dynamax

Digital Signage for Corporate Communications

What you need to know to manage your displays

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CHAPTER 1:
What is digital signage

Digital signage and corporate communications proved to be a successful combination over the years. From management staff to plant workers, everybody in the company can be kept in the loop regardless of whether they have access to a phone or computer during their work hours.

We've all seen digital signage in our environments even though we haven't probably identified it by this name. Despite its sophisticated term, the concept is quite simple to grasp.

In plain words, **digital signage** is….

-a form of electronic display showing advertising and general information in private and public areas (shopping malls, waiting rooms, restaurants, reception areas, corridors and even elevators).

In its simplest version, the system has three elements:

- **The hardware-** the screen as the one on the right, powered by a media player that stores your message and carries it to your displays;

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- **The software**: it's that critical piece of the puzzle that allows you to upload and schedule content and send it to the media player(s) powering your screens;

- **The content**: this is the actual information that you communicate. It is imperative that you build your system around your content strategy which should be in line with your communication objectives (what you want to achieve). In digital signage terms, this translates into files (images, videos) and feeds (social media, news, blog etc.).

> " *A good story is one that is credible and honest, not just a rosy picture of the glorious future.* "
> Alison Esse, co-founder of the Storytellers

> " *The story needs to be adapted by different parts of the organization.* "
> Communicate Magazine

> " *No company should allow someone else to tell their story for them.* "
> Communicate Magazine

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Corporate communications are particularly important in challenging economic conditions when employees are anxious to learn about the rationale behind management decisions.

Reviewing the existing processes and flow of information both vertically and horizontally, integrating new channels such as digital signage is an important step in boosting employee engagement and productivity.

Studies from recent years suggest the following:

1) Email overload and email interruptions confound effective work practices every day with email costing companies around £5,000 to £10,000 per employee per year according to a 2011 research reported by the International Journal of Internet and Enterprise Management. The survey of company emails shows that 13% of received emails were irrelevant or untargeted and a mere 41% of received emails were for information purposes[1].

Yet, employees need to be informed about company news that matter to them and they should be the first notified. But how do you achieve this in a non- intrusive manner?

CHAPTER 2: Key corporate communications facts and issues

Photo source: bizaims.com

Digital signage brings the information in your employees' environment and lets them digest the news at their own pace, without interrupting or disrupting their job duties.

2) **Video is a powerful storytelling tool. Yet, only 61% of FTSE 100 companies employ it**. Show the existing ones on your screens to capture attention and ensure that those who didn't know they exist finally do.

Showing online videos as you create or discover them is another way of ensuring your screens' content is fresh and poignant.

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[1] ''How Much Does Email Cost a Business?'', Science Daily, May 9, 2011
http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/05/110509100940.htm

Key corporate communications facts and issues

2) According to Business Leaders in Communications Study 2012, **81% of the Communications Directors surveyed said that their CEO's and management board considered communication to be critically important**, a belief also shared by 59% of employees.

3)Strategic communications help a business achieve its goals. ''*Effective communication from senior management directly connects employees to the purpose of the organization*'' shows Wattson Wyatt's 2008/2009 WorkUSA Survey Report[2].

Staff at all levels need to be informed about the strategic direction of the company and the tactics they need to employ. *Ensuring that this information reaches them and does so without inconsistencies is of major importance.*

4)Targeted communications have a stronger impact. Different groups are interested in different information or in different aspects of the same issue. To convince them to take an action you need to provide them with the relevant part of the story and to do so in a timely manner.

Digital signage allows users to disseminate the right information to the right department, at the right time and update it throughout the day.

5) **Product and communications planning must work together as part of a cohesive whole**. But often, they are disconnected, leading to communication inconsistencies and confusions.

The software behind digital information displays (screens), such as digitalsignage.NET offers the two teams a common platform for disseminating news and information to interested parties.

[2] "Watson Wyatt's WorkUSA Survey Identifies Steps to Keep Employees Engaged, Productive in a Downturn"

Watson Wyatt, February 2009, http://www.watsonwyatt.com/render.asp?catid=1&id=20559

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6) There are costs associated with communicating but the costs associated with not doing so are much higher. Lack of information leads to decisions and actions disconnected from reality, to misinformation and rumours caused by communication gaps.

Digital information displays allows the management to fill these gaps by enabling them to share reliable data to all relevant departments, at the same time.

"Today, whatever you say inside of a company will end up on a blog, So you have a choice as a company - you can either be proactive and take the offensive and say, 'Here's what's going on,' or you can let someone else write the story for you." says Rusty Rueff, a former HR executive at PepsiCo[3]. Digital signage allows you to do just that - tell the story from your perspective and influence attitudes and behaviour.

7) With so much emphasis on digital communication channels, **your non-wired workforce**- like factory workers, airline and train crews or restaurant staff- **may seem left out from the information loop**. It doesn't have to be so.

Key corporate communications facts and issues

Besides printed communication vehicles like posters or leaflets, digital screens are a suitable and more powerful communication channel that can be used to disseminate information in almost real-time across plants, canteens and other facilities.

Place the displays in key locations where the staff is to be found during a normal working day and send communications that would be both interested and helpful to their jobs.

[3] ''Why is Good Employee Communication So Important During an Economic Downturn?'', Sarah Perry, http://ezinearticles.com/?Why-is-Good-Employee-Communication-So-Important-During-an-Economic-Downturn?&id=1695935

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Digital signage complements your other corporate communications channels by reinforcing and promoting them or by covering their limitations.

