

ROI and Optimizing Your Network



INSIDE: As an emerging technology, digital signage has much to offer businesses. It's flexible, targeted and affordable. Just as important, methods of measuring ROI for digital signage are becoming more creative and effective.

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Contents

ROI and Optimizing Your Network

Page 3	About the sponsors
Page 4	Introduction
Page 5	Chapter 1 What's in it for me? Print vs. digital CPM Drawing attention Real-time control of ads Instant feedback Creative ways to measure ROI Narrowcasting vs. broadcasting Saving money and making money Point-of-sale marketing A more effective form of out-of-home advertising
Page 11	Chapter 2 Measuring for ROI
Page 14	Chapter 3 Optimizing digital signage content for ROI
Page 17	Chapter 4 Digital signage ROI through branding and corporate communications
Page 19	Chapter 5 ROI for retail digital signage
Page 21	Conclusion The future of digital signage is now

About the sponsors



Digital Multi-Media Services is a total solution provider for the digital signage industry. Among the services DMS provides are consultation, cutting-edge research and development, proprietary hardware, installation, content design and management, as well as around-the-clock networking and tech support.



Digital Signage Today, operated by Louisville, Ky.-based NetWorld Alliance, is the leading online publisher of news and information on the emerging world of digital signage, dynamic messaging and cutting-edge business-communication technologies. The content, which is updated every business day and read by professionals around the world, is provided free of charge to readers.

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Written by **Fritz Esker**, contributing writer, Digital Signage Today

Edited by Bill Yackey, editor, Digital Signage Today

Dick Good, CEO

Tom Harper, president and publisher

Bob Fincher, executive vice president

Joseph Grove, vice president and associate publisher

Introduction

Digital signage: A better option for a challenging time

In today's economy, businesses find themselves caught between a rock and a hard place. To promote their products, businesses need to get their message out to the public. They need consumers to know about their products and be willing to spend their hard-earned money on them. As businesses continue to lose money, their advertising dollars become more precious than ever; they cannot afford to spend carelessly on campaigns that don't work.

"The economy is only going to help digital signage," said Gary Downey, chief executive officer of Digital Multi-Media Services. "It's not going to hurt it."

Hard times bring great opportunity to the world of digital signage. By nature, many businesses are conservative; they tend to stick with what has worked in the past. In comfortable times, that might mean sticking with television or print advertising instead of branching out to try a new technology. But when times are tough, some businesses are more willing to experiment and try new things.

"The economy is going to lead a lot of big companies that are complacent to change," said Paul King, chief executive officer of Hercules Networks of New York City, a company that produces automated phone chargers with digital screens. "Advertisers and major media conglomerates will be thinking outside of the box."

Fritz Esker,
Contributing writer,
Digital Signage Today.

"The economy is only going to help digital signage. It's not going to hurt it."

— Gary Downey, CEO, Digital Multi-Media Services

Chapter 1

What's in it for me?

Before a business can commit to installing digital signage, there must be tangible benefits for the company. After all, the point of operating a business is to make money. So, for a business to spend money on something, the pros must outweigh the cons. In short, potential deployers must know the answer to the question “What’s in it for me?”

Print vs. digital

Traditional print advertising encompasses a number of categories, including magazine ads, newspaper ads and static billboards. So how is digital signage a more effective and affordable alternative to print?

First, newspaper circulation has been steadily decreasing for years. In 2007, the Newspaper Association of America reported the sharpest drop ever in advertising revenues, a whopping 9.4 percent from 2006 — and 2006’s revenues were a record low at the time. Newspaper advertising is becoming passé and ineffective.

