

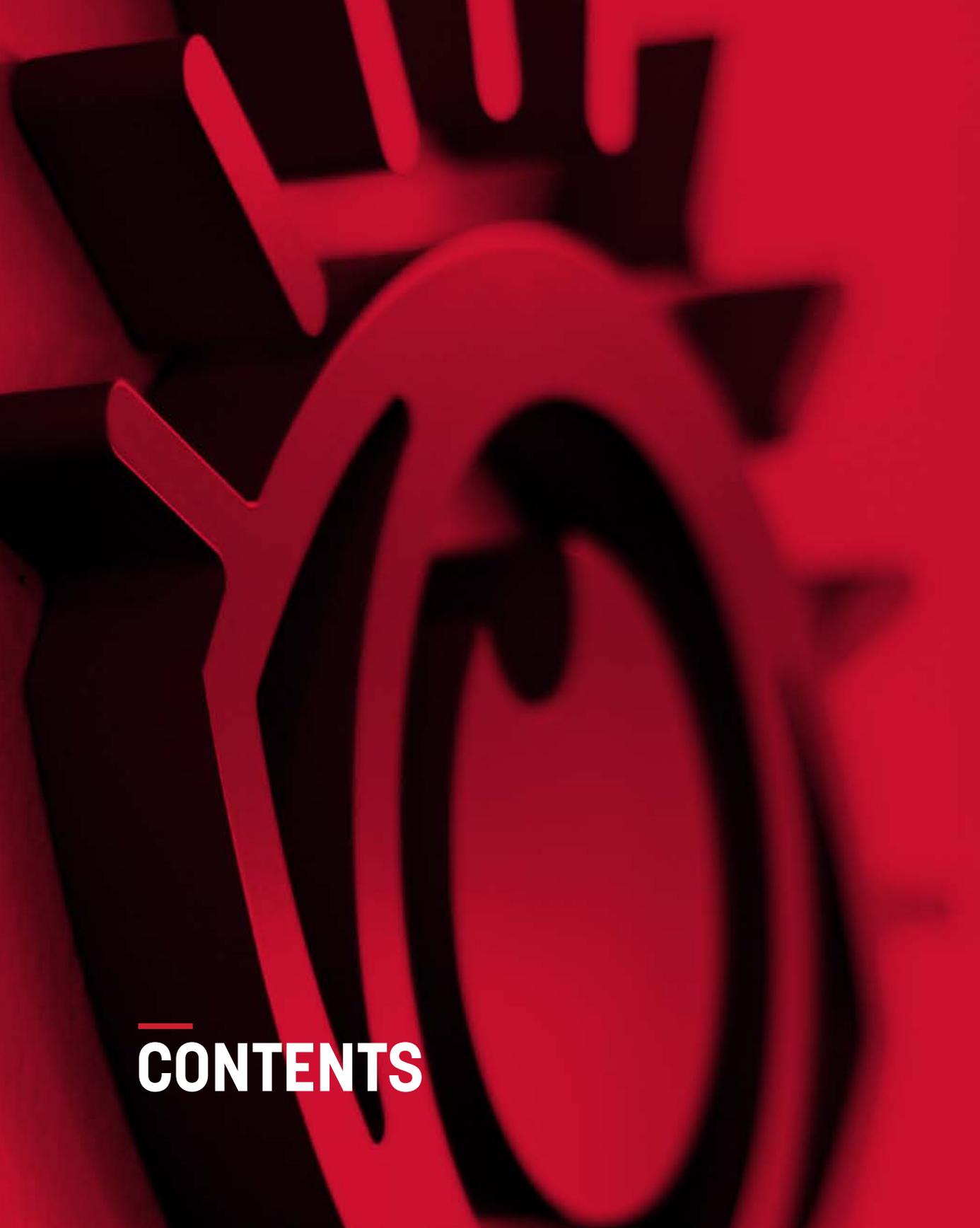


MOOD:MEDIA



DIGITAL SIGNAGE FOR NATIONAL & GLOBAL BRANDS

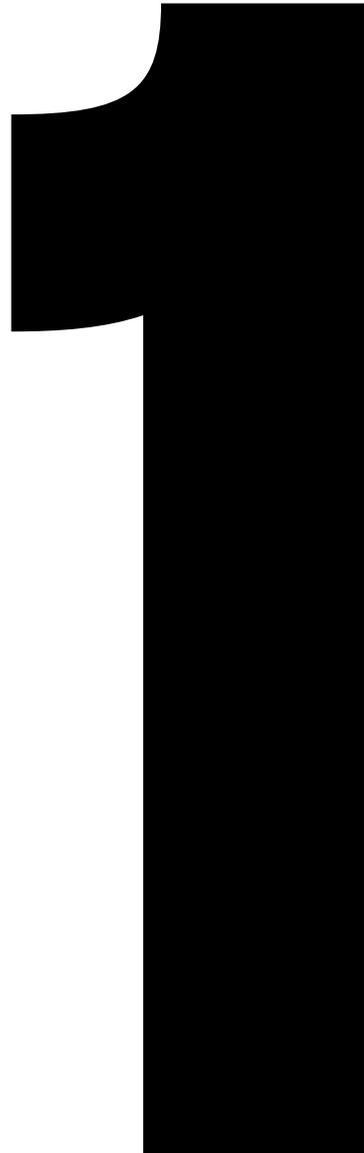
7 Essentials for Building a Successful
Digital Signage Strategy



