: FIND A RELIABLE SERVICE PROVIDER

Blank screens are not good. The sight of a dark screen can spoil the customer experience and give the impression that your company isn't on top of its game.

As is the case with any kind of technology, some digital signage solutions can be prone to technical issues, which is why it's so important to go with an experienced provider that offers reliable digital signage players, commercial grade screens, software **and** content creation. Such integrated solutions are designed to work in unison, ensuring maximum reliability and ease of use.

Additionally, you want a provider that also offers installation and on-site service. A reliable solution begins with proper installation, and in the event that something goes wrong, it's always good to know that your provider can send someone out to take care of any issues.

We hope this article has helped you establish a foundation for an effective digital signage strategy. For more information, **contact our digital signage experts** and explore the possibilities for your business.

Lastly, if your business has a regional, national or global footprint, be sure to download "**Digital Signage for National and Global Brands.**" This valuable eBook goes into greater detail on many of the topics covered here. It also provides key insights for those looking to implement digital signage at scale.

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