Additionally, print advertising is more expensive than digital signage, and it rarely catches consumers at a time when they are in a buying mindset. Also, when a company advertises via print, it is locked in for a specific amount of time. If the ad campaign isn’t working, the advertiser is forced to ride it out before changing it, unless it wants to absorb considerable

expenses. Changing messaging on digital signage is comparatively cheap and easy. Digital Multi-Media Services CEO Gary Downey gave the example of a large, national insurance company that wants to send the same poster to each of its 17,000 locations nationwide. “The company would pay roughly \$2.00 for printing and postage per poster,” Downey said. “DMS, in most cases, can take that poster that has already been designed, animate it for around \$300 and send it on its way to all 17,000



locations. End result: \$300 versus \$34,000.”

Finally, 100 percent compliance with the advertiser’s wishes as they relate to the display is possible. If an advertiser ships static displays to be put up in stores, there is no easy way to know if the signs were actually placed and,

Digital signage and dynamic out-of-home media are proving to be better at reaching consumers than traditional advertising and messaging.

Chapter 1 What's in it for me?

if so, in what location. However, since digital signage can be monitored from a central location, advertisers know their message is being shown.

CPM

In general, cost per thousand, or CPM, is lower for digital signage than it is for magazines, television and newspapers. CPM is lowest in areas with high foot traffic and highest in areas where there is a more captive audience (e.g., lobbies, elevators, etc.). But even in areas where CPM is high for digital signage, it should not deter advertisers.

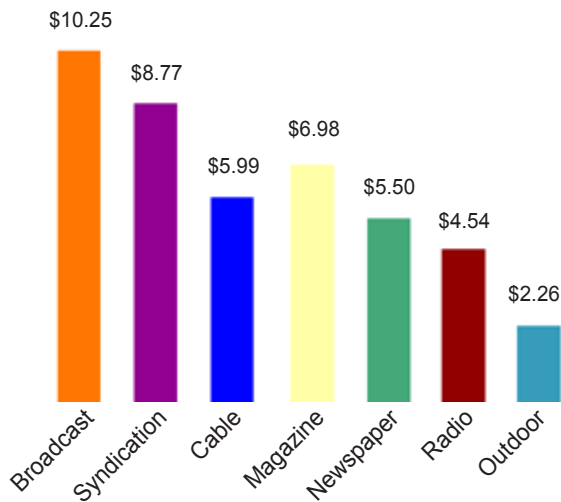
“CPM should not be a blunt mechanical criterion as far as affordability goes,” said Brian Dusho, president and chief strategy officer of BroadSign of Montreal, a company that creates software for managing digital signage

networks. “The general rule is (that) if you can prove your audience has watched the ad, has a relatively high per-capita income and is known to have bought products similar to the one advertised, you can justify a much higher CPM in your rate cards, and it may still be very attractive to advertisers, as long as it is backed by research data.”

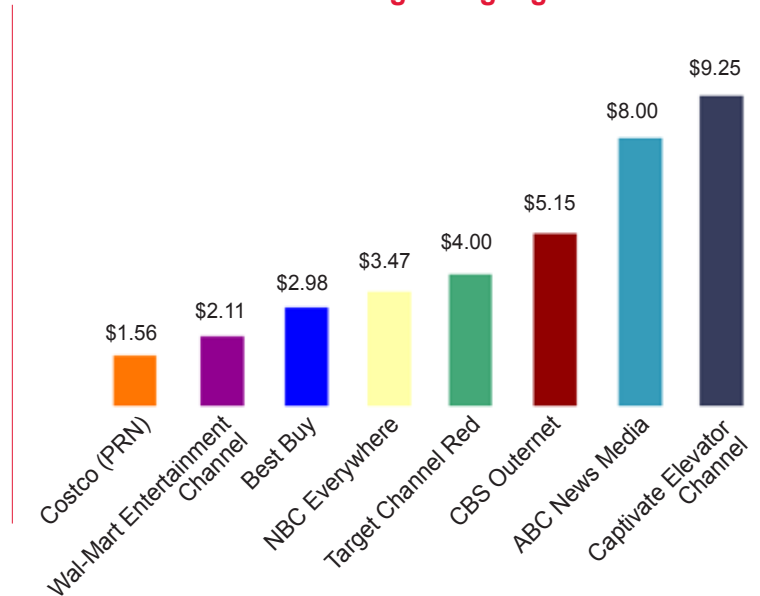
“CPM for digital signage is still somewhat unclear,” Downey said. “But the numbers are starting to roll in, and the figures are promising.”