- 1 INTRO**
- 2 CONTENT STRATEGY**
- 3 HARDWARE**
- 4 SOFTWARE**
- 5 IT & SECURITY**
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INTRO



We live in a screen-oriented world. In our homes, we splurge on sleek flat screen TVs of incredible size and picture quality. These screens have become essential appliances (yes, that's plural, as the average household owns 2.3 TVs).

You're most likely reading this on the screen of your desktop, laptop, tablet or phone. A recent survey shows that Americans check their phones 80 times a day on average.*

We've become conditioned to respond to screens as the preferred medium for information, entertainment, and news—just like the radio before, and the printed word before that.

Screens have become our window to the world.

That's good news for brands looking to leverage our reflexive inclination to look at screens and engage with visual content.

Like most major brands, you're probably well down the path of developing, executing, and analyzing your digital and mobile strategies. Chances are you have entire teams and agencies dedicated to creating content and optimizing campaigns every step of the way. Consider the common denominator of all these different channels and devices—a screen of some shape, form, or size.

RECOGNIZING THEIR UBIQUITY AND INHERENT POWER, BUSINESSES ARE INCREASINGLY LOOKING BEYOND THE SCREENS IN THEIR CONSUMERS' HOMES AND AT THEIR FINGERTIPS - THEY'RE LOOKING AT THE SCREENS (OR LACK THEREOF) IN THEIR OWN BRICK-AND-MORTAR ENVIRONMENT.

This trend has driven exponential growth in the digital signage industry, a \$20 billion industry today, projected to grow to **\$31 billion by 2023.****

Building a digital signage network has become a highly effective way to engage customers with memorable and effective content and offers. A study conducted by Arbitron Inc., found that 70% of Americans remembered seeing a digital display in a retail environment in the previous month, versus 43% having remembered seeing a video advertisement display on Facebook.[†]

THE SAME STUDY FOUND THAT OF THOSE WHO HAD SEEN AN IN-STORE VIDEO ADVERTISEMENT, 47% WERE ABLE TO RECALL A SPECIFIC ADVERTISEMENT AND 19% OF THOSE ACTUALLY MADE AN UNPLANNED PURCHASE AFTER SEEING AN ITEM FEATURED ON THE SCREEN.

A 2018 consumer survey found that seeing a menu item displayed on a digital screen inside a restaurant is the most preferred content, whether it be fast food or fine dining.^{††}

The message is clear—digital screens are valuable visual real estate; they allow companies to engage quickly with their audience in impactful ways. If you haven't already, you should consider the role that digital signage can play in your overall customer experience strategy. If you have looked at digital signage, or even piloted a test program, then you're aware there's more to it than simply hanging some screens on the wall and feeding images and videos from your content library.

Despite the power and potential of digital signage, many global and national brands have lagged behind in adoption. Beyond the associated costs, both hard and soft, there are numerous factors to consider when implementing digital signage at scale. The strong desire to move forward can be weakened when you discover the technical, operational and financial factors at play. Going big with big screens can seem like a complicated and intimidating challenge.

It doesn't have to be.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Often, the desire to invest in digital signage begins within marketing. The allure is obvious. For larger companies with multiple locations, the task of delivering timely, relevant and effective messaging to customers can be daunting. Assuring consistency across hundreds or thousands of locations using print-based displays requires the integration of planograms, delivery of point-of-sale materials and the labor required to install and swap the signage in a timely manner. Digital signage solves many of these logistical problems—while also providing a platform that expands upon messaging opportunities that can be targeted immediately down to the store level by the hour, rather than by the season.

The advent of affordable flat panel displays controlled and programmed from a single source offers efficiency and a dynamic digital canvas for both static and motion graphics.

MANY OF TODAY'S MARKETING CHANNELS REQUIRE AGILE MANAGEMENT AND HAVE MOVED TOWARD DIGITAL PLATFORMS OFFERING DETAILED DATA AND ANALYSIS, SO IT ONLY MAKES SENSE THAT IN-STORE SIGNAGE IS MIGRATING TO DIGITAL.

