



Digital signage is an island – and what you can do about it

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DIGITAL SIGNAGE IS AN ISLAND – AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

The issue

“Companies need to bridge the gap between digital signage and their web/mobile initiatives, as it remains a critical part of connecting with consumers. Too often, web/mobile and in-venue are operated by different teams with different strategies working on completely different paths.”

The advent of digital signage spotlighted in-venue products and services. Sharp visuals and strong messaging reeled in consumers, often enticing them to make a purchase.

Traditionally though, digital signage has been constrained to use within brick-and-mortar locations and limited to consumers physically situated in front of a display. Over time, as technology, digital platforms and strategy evolved, in-venue displays became secondary to websites and mobile apps that are accessible by consumers anywhere and anytime.

Content can now go to its target audience rather than requiring the audience to go to the content. That shift has left digital signage in businesses a largely secondary customer-facing channel. But it hasn't diminished the relevance and impact of digital displays. Digital signage reaches 135 million people a week, according to technology firm MVIX. Additionally, digital signage has a recall rate of 83%, almost double the information retention rate for traditional advertising. In-venue signage content has also graduated from videos playing over and over on dedicated screens to become interactive and relevant in real-time to drive foot traffic and, ultimately, revenue.

Much time is spent by companies on web and mobile because they can reach scores of people more quickly. The two are often closely intertwined with unified backends, just different channels. The venue, meanwhile, has become lost in the shuffle, so to speak, as an isolated technology island.

Companies need to bridge the gap between digital signage and their web/mobile initiatives, as it remains a critical part of connecting with consumers. Too often, web/mobile and in-venue are operated by different teams with different strategies working on completely different paths.

“It makes no sense,” said Geoffrey Bessin, CMO for leading digital technology firm Intuiface. “It should be exactly the same, just tailored for different mediums. ... When deploying a signage platform, consider what you

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are doing for web and mobile and what you can do to bridge the gap to somehow bring them together because at the end of the day, it's all the same audience.”

Each customer-facing channel offers advantages, but also works in tandem to reach consumers where they are and how they want to view and interact with content. Unified channels enable businesses to reinforce their messaging and, when relevant, drive traffic to the venue.

The challenge

Digital signage vendors are missing opportunities to capitalize on efficiencies to drive revenue by broadening their focus and weaving together all prospect/customer communication efforts into a unified approach.

Oftentimes, companies have production teams working in silos to create and manage a specific platform, developing specific content, designing promotions and executing strategy that has little or no tie into what consumers see and use inside a venue.

In fact, there have been attempts to unify these outreach efforts. Called Digital Experience Platforms (or DXPs), this technology exists to unify



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creatives and manage and deploy content. Unfortunately, they tend to only focus on web and mobile projects. Again, in-venue signage hardly, if ever, is considered.

It is critical to ensure each medium tells the same story. The way in which the story is told may vary some, but the core content should overlap in terms of appearance and messaging.

Businesses need better collaboration between digital teams with a shared focus, vision and direction that better ties together a company’s digital strategy so that it can successfully capitalize on all technology platforms. That synergy resonates with consumers, who see a small number of messages reinforced rather than multiple, potentially conflicting messages that disincentivize engagement.

“Most digital signage vendors are doing nothing to unify the channels,” Bessin said. “It’s a conversation they should be having. How does it fit into the larger communication operation with web and mobile?”

The solution

Companies must include in-venue signage in their digital strategies moving forward. Part of the successful convergence hinges on the adoption of platforms that intuitively unify content deployment and messaging across multiple channels. Since DXPs have failed to facilitate this convergence, Some digital signage platforms have taken on the responsibility.



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Companies like Intuiface have created platforms that enable businesses to easily and seamlessly communicate across in-venue, web and mobile channels. These solutions enable non-technical users to create or update content without having to know coding. For example, Intuiface enhanced its solution to enable web and mobile app deployments of the same content created for in-venue use, with a create-once-push-content-everywhere technology.

Successful cross-channel deployments, though, demand several considerations:

Take a venue-first approach

Despite the convenience and popularity of online consumerism, in-venue activity remains king. Effectively adopting a venue-first approach requires an understanding of the different channels, because, after all, what works for one space won't always work for another.

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Adopt interactivity in-venue

Websites and mobile apps encourage interaction, enabling target audiences to choose their own path. Limiting the in-venue creative to mere broadcast communication squanders an opportunity to engage when the audience is potentially moments from purchase.

Interactivity doesn't just facilitate exploration, it increases engagement. Adopting touch, gesture, sensor, and voice modernizes deployments, increases dwell time, and maximizes the hold on an audience's attention.

Optimize media

Time is not on a business's side. Customers' attention must be captured quickly. That means load times for videos and other content must be

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minimized. Unlike in-venue deployments, there is a good chance that at least some media, particularly that on a website, will be downloaded in real-time. Be sure to performance test your output.

Experts recommend against using 8k videos, for example, when high definition will do.

Ensure consistency between channels

Branding connects presentations between in-venue, web and mobile to the business or a particular campaign. Even if reconfiguring layouts and/or content for different devices or audiences, hold fast to the look that represents your brand.

Cater to different viewers and users

Consider accessibility best practices, such as choosing colors and contrast appropriate for the diverse color-blind community. Also, don't overlook opportunities to incorporate audio or that offer alternative means of interaction, such as voice or keyboard, for those who may not be able to adequately interact with the screen.

“Use analytics generously to identify what works and what doesn’t. Based on findings, make changes and add content via streamlined processes for manually changing content.”

Capitalize on data

Data and how to collect it is an area that has evolved considerably in the digital signage world. Traditional digital signage, as a broadcast medium, was very data poor. With interactivity of all stripes, deployments are now data-rich. In fact, with cloud connectivity and modern interactive technologies like computer vision, digital signage deployments can now collect a wide range of contextual information, from location and weather to gender and age. By combining this insight with onscreen choices like item selection, projects can feed critical Key Performance Indicators, creating a holistic understanding of the target audience.

Conclusion

In-venue creative remains a pivotal piece of the digital media pie. Experience platforms focused on web and mobile have failed to blend in-venue content into its development technology.

Companies like Intuiface are weaving capabilities into its solutions to help eliminate this technology island.

“Communication should be unified so that what I see on a website and in a store are complementary,” Bessin said. “That’s what I want as a retailer: consistent, reinforcing content optimized for the medium.”

ABOUT THE SPONSOR:

Intuiface is the market’s only no-code platform dedicated to the creation, deployment, and analysis of interactive digital experiences that connect people to place. Over 1,600 agencies, integrators, and enterprises across 70+ countries are engaging audiences in-venue, on the web, and on personal mobile devices using interactive options such as touch, gestures, sensors, voice, computer vision, the Internet of Things, and much more. It is an ISO 27001 Certified platform that can be used by any industry – including retail, hospitality, real estate, tourism, education – and for any intent – from digital signs to self-service kiosks and assisted selling.