Laura Davis-Taylor, founder and principal of Retail Media Consulting, Inc. of Atlanta, a consulting firm that specializes in digital signage strategies, has the numbers to back up digital signage's affordability, compared to other forms of advertising.

CPM for traditional advertising



CPM for digital signage



Chapter 1 What's in it for me?

Drawing attention

Here is where digital signage has a distinct advantage over other forms of advertising. Digital signage is new and visually dynamic, so it will catch the eyes of customers. But it is not so different from anything that's gone before that it will confound and confuse customers. It combines elements of the familiar and unfamiliar in a way that makes it very enticing to people.

The novelty of digital signage gives it a leg up on more traditional forms of advertising. Americans are inundated with advertising. Petro Shimonishi, general manager of eastern region commercial sales for NetStreams, an Austin, Texas, company that provides digital entertainment networks based on Internet protocol (IP) technology, cites an Adweek article stating that the average consumer sees about five million advertisements a day.

"We've really got to fight to get the consumer's attention," Shimonishi said.

Since so much advertising is out there, consumers have learned how to tune it out. They often don't look at the billboards they pass on the highway. They install pop-up blockers and close pop-up windows as fast as they appear on the Internet. They subscribe to services such as TiVo or DVR, which allow people to record TV programs and fast-forward through the commercials. In the car, they either install an iPod dock or subscribe to

"The general rule is (that) if you can prove your audience has watched the ad, has a relatively high per-capita income and is known to have bought products similar to the one advertised, you can justify a much higher CPM."

— Brian Dusho, president and Chief strategy officer, BroadSign

satellite radio so they don't have to listen to commercials. And when people cannot prevent an ad from getting through the filters of TiVo, pop-up blockers, etc., people often just give it a second's notice before focusing their attention elsewhere.

Because so much technology is available, and so many forms of technology are assaulting consumers simultaneously, it becomes that much harder to capture their attention. As a result of this media deluge, customers do not have the attention spans that they used to. In their book "Lighting Up the Aisle," authors Laura Davis-Taylor and Adrian Weidmann refer to the phenomenon as "media ADD."

Because digital signage is fresh and visually compelling and provides relevant information, it is the form of advertising most likely to break through that "media ADD."

Chapter 1 What's in it for me?

Real-time control of ads

Digital signage offers flexibility and adaptability. For example, if an advertiser shipped displays out to stores, but the displays did not result in an increase of sales, then the process of withdrawing the displays and sending out different ones would be time consuming and expensive. The same is true of replacing ad campaigns in newspapers, television or billboards. But if a digital signage campaign isn't working, then it can be removed and replaced quickly.

The real-time control of ads also allows businesses to cater their ads to specific demographics. If a store knows that adolescents tend to frequent the store at a certain time of day, then the digital signage can be catered to that demographic. If seniors frequent the store at a different time, then the digital signage can be made to appeal to them. The same cannot be done with static signage.

"Audience demographics are often different at different times of the day, week, month and season," said Mike Abbott, president of ADFLOW Networks of Burlington, Ontario, a company that provides digital media management technology.

Kim Ramser, business development manager of DOmedia, a Columbus, Ohio, company that provides a

database of out-of-home and alternative media opportunities, says digital signage allows ad mistakes to be corrected instantly. In ad campaigns via print or billboard, mistakes can be made, no matter how much effort and how many hours are spent on the project. There may be a typo. The phone number may be one digit off or the store's address may be wrong. If this happens on a billboard or a print ad, customers will get the wrong information for a painfully long span of time before it can be withdrawn and corrected. However, if a mistake is made on a digital signage ad, it can be corrected instantly.