EXECUTING A DIGITAL SIGNAGE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT CAN BECOME COMPLEX, AS STAKEHOLDERS FROM OTHER AREAS OF THE BUSINESS BECOME INVOLVED. CREATING AWARENESS AND ALIGNMENT IS KEY—DOING SO AT THE OUTSET CAN STREAMLINE THE PROCESS, MITIGATE RISKS, AND SAVE MONEY.

There needs to be direct involvement from marketing, sales, IT, finance, and operations along with awareness of key C-level executives. Active collaboration assures that you maximize performance and achieve important operational and financial efficiencies and objectives.

If you're the one pushing for digital signage, this guide provides an overview of the 7 most important aspects to consider when executing a world-class digital signage program for your brand enterprise:

- + CONTENT STRATEGY**
- + HARDWARE**
- + SOFTWARE**
- + IT & SECURITY**
- + PROJECT MANAGEMENT**
- + COSTS**
- + ROI**

Within each of these topics, we provide insights and advice to help you navigate the various considerations of all stakeholders. The implementation tactics are largely the same for most industries—just scaled to meet their particular needs and space.

Once you know the lay of the land, you're well on your way to creating a winning implementation strategy and converting your environment to one that embraces modern technologies, elevates the customer experience, and helps you sell more.

CONTENT STRATEGY

While it certainly applies, the cliché “content is king” doesn’t do this topic justice. **As you navigate the various elements of your investment in digital signage, never forget this: content strategy is everything.**

Much like your broader content marketing strategy on web and mobile platforms, the common goal of presenting the right content to the right audience at the right time is certainly applicable. **Think of your screens as another device type to add to your mix of phones, tablets and desktops**, recognizing that digital signage screens are stationary to the in-store environment, which brings us to the best place to start.

1 DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVES

What are you trying to accomplish with your digital signage? Brand enhancement? Creating an artistic wow-factor with a video wall? Promotional content and suggestive selling? Entertainment to increase dwell time? Touch screen interaction? Depending on your business, your goals could be any one of these things or a combination of all.

2 DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE

This seems obvious, but it’s worth reminding that your in-store audience can differ greatly from your broader digital audience. Also keep in mind how your customer traffic patterns can change throughout the day, the week, and seasonally. Your content strategy will change depending on these important variables. Knowing your audience and your objectives will lead you to the following consideration.

3 SCREEN SIZE & PLACEMENT

Your content will likely change depending on where screens are located, as your audience and objectives can be different depending on the specific area of your store. For restaurants, the content you display on screens behind the bar will likely differ from the content you show in the dining area. For retailers, content at point of sale will differ from that on the floor, on shelving, or near endcap displays. For healthcare providers, the screens in the waiting room will display different content than those in the main lobby or in exam rooms.

4 GATHER & CREATE CONTENT

After you've considered steps 1-3, you're ready to build out your content. Gather existing images and video content that meet your objectives. You can often scale existing assets used in other channels, keeping in mind that you have a larger and more flexible canvas to work with. From here you should be able to identify content gaps and lay out a plan for new content creation. Leading digital signage partners are able to provide professional content creation to support existing internal design teams or agencies as needed, often at reasonable rates. They will also be able to advise on variable formats and content types that work well with different digital signage applications.

5 CREATE YOUR CALENDAR & SCHEDULES

This is the fun part where you get to put on the hat of a TV producer. That's essentially the role you play when you build and schedule your playlists. It's also where your understanding of your audience and variables in traffic patterns come into play. Best advice? Start broad from a seasonal standpoint that is consistent with your general marketing and content calendar, and then fine tune your plan as your work toward monthly, weekly and daily scheduling. Again, leading digital signage partners are able to provide content management services to support you as you build out your own in-store digital team.

6 OTHER BEST PRACTICES?

Plan ahead and keep it simple. More content is not always better. Start small, measure, analyze, test and iterate—much as you would with other digital and content marketing efforts.

HARDWARE



The primary hardware components of digital signage include the screens, media players and associated wiring. For more complex applications, additional splitters and screen control devices may also be necessary to manage multiple signals for one system.

SCREENS

As a commercial display system, there are specific considerations that need to be resolved for screens. The average time the television screen is on in the U.S. household is 5:11 hours.[†]

Compare that to a display in a commercial environment, which may be on, uninterrupted, for as much as 24-hours a day. The hardware selected should be up to the challenge.

Make certain to invest in commercial-grade screens that can scale and offer extended warranties covering commercial use. Cheaper consumer-grade hardware can negatively impact stability, usability, and longevity of the systems involved. Displays that flicker, have odd color shifts, or are prone to video artifacts (aka, “burn-in”) over time, can leave customers with a perception that your business is aging or poorly maintained.