Finally, real-time control of ads allows companies to respond swiftly to competitors. If a cell phone company releases a new plan to the public, then a rival cell phone company can change its digital signage accordingly to respond to the other company's sales gimmick. With print advertising, the response would take weeks. And just as the saying goes, time is money.

Instant feedback

Digital signage not only allows businesses to adjust their content quickly, it allows them to receive feedback quickly as well. If a store advertises a sale via digital signage, it can find out that day how well the on-sale items are selling. If an item is not selling, then the store can try different strategies (e.g., changing a 25 percent

Chapter 1 What's in it for me?

off sale to a two-for-two sale).

The instant feedback and the flexibility of digital signage allow retailers to adjust sales on a store-by-store basis, too. If a national chain sells sweaters, and the sweaters are selling well in the Philadelphia store but not the Pittsburgh store, then the digital signage can be adjusted accordingly. The sweaters in the Philadelphia store can stay at the same price, while a sale can be instituted in the Pittsburgh store to help sell the items.

Creative ways to measure ROI

With the new technology has come a bevy of ideas as to how to measure it. Dwell time around a piece of digital signage can be measured. In many cases, it can even be determined whether the person looking at the sign is a man or a woman. Interactivity via Bluetooth and touchscreen kiosks also make it much easier to measure ROI for digital signage when compared to print or TV.

The Out-of-Home Video Advertising Bureau recently released guidelines for audience measurement. The key piece of currency is average ad-unit audience, which OVAB defines as “the number and type of people exposed to the media vehicle with an opportunity to see a unit of time equal to a typical advertising unit.”

OVAB says this should be judged by the measurement of a person's

presence at the screen, dwell time and notice (where the person is looking).

Narrowcasting vs. broadcasting

In traditional advertising, a message is broadcast. The messages of traditional advertising are not targeted. Traditional advertising uses the “shotgun blast” approach. In a TV, print or radio ad, a general message is sent out simultaneously to a large group of people and the business has to hope the message sticks with as many consumers as possible. But this approach is problematic. After all, how can a store know it is reaching its target audience?

Instead of broadcasting, digital signage networks use narrowcasting. For example, if a popcorn company wanted to place ads for its microwave popcorn, it could narrowcast by placing digital signage ads in video stores or grocery stores, i.e. places where people might be interested in buying microwave popcorn. The ads are broadcast in a location where people looking to buy the product are likely to be and the message is reaching the consumer at the moment he is likely to make a purchase. Other ads are not as targeted.

Saving money and making money

Digital signage saves money for businesses in that it does not require

Chapter 1 What's in it for me?

printing, shipping or installing new signs every time a new campaign comes out. It can make money by including advertising from complementary companies. For example, if an airport has a digital signage network, it can include ads for cab companies and hotels. The costs for installing digital signage are thus easily recouped.

Point-of-sale marketing

The problem with many other forms of advertising is that they do not reach consumers when they are in a buying mode. When a person is in the comfort of his home, he does not want to be sold to. Television ads often seem like an intrusion. Even if the person does not view the ads as intrusive, he might be in the bathroom or the kitchen when the ads are broadcast. And even if he is sitting on the couch, being completely attentive to the ad, he is still not in buying mode. During an ad for a television, he may say, "Oh, that looks like a cool TV," but by the time he needs to buy another TV, he might have forgotten all about that ad.

"When you're at home reading a magazine (or watching television), you're not thinking about buying a product," Hercules Networks' King said.

However, when a person is in a store in the act of shopping, that person is in buying mode. A customer in an electronics store who sees an ad for

a specific brand of television is more likely to buy that brand than a customer who sees an ad while watching TV at home or reading a magazine in the lobby of a doctor's office. If a company spends its ads on point-of-sale marketing, then that company knows the ads will reach customers who are in a purchasing mindset.

A more effective form of out-of-home advertising

Digital signage can be one of the most effective forms of out-of-home advertising. Radio is losing its effectiveness. People do not listen to the radio for the commercials. Even if a driver leaves the radio on for an ad, there is a good chance he may be talking on his cell phone or talking with a passenger in the car. In other words, there are lots of reasons to believe that radio ads often fail to reach the ears of the consumers.

Billboards face similar difficulties. For starters, they have become so ubiquitous that people often pay them no more attention than they would an interstate or a parking garage. As previously mentioned, when people are driving or walking and passing up the billboards, people are often talking on a cell phone, talking to a friend or fiddling with their iPhone or Blackberry. To get their attention, there has to be something new, fresh and dynamic.

Digital signage, however, attracts

Chapter 2

Measuring for ROI

The challenge for digital signage is finding ways to measure ROI. Are people looking at the screens? And if they are looking at them, are they acting on what they see? Are they buying the advertised merchandise? “ROI is, unfortunately, looked at my most customers in the digital signage land as ‘How can it create more business for me,’” Jon Laevey, DMS’ president, said. “Digital signage is so much more, and the value is hard to measure” Clearly, there is no single answer to the question of how to measure ROI.

“As in any other medium, there is no single method for measuring the effectiveness,” said BroadSign’s Dusho. “You have to use a combination of different metrics.”

Current technology can measure a

person’s dwell time or eye contact with a piece of digital signage. Some technology is even able to accurately distinguish the gender of the person looking at the screen. While this is helpful to a degree, in that it lets businesses know if people are at least looking at the signage, it does not measure whether the customer made a purchase.

“One of the disconnections is it doesn’t go to sale, only dwell time and exposure,” said Bob Wilson, chief operating officer of DMS.

One way of measuring ROI is for a company to roll out its digital signage on a small scale initially. For instance, a deployer can install the digital signage in only a limited number of stores. That way, it is possible to compare



The key to finding ROI is to know who is looking at the screen, when and for how long.

Chapter 2 Measuring for ROI

sales figures of locations where the digital signage is installed with figures of locations where there is no digital signage.

But what if it is a store with only one location? Bruce Pollack, senior product manager for the professional display division of Sharp Electronics, says standalone stores can implement digital signage for certain parts of the day and avoid using it at other times, then compare the time periods to see how well the displays are working.

Bluetooth technology is another important way of measuring ROI. For example, a casino in Las Vegas can install digital signage at the airport that tells people to call or text a phone number to receive \$25 in free chips. When viewers take advantage of the offer, the casino can automatically deduce how many people are responding to the digital signage.

Digital signage can also tell customers to turn on their Bluetooth to receive movie trailers, MP3s and other ads.

“They are literally taking the ad away with them,” said Steve Birnhak, CEO of Inwindow Outdoor of New York City, a company that specializes in creating high-profile advertising in storefront locations.

Birnhak added that the response to Bluetooth-related digital signage has been phenomenal. He said 40 percent of the people pinged with a message

on their Bluetooth have responded. Comparatively, he said, only a 1 percent response rate for a direct-mail flyer is considered a success for that medium.

Part of what makes the Bluetooth measurement work is interaction, and interactivity also is key to measuring ROI. Kiosks are another way to get

“As in any other medium, there is no single method for measuring the effectiveness. You have to use a combination of different metrics.”

— Brian Dusho, president and chief strategy officer, BroadSign

customers to interact with digital signage. Touchscreens can prompt customers to click for more information about a product, and the interactions with the screen can be measured.

“You need some participation from the folks viewing the information,” Downey of DMS said.

Customer surveys are another way to achieve this. DMS is going to start beta testing a network with a group that owns 25 assisted-living centers in the Boston area. The test will begin at the start of the second quarter of this year and last for three months. There are four to six displays in common areas and televisions in the rooms of the residents.