Another consideration for larger visual installations, is whether to use traditional ultra-narrow LCD screens or direct view LED displays. These have been your two options for years; however, the cost of high resolution LED displays has fallen dramatically in recent years. LED displays can achieve extremely high brightness (NITs) that LCDs cannot. They can be used to create unique display configurations that can’t be achieved with screens (curved surfaces, circular displays etc.) and it’s now possible to have a seamless video wall (no screen bezels) using LED for the same price

as a traditional screen video wall. Make sure you chose a hardware partner that is experienced in both and can advise you on what works best for your digital solution.

Also, consider ease of installation. Be aware of what types and variations of mounting and installation options a particular display provides. Will it allow for a tightly grouped video wall installation where bezel width is an important consideration? Does it provide for vertical/portrait mounting for strategic placements? (Most residential displays are engineered to be mounted horizontally.) It's critical to understand installation needs and mounting configurations in order to implement your network effectively, and safely, for your customers and staff.

MEDIA PLAYERS

Media players are devices that receive, store, and drive your digital signage content to the screens. These are the primary factors to consider when selecting a media player:

+ Reliability

Like your screens, media players should be commercial-grade and up to the task of extended operation. If your players malfunction, then screens go dark, – no one wants that problem. Look for solid-state devices with no moving parts. Devices should be “store-and-forward,” ensuring that content continues to be displayed if internet connectivity is lost. There are numerous devices on the market, and technology continues to evolve. Make sure to go with a device that has undergone extensive testing, has been proven in the field, and includes a strong commercial warranty.



+ Size/Weight

Stand-alone devices that are small and lightweight provide the greatest amount of flexibility when it comes to installation. Players should be easily mounted behind your screens, remotely on a rack. In most cases, you should avoid platforms that depend on a stand-alone computer loaded with software to serve as the device, as these will limit your flexibility, create wiring challenges, and be difficult to troubleshoot and service.

+ Connectivity

Stand-alone devices require a standard DC power source and should include multiple input/output options. Universal HDMI connectivity is considered a must for quick and easy connections to modern screens. Audio inputs/outputs are required for applications that will require audio (if you don't need it today, you might in the future!). An Ethernet jack should be standard. Wireless WiFi connectivity may also be a consideration where Ethernet runs and connections may present a costly challenge.

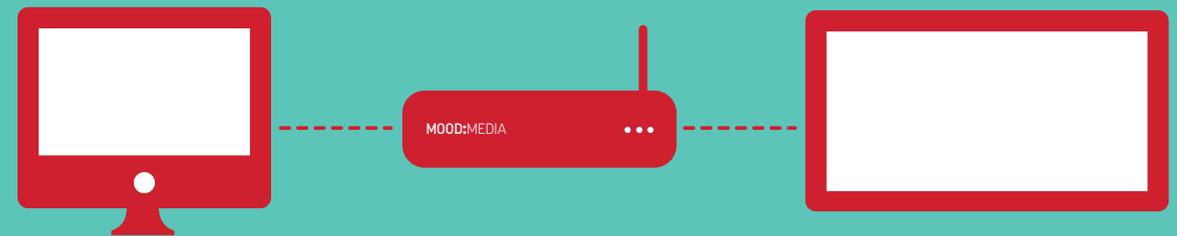
+ Storage

Digital signage content files can be large, especially if you're including high-resolution animated and video content. Your device should include adequate storage on the device—additional external storage within the compatible platform network should also be available.

+ File Type Compatibility

Devices should support multiple file types including 4K, 2K, 1080p HD video playback, HTML5 and RSS feeds.

+ Playback Flexibility



Many applications require devices that offer multi-screen compatibility and allow you to sync content across multiple screen configurations. Look for robust devices that provide flexibility, as they can reduce the total number of devices you need to deploy and minimize associated costs.

Selecting the right hardware for your brand's digital signage campaign is fundamental to a successful launch. Having a digital signage consultant that understands industry standards and hardware options can provide you with a robust system that will give years of trouble-free service, while still managing budget constraints and specific content needs.

4

As an enterprise-level business, one of the key requirements for a digital signage program is the ability to CENTRALLY manage all content. Using a cloud-based content management system (CMS) to access all devices and locations at the corporate admin level allows for complete control of all systems, brand standards, and data analysis.

The CMS should provide simple admin controls, enabling you to establish standard hierarchical access and permissions across your enterprise from the top down (corporate, region/group, store level). Look for a lot of flexibility here, but don't overthink it. Start basic, and then segment further as your team becomes more experienced and agile at managing your content strategy. The more individuals you can enable to manage content, the more effective you will be. The other option is simply to work with a partner who offers full-service content management capabilities.

The software should be focused on its ease-of-use.