Chapter 2 Measuring for ROI

What DMS will do is take a channel through the facility's cable system. The facility has a channel that lists all the daily activities, meal menus for the day and any other news items the residents might need to know. For this reason, it is a very popular channel among residents of the assisted-living facilities. The channel will still provide all of the useful, pertinent info the residents need. However, during the test there will be ads on one side of the screen and daily events/menu items on the other side of the screen. The assisted-living center will get the system for free. The ads will pay for the network. Downey is confident that many companies with products targeted toward seniors (e.g., pharmaceutical companies) will want to take out ads.

"We've got a niche market a lot of companies would be interested in," Downey said.

When the test period is done, DMS plans on getting feedback from the residents through forms asking their opinions on the network.

But whatever the method, measuring ROI will only improve as more studies and research is done on the subject.

"We'll only get better and more creative at measuring ROI," Downey said.

Chapter 3 Optimizing digital signage content for ROI

While digital signage is an exciting, new technology, its novelty alone will not be enough to ensure its success. Digital signage needs to be thoughtfully placed, and it needs to feature compelling, relevant content to make money for its deployers.

“The first challenge is to get [the customers’] attention. The second challenge is to get them to focus and pay attention,” Downey of DMS said.

One thing businesses should be careful not to do, however, is make digital signage seem too much like television. Even though the method of presentation may be similar to TV, it is a different medium and should be treated as such.

“We see a lot of TV content being recycled as an ‘attract’ part of the loop in some big networks,” Dusho of BroadSign said. “It might seem logical and practical at first glance, but then, if you think of it, those networks are using the same concept that has caused the downfall of traditional TV: inserting ads between entertainment and news segments ... Digital signage is not TV; it has a tremendous and unique potential all its own.”

Placement and location of digital signage is important. It needs to be in a high-traffic location, near eye level, where people can see it. If it is tucked away in a corner or hanging from the ceiling, then the content will be

irrelevant because the customer might not even see the screen itself.

“The display needs to be where it will attract attention,” ADFLOW’s Abbott said. “And it needs to be integrated with the design, function and traffic flow of the location.”



People should pay close attention to the setting in which the digital signage is being presented. In certain locations customers are more likely to be standing still for greater periods of time, while in other locations they are more likely to be walking toward something else.

For example, Hercules Networks works with digital signage attached to machines used for charging cell phones. In those locations, a person is more likely to be standing still for an extended period of time.

Knowledge of the network’s audience allows digital signage users to tailor their content to achieve specific goals.

Chapter 3 Optimizing digital signage content for ROI

“People that need to charge their phones have to stand there for ten minutes,” said Hercules Networks’ King.

In those scenarios, Hercules caters its digital signage to stores in close proximity to the charging machine. By doing this, the content is relevant to the customer who is charging his phone. Since the person is standing still for an extended period of time, the content can afford to be a bit more long form.

However, digital signage is often in locations where customers are in a hurry. In that case, different strategies must be employed. The digital signage might have only a second or two to capture the eye of the customer, so there is no room for long-form, television-style advertisements that tell a story in 30 seconds and often do not reveal the name of the product until the very end. Most people who are looking at digital signage are not at that location to watch fancy content. They are mission oriented and will stop only to watch something that is useful to them at that specific time and place.

“Less is more; the shorter the better,” Dusho said. “Adjust the content to customer behavior in specific locations, use a special version for every target audience, avoid audio whenever possible, use content shops that specialize in digital signage — it will be much cheaper and more effective.”

“It needs to be really simple and it needs to be relevant,” DOmedia’s

Ramser. “It needs to speak to your audience.”

Content should also be relative to the environment in which it is being presented. For example, if a digital signage network is in a gym, then the informational content should be health related. It should give gym patrons tips on how to properly do a bench press, or the location of health-food stores or sporting-goods stores in the vicinity.

“The first challenge is to get [the customers’] attention. The second challenge is to get them to focus and pay attention.”