A SYSTEM THAT IS INTUITIVE AND LOGICAL IN ITS INTERFACE AND FUNCTIONALITY WILL GREATLY REDUCE TRAINING TIME AND IMPROVE OVERALL ADOPTION. THE SOFTWARE SHOULD USE NAVIGATION AND TOOL SETS THAT ARE INTUITIVE AND FAMILIAR TO THE AVERAGE USER.

SOFTWARE

The library of tools in the software should be subdivided into logical categories as well. If it takes a long time to drill down and find the controls for commonly accessed functions (e.g., posting controls, content schedules, etc.), then users may become frustrated and resistant to engage the digital signage system. Core functions should never be more than one or two clicks from the main page.

The software should be capable of supporting various content types. Content may be generated in multiple video formats and scales. The software selected should easily integrate each of these seamlessly and provide a quality signal to the system displays. The integration of video, photography, computer-generated graphics and other media will provide a rich media experience and many more options for your business.

Digital signage systems should have the ability to easily control separate business locations and be robust enough to provide controls of defined zones within each location. Think of a large department store. Within a single location, there may be a dozen or more specific departments (e.g., men's clothing, women's clothing, sporting goods, electronics, etc.). The marketing team should have the ability to define each department zone and which displays will be used for that department's content. This ability provides the opportunity to create engaging content for each area of the business. The same could be applicable to a restaurant chain or healthcare facilities which may need unique content in specific areas.

Also consider digital signage software that includes various templates for formatting content. Providing standardized structures and layouts for common display ratios and orientations will make the process of developing and updating content much easier and efficient. Templates are a great shortcut.

Select software that is proven specifically for digital signage systems. Don't allow your brand to be a test bed for a system that has not been user tested in a real-world environment. The software should have a documented history of regular updates and improvements. As hardware, media formats, and network components change and improve, the software system needs to be capable of evolving to take advantage of new opportunities.

REMEMBER, THE SOFTWARE SYSTEM IS THE CONTROL ROOM OF YOUR DIGITAL SIGNAGE STRATEGY.

Having a solution that meets your brand's needs, while being easy and intuitive to use, will be paramount to overall success.

Lastly, look for software that offers comprehensive support and training options throughout the implementation process and after installations are complete. Providers should offer options for one-on-one support, group webinars and on-site training as needed and appropriate.

As an internet-enabled solution, digital signage comes with IT Network and data security considerations. These factors are always top of mind for enterprise-level applications, and it's important that your IT department be involved in the decision making process at the outset of your discovery to assure that proper network security protocols are in place.

Your IT team should be able to evaluate the system for a full security audit of each aspect of the system. The digital signage partner should provide a set of best practices for their system security and help with aligning their expertise with your own security protocols.

Most digital signage platforms are cloud-based solutions that exist outside of your internal network, require no access to other business systems, and do not access any internal or customer data. Regardless, a thorough analysis of the platform is necessary to ensure safety and security. As an added measure of comfort, software and devices should be certified as PCI compliant.

In some cases, a separate business connection specifically for digital signage controls is needed. Most businesses require stable and fast connections for credit card processing, accounting communications, inventory management, and other core business processes. If the current business connection is near capacity, then adding the digital signage system can make the system unstable and slow. Your digital signage plan should include an evaluation of connection options for each location, as specific broadband services and capabilities may vary.

Some businesses may prefer to host their digital signage platform and software on a secure internal network. Providers should be able to offer detailed information on compatibility and requirements and offer technical support in such instances.

REMEMBER, CUSTOMERS ARE DRAWN TO SCREENS—AND DIGITAL SIGNAGE IS HIGHLY ENGAGING—SO IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG, THEY’LL NOTICE.

Dark screens, on-screen errors, or incorrect content can leave customers with a negative impression about the brand. Network configurations need to be bulletproof, so an experienced partner with broad technical expertise is a must.

From a functional standpoint, bandwidth demand and availability at each location is a basic consideration. Your digital signage partner should be able to give you accurate calculations on the system’s bandwidth requirements by understanding the number of displays, the media format sizes, software requirements and interaction with other network components.

PLATFORMS SHOULD OFFER FLEXIBILITY AND ADMIN-LEVEL RESTRICTIONS FOR SCHEDULING CONTENT UPDATES AND DOWNLOADS DURING OFF-PEAK HOURS ALONG WITH THE ABILITY TO THROTTLE BANDWIDTH AS APPROPRIATE.

In addition, providers should offer proactive network and platform monitoring along with associated status reports, notifications and defined issue response procedures. Basic tasks will include device health, connectivity, content download reports and proof of play. Depending on your needs, many enterprise-level providers will also offer customized reporting upon request.

Another operational consideration is physical security of your hardware. Most displays are located in publicly accessible areas. When possible, displays should be located in areas that are difficult to access, and all wiring should be tightly secured.