— Gary Downey, CEO, DMS

Like anything else in life, first impressions are critical for digital signage. Since it is a relatively new medium, many people will be attracted to it simply out of curiosity. However, it is vitally important that businesses using digital signage create content that is helpful, relevant and positive. If the content is uninteresting or depressing, then people are more likely to ignore it the next time they see it.

“(If people have a pleasant first experience with digital signage), then the next time they come by, they’ll be at least inclined to look at it when they go by,” said Kevin Reinis, president and chief executive officer of NetStreams.

Chapter 3 Optimizing digital signage content for ROI

To keep customers' impressions of digital signage positive, an important piece of content DMS uses is something Downey calls "The Good News Network." Many digital signage networks contain news as part of their programming. However, this can present a problem. After all, a lot of depressing news is out there. Reports of soldiers killed in Iraq, murders in American inner cities and a deepening recession are just some examples of the depressing news headlines Americans are exposed to on a regular basis. While reporting difficult stories is a necessary job for newspapers and TV news shows, it is not a smart idea for digital signage networks.

Why? Because businesses should want customers to have purely positive associations with the digital signage content in a store. If a customer sees a depressing news item on a store's digital signage network, that customer might not look at it again because he does not want to be depressed. If a digital signage network has a straight news feed to a TV news station, then these stories will be unavoidable because the business has no control over the content streaming through the network.

"[The customers] see enough depressing content at home," Downey said. "You don't want depressing associations."

However, to create "The Good News Network," the folks at DMS scour the Internet on a regular basis for good, positive news stories. The idea is to make customers happy while looking at the digital signage. If they see uplifting stories on the screen, they will be more likely to look at the screen on future visits.

Chapter 4 Digital signage ROI through branding and corporate communications

Branding is an important part of selling products. Customers want to feel a level of trust and familiarity with a specific brand. Digital signage can help businesses get their branding message out to customers. Successful branding builds trust between the customer and the business.

“Branding is something a lot of companies don’t spend time on,” Wilson of DMS said.

DMS’ biggest client is State Farm Insurance. On State Farm’s digital signage, the network features trivia about State Farm (e.g., that it was founded by a farmer in Illinois, that it has more locations around the country than McDonald’s). On the signage, there are two zones and a ticker for

State Farm. One zone features a State Farm ad, the other zone features a news feed, and the ticker has information about various State Farm insurance agents.

For businesses, even the monitors used to display digital signage can assist businesses with getting the company’s image out there. DMS has offered State Farm custom monitors. The monitors come in a high-gloss red color with the State Farm logo and trademark on them. The monitors become part of the décor. The customers have a pleasant experience with the digital signage and, because it has the State Farm logo on it, they immediately tie in that pleasant experience with State Farm.

It is important for companies to convey their brand and message not just to



Not all signage networks are ad-based — those that aren’t will see ROI through the achievement of goals such as branding.

Chapter 4 Digital signage ROI through branding and corporate communications

customers, but to employees as well. Digital signage can also be used to convey that information internally to employees. NetStreams provides companies with these tools. Reinis said the company's digital signage conveys its clients' benefits plans, corporate messaging and values, philanthropic messages, updates on the status of the company and even the daily lunch menu. It improves communication within the company.

"Communication is mission critical to business," Reinis said.

"Branding is something a lot of companies don't spend time on."

— Bob Wilson, chief operating officer of DMS.

Chapter 5

ROI for retail digital signage

“Nowhere will the impact of digital signage be more utilized in the future than in the retail environment,” DMS’ Laevey said. “The potential for pushing, persuading and upselling with dynamically changing content is enormous.”

A good way to measure ROI for retail digital signage is through monitoring upselling. Upselling refers to the act of getting a customer to buy more than that person originally planned to buy. A classic example is a customer who plans on getting a small drink at a movie theater and the concession-stand worker informs the customer that a medium is just a quarter more.

Digital signage facilitates upselling. Store managers are always telling their employees to upsell both in the aisles and at the cash register. However, employees cannot always be counted on to do this. The employee could be lazy or apathetic toward the job and simply choose not to. But even the most hardworking, conscientious employees will forget to upsell sometimes. The employee might be tired at the end of a long shift, or not feeling well, or be distracted because of personal issues. But digital signage does not get tired or distracted or moody. It can always get the store’s upselling message to the customers.

“Digital signage is an excellent way to upsell products,” Sharp Electronics’ Pollack said. “Digital signage can easily

provide the merits of each model option — perhaps even including videos of the item in use and on-screen product comparisons — providing an excellent opportunity to not only upsell but also cross-sell complementary items for use with the original item they are looking to purchase.”

The impulse buy is closely related to the upsell. Digital signage is also a great asset for stores looking to encourage customers to make an



impulse buy. For example, a person waiting in line to check out at a store that has a refrigerator with cold drinks at the checkout line, might not have been planning to buy a soda at the store. But standing in line looking at the drinks might make the customer realize he is thirsty and could use an ice-cold soda. Digital signage can direct a customer’s attention to impulse items

In retail, digital signage’s greatest power is providing the upsell — making shoppers leave with more than they came for.

Chapter 5 ROI for retail digital signage

at the cash wrap or other sections throughout the store.

“There’s no advertising more powerful than on-site or point-of-sale marketing,” Downey of DMS said.

ROI will be very easy to measure in terms of impulse purchases. Stores only need to compare numbers of impulse items sold before the digital signage was installed and after the digital signage was installed. Or, if only certain aisles have digital signage installed, a store could look to how items in those aisles are selling.

Aside from helping the store to make money through upsells and impulse purchases, digital signage can also make the customer’s experience easier and more pleasant. Often, a customer enters a store and is looking for information. Sometimes, store associates either are not available to provide the information the customer is looking for or provide less than adequate customer service.

“As a customer-service tool, digital signage in a retail store can make it easy for a customer to locate the department they are looking for, to explain features and benefits of an item,” Pollack said. “In a tourist location or central mall location, it may have information on different locations and events within the area and through a touchscreen and narrative, might

permit the viewer to receive additional information — special offers and even directions.”

Making the digital signage interactive is another important way to enhance customer service. Customers want to feel empowered. They want to feel as if they have some sort of control over their shopping experience and what they are seeing on the screen. Interactive kiosks can provide that experience.

“Digital signage that is integrated with interactive kiosk displays can be used as a customer-service tool, be it for self-service, wayfinding or product

“There’s no advertising more powerful than on-site or point-of-sale marketing.”

— Gary Downey, CEO, DMS

demonstration,” ADFLOW’s Abbott said. “It is our experience that retailers can achieve even higher ROI on their digital signage investment by combining it with interactive customer kiosks.”

Aside from the interactivity, digital signage can improve customer service by keeping customers entertained at the checkout line. No one likes to wait in line. However, customers will find the wait in line more pleasant if they are looking at relevant information, whether it be advertising or news/ weather/entertainment options on the

Conclusion

The future of digital signage is now

Digital signage is an exciting, new technology poised to make a huge breakthrough in the upcoming years. The benefits are numerous — it is affordable, targeted, relevant and easy to use. The new technology has also brought forth a number of efforts by talented people to find more effective ways to measure ROI.

But, ultimately, the benefits of the product speak for themselves — especially in trying economic times like these, when advertisers cannot afford to make mistakes.

“With traditional media’s continuing fragmentation, audiences tuning out ads and new ad-zapping technologies, the advertiser has to pay more than before to reach smaller groups of viewers ... The efficiency of traditional media has been waning the past 15 years, and that gave a boost to new media, especially the Internet. However, as more and more people are realizing it now, the advent of digital signage is a silent game-changer for the whole advertising industry,” BroadSign’s Dusho said.

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— Brian Dusho, president and Chief strategy officer of BroadSign