Information about security protocols for any operating application should be readily available. There needs to be a clear and concise understanding of each party’s responsibilities and processes. Treat the digital signage network system with the same level of attention and care given to any other mission-critical corporate network. **An ounce of prevention is truly worth a pound of cure when it comes to a system that presents and controls your brand image and customer messaging.**

PLANNING & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Before the installation process begins, strategic and detailed planning is essential. In a larger-scale digital signage deployment, this requires coordination with several different departments and all locations.

Decide who will need to be on the project management team and what responsibilities each person will oversee. In this early phase, it's a good idea to create a basic RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed) matrix that considers the appropriate department heads for Marketing, IT and Operations involved along with any others as appropriate. Each department head may assign a subordinate to support the launch. However, it's good practice to start at the senior level so that leadership understands the project and can ask critical and relevant questions.

A qualified digital signage partner should be sufficiently staffed to assign a dedicated project manager to coordinate the other members of the team and ensure that the project stays on budget and deadline.

THE PROJECT MANAGER WILL ACT AS THE KEY CONTACT, SCHEDULE PLANNING MEETINGS, DEVELOP TIMELINES AND CHECKLISTS, COORDINATE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL ASSIGNMENTS, AND ACT AS A SOURCE OF UPDATES FOR ALL OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TEAM.

The best digital signage service providers will provide a professional and experienced project manager, as well as a fully staffed and experienced team of professionals to create a seamless and effective rollout.

Beneath the project management team are the technicians who will actually perform the installations on-site. This is “where the rubber meets the road,” as they say. It’s a key point of differentiation between most providers. While there is no shortage of hardware and software providers in the marketplace, only a select few have the requisite experience and network in place to execute in the consistent and efficient manner that enterprise-level clients require.

Tasking internal technical, operational and facilities resources to install digital signage is a costly tax on time and resources, so make sure your provider is up to the challenge. Proof of experience and performance is a must. Lack thereof should be a deal breaker. Providers with sufficient internal resources are essential.

It’s critical to test the infrastructure of a new system before deploying to all locations. Select one or two test locations for preliminary installation and testing purposes. Choose locations with an experienced and responsive local staff that will share observations, ideas and recommendations. Bring senior management to these test locations at the point it becomes relevant for them to become involved. These tests should be used as an indicator for project implementation timelines, relevant staff to involve at each location and potential issues that need to be resolved prior to the larger rollout.

THE PILOT TEST ALLOWS YOU TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR PARTNER’S PROJECT TEAM AND YOUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS. HAVING A COMMON, TANGIBLE FRAME OF REFERENCE IS EXCEEDINGLY HELPFUL. IT CAN ENSURE THAT YOU’LL SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS.

Use the test implementation as an opportunity to develop a training map for the system. This training procedure should begin with a library of existing resources from your digital signage service provider. These should then be customized to your specific project scope. Having a personalized training program improves adoption and accelerates custom usage of the digital signage system.

Use the pilot locations as a template to understand network installation protocols for the digital signage system as well. There are several key connections, power, and cabling input needs that are unique to a digital signage campaign. Evaluate the location, assign display-mounting positions, plan for integration of network controls on office computer(s), and plan for security protocols for displays and network access. Using these pilot locations as a prototype can help clarify concepts and ensure program success.

COSTS

So how much will your digital signage project cost? The answer varies widely depending on a number of factors. The most immediate variable is the complexity of your implementation at the location level, and costs scale from there across the total number of locations.

Depending on their specific business models, each provider may package and position their pricing in slightly different ways. Regardless, there are several primary cost components of any typical large-scale digital signage project:

+ Reliability

Your screens will present the largest upfront cost with the primary variables determined by brand and size. Secondary variables will be determined by features, functionality, brightness and picture quality. It is not uncommon to require a range of sizes and quality depending on purpose and placement. And remember, commercial grade screens will typically cost more than what you'll find at your local big box store when shopping for a new television for your home. However, the good news is that you'll save money in the long run due to the increased longevity and better reliability you get with commercial grade screens. Each screen will require its own mount as an ancillary cost.

+ Media Players

Costs for media players may vary widely as well, though in general costs have decreased over the years in response to greater demand and advances in technology. Providers may sell the devices outright, or others may offer lease options. Most devices are not software agnostic, so leasing is typically preferred, though some businesses may opt for the purchase model in order to capitalize the expenditure. Leasing should include a minimum level of maintenance coverage; purchase models should include basic warranty terms. Also, consider that some platforms still require separate computers as opposed to devices, and these will carry a much higher price tag.

+ Software

Most often, digital signage software is licensed per device (not by users or by location). This is typically a flat cost component factored into an overall, per device monthly fee where economies of scale can come into play. Depending on your requirements, some software may need customized configurations which will incur some initial development expense.

+ Installation

Installing digital signage can be fairly labor intensive. It's at least a two-person job to mount screens over 55", and depending on size, configuration and placement, hanging screens can take a bit of time. If possible, you'll save time and money if devices can be mounted directly behind the screens, reducing wire costs as well as additional labor to install long and difficult wire runs. (This is an especially important consideration with new construction and renovations.) Whatever your setup, it's critical to work with providers with experienced and efficient crews. The last thing you want is to have to call in backup to finish the job if the first crew doesn't get it right.

+ Content Creation/Management

Costs for content and content management will depend on what you already have on hand, the internal resources you have to modify or create new content and the resources you have to actively manage the content on your own in a manner that is consistent with your strategy.

For many companies, it will not be a heavy lift to use internal or existing agency resources for content creation to populate your digital signage channels. For others, it can be especially helpful and cost-effective to work with providers who offer professional content creation as part of their overall solution offering (consolidating vendors is always much easier). So choosing a provider that is experienced in developing your digital content strategy and has the internal creative resources to produce it can be beneficial. Costs will vary depending on the amount of content needed. Providers may offer services at an hourly rate or negotiate a retainer based on the number of assets to be created on an agreed upon cadence.

The amount of time and energy you need to actually manage content will be driven by the following factors:

- + Overall content strategy
- + Complexity of the content configurations (single vs. multi-screen, etc.)
- + Frequency of updates
- + Content hierarchy and localization (corporate/regional/store level)

Once again, for some brands this will be a simple task (especially if you've chosen intuitive software). For others, the additional expense of content management support is necessary and well worth it. Costs will vary depending on the factors noted above.

+ Training

Training is another line item to consider in a large-scale deployment. Most companies will include some level of training as standard. Much of this should occur during the pilot phase as previously mentioned, and basic training should be provided for your content management team and at the store level for appropriate personnel upon the completion of each site installation. There may be additional costs for training that falls outside the norm, e.g., on-site group training that requires additional travel and expenses. It's smart to define your training plan up front and negotiate as appropriate for any specialized and ongoing needs.

+ Service & Support

It should go without saying, but post-rollout service and support cannot be assumed or ignored. The digital signage industry remains fragmented with numerous start-ups and providers who specialize in one or two critical aspects of a complete solution. When supporting a larger enterprise, make certain that responsive and reliable support structures are proven and in place. Ask for standard SLAs, a primary point of contact, and a clearly defined and streamlined process for responding to service inquiries and installing new locations.

ROI

In the end, all things come down to the almighty three letter acronym, ROI. In your efforts to determine the return on your investment, it's important to remember that digital signage is not a short-term proposition. Like any other digital campaign, it will require continued analysis, iteration, and some degree of faith in attribution. Unlike other digital campaigns, drawing direct lines to desired goals and conversions (i.e., sales) with digital signage can be a little more complex.

FOR EXAMPLE, A STRONG DIGITAL CAMPAIGN WILL CERTAINLY ENHANCE PERCEPTION OF YOUR BRAND AND CONTRIBUTE TO A BETTER OVERALL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE. THESE ARE THINGS THAT ALL MARKETERS STRUGGLE TO QUANTIFY.

DOING YOUR RESEARCH UP FRONT, DEVELOPING A CLEAR STRATEGY AND TAKING THE TIME FOR PROPER PLANNING ARE THE BEST WAYS TO ENSURE EARLY RETURNS ON YOUR INVESTMENT, WHILE ALSO MITIGATING RISKS OF UNFORESEEN HICCUPS AND EXPENSES ALONG THE WAY.

There are several creative things you can do in the planning stages to help you measure the bottom line impact of your efforts:

+ Set Beginning Benchmarks

What are sales today or what are your current customer survey results? Setting early benchmarks around one or two metrics can help demonstrate the value of digital signage and ultimate improvements upon KPI's. Establishing early benchmarks allows for measurement of specific metrics that can indicate the benefits and ROI of your digital signage strategy.

+ Utilize Available Data

Leveraging technology to provide content playback reports can be easy and simple to execute. Common data points provided from most content management systems include content frequency (number of times played), duration of content (total time content aired) as well as specific sites where content was displayed. Formatted in easy to sort Excel files, leveraging content analytics can help provide data driven ROI measurements.

+ Plan to A/B Test

Apply similar A/B testing strategies from your other campaigns to your digital signage. Test headlines, images, price points—you name it—just keep it simple and easy to control and measure. Split your stores in half. Run one product promotion in one set of locations and a different promotion in the other. After a period of time, compare the sales impact between the two.

+ Survey Your Customers

Use your existing customer feedback loops to ask them what they think about your new signage. Did they notice? Did they like the content? Did they make a purchase based on what they saw?

+ Use Exclusive Promo Tags

Include special promo codes in your digital signage content, the same way you might use vanity URLs, phone numbers or promo codes in other broadcast channels. These can be especially effective and generate immediate in-store results at the point of sale. "Mention X to save \$Y on an extra this or that."

+ Incorporate Interactive Elements

Leverage touch screen kiosks and measure click reports. Include visual scan codes on promo boards. You name it. Interactive digital signage technology opens up a world of opportunity to connect, engage and sell more.

+ Peace of Mind Monitoring

You're paying for it, so make sure it's working! From mobile, laptop, or desktop computers, you can immediately view the active media content displayed on-site with most enterprise systems. By utilizing live check-ins on the active screen content, you can have immediate peace of mind that everything is operating properly. This feature also provides pro-active device monitoring abilities, which gives you and your teams the heads up that devices are properly connecting, or not.

+ Integrate with POS Systems

This is an easy place to go, but as anyone who has ever been through any platform integration is well aware, it's not always as easy as providers make it sound. That said, it's not rocket science either, and many providers offer open API software that can integrate with various POS systems. Just be aware that POS integrations inherently require additional levels of complexity at all levels of implementation (content strategy, hardware, software, installation, etc.). If you have the will (and the resources), there is always a way, and that can certainly be a path toward greater returns. Talk to your provider about your goals and objectives to determine if POS integration is appropriate out of the gate or something you may want to scale for in the future.

+ Consolidate Vendors

The immediate return on investment can be impacted by many different factors. A core consideration should be the breadth of work that can be consolidated within the fewest number of vendors. Each time a new sub-contracted provider is brought into the project, a new level of necessary mark up costs and overhead burdens are introduced. The goal should be to pre-qualify and select the most efficient and experienced partners as possible to mitigate added costs for secondary support providers and corrections/repairs caused by inexperience and poor execution.

The process of implementing and activating a quality digital signage strategy can be simplified through selection of a qualified digital signage partner who offers a streamlined process based on their experience. Your role is to outline your vision, objectives and service and support expectations.

On the following pages, you'll find a convenient check list of key steps in the process to assure a successful partner selection process and launch of your new system to strengthen your project investment.

1 YOUR COMPANY'S INTERNAL TEAMS

+ FINANCIAL TEAM

- Provide budget directives and plans for equipment acquisition and depreciation schedules

+ MARKETING TEAM

- Provide brand identity guidelines and market targeting intelligence for content development
- Share promotion calendars and key KPI for marketing content reporting
- Share marketing assets and resources to be used for custom content development, and work with other teams to plan new asset development
- Plan for integration of messaging in other marketing resources (posters, flyers, brochures, menus, etc.)

+ SALES TEAM

- Provide sales history data and future sales projections for ROI report planning
- Support promotion calendar development and work with regional sales teams to educate on new system and goals

+ IT TEAM

- Develop integration and hardware plan for central digital signage control system and software
- Provide security protocol support for control system
- Support networking integration implementation for new system to all locations and users
- Create plan for monitoring and troubleshooting of digital signage system

2 DIGITAL SIGNAGE SERVICE PARTNER

- Works with company to develop effective digital signage campaign using industry experience and marketing research
- Shows custom content development capabilities with examples and concepts specific to client industry
- Curates hardware and software options to best meet client budget and usage requirements
- Provides effective training program for all key personnel that will be using the new digital signage system
- Works closely to support client through development, testing, installation, and evaluation processes of the campaign
- Supports the sourcing, evaluation, and selection of general (non-custom) content for system
- Provides ongoing plan of support and development of future digital signage content and hardware needs

3 ANCILLARY SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Internet Service provider (ISP) should provide contracts with guarantees regarding service stability, security and outage limitations
- Control software provider (may be handled through digital signage service partner) to provide outline of software support plans and future update information
- Hardware providers should provide warranty and technical support for all system hardware

YOUR DIGITAL SIGNAGE STRATEGY CHECKLIST

An effective digital signage system can be one of the most powerful and versatile tools you can add to your sales and marketing mix. With a wealth of engaging content to delight and motivate your customers there is endless potential to enhance your brand image and drive revenue. Implementing digital signage at scale requires a broad understanding and detailed strategic planning.

The first step toward success is to partner with a digital signage expert that can help you realize your vision. Mood Media is an industry leader providing comprehensive digital signage solutions, with a depth of experience in designing and managing large-scale projects.

TO BEGIN THE PROCESS WITH A MOOD MEDIA EXPERT AND FOR A FREE CONSULTATION, PLEASE VISIT [US.MOODMEDIA.COM/ENTERPRISE-DIGITAL-SIGNAGE](https://us.moodmedia.com/enterprise-digital-signage) AND CONTACT US TODAY.

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CONCLUSION

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