Here's a comparison table between digital signage and other communication vehicles like the email, the telephone and social media.

CHAPTER 3: Digital signage and other communication channels

Digital Signage	Email	Telephone	Social Media
	Digital signage helps you reduce email overload and helps your employees cut through the information clutter.	Digital signage allows you to disseminate information quickly and less obtrusively than text messages.	A public communications tool like digital signage.
	Screens don't distract or disturb like emails do sometimes.	Digital signage can help you reach a wider audience (i.e. people whose contact details you don't have	It doesn't present social media's limitations – such as short message length and life span.
	Can remind employees about the company's newsletter and invite them to subscribe to it.	Can be used to reiterates messages communicated via the phone (provided these are not confidential)	The uptake rates of social media for internal communications are quite low (only 1-2% for Twitter, experts say).

	Email	Telephone	Social Media
Digital Signage	Display the key information from your e-newsletters on your screens to ensure that everyone has got it.	Display telephone numbers for different services and departments that employees need to access (Accounts, HR etc.)	Display your social media channels on your screens to promote them and increase uptake rates among your employees.
	Informs employees without them having to login to an email account.	Display your telephone usage policy to raise awareness and remind employees when and how to use phones at work.	Display your social media policy to reinforce best practices and rules and prevent confidentiality breaches.

Define the position you want your company to occupy in the hearts and minds of employees.

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Do you know that situation when you're on to something good but you're not quite there yet?

That's what Liverpool- based train operator Merseyrail experienced with their initial digital signage system. Even though the data was relayed automatically across their 20 office screens, they couldn't show anything besides train time efficiency ratings downloaded directly from a URL.

As it was clear that the system wasn't reaching its full potential and it was about to become redundant they started looking at alternative solutions. That's where we stepped in. Our digitalsignage.NET software allowed Merseyrail to continue displaying the same real-time data but intersperse it with other corporate communications such as employee schemes available, team- building activities or events. Our solution enable them to keep the same network of screens they had in place, making the transition to digitalsignage.NET seamless and cost-effective.

Thomas Philip, Business Analyst at Merseyrail presents the situation: *"Dynamax's [digitalsignage.NET](#) seemed a simple solution that could be deployed over our existing IT hardware infrastructure.*

Merseyrail's story
Train operator uses digital signage to make information travel faster

The user-friendly interface allowed us to involve our staff regardless of their technical skills and enable them to use content already created by their colleagues, further decreasing the amount of work required for updating the system."

The current system allows headquarters to update communications throughout the day, monitor performance remotely and access their files via their web browser.
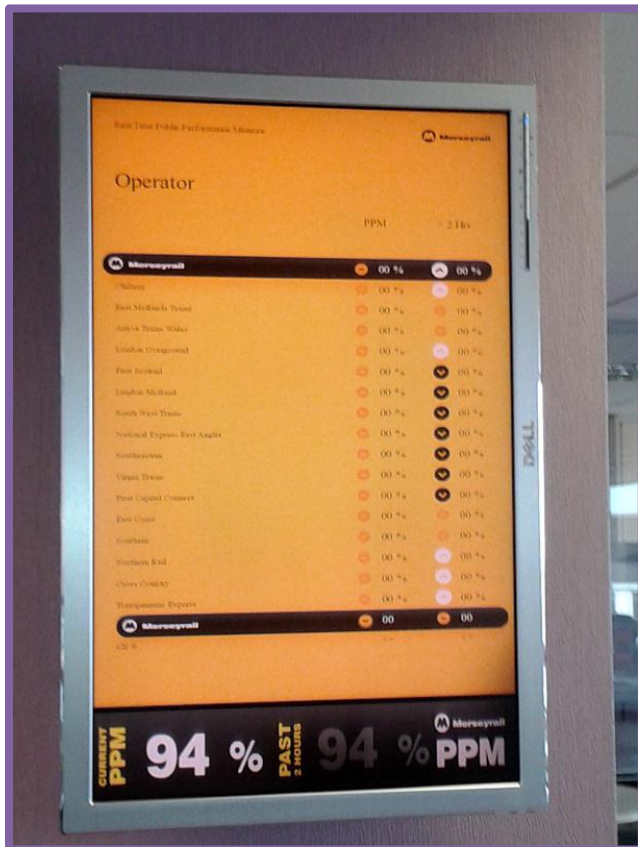

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Displays run by digitalsignage.NET

About Merseyrail

Merseyrail is an urban network of vital importance to the transport infrastructure of Liverpool and the region. They run almost 800 trains per day and carry over 100,000 passengers on an average weekday.

Sign up to digitalsignage.NET for free!

No obligations, no credit card required

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CHAPTER 4:
The objectives digital signage can serve

The use of digital information displays should be directed towards reaching specific strategic goals, such as boosting employee morale and loyalty, reinforcing your corporate values and/or creating an open, transparent corporate environment.

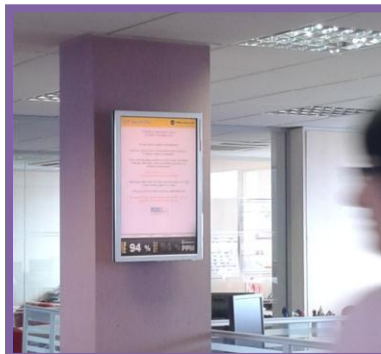These objectives can be translated into tactics such as…

1) Communicating relevant information to each department using screens in the right location

2) Incident management; digital signage can be a quick way of cascading

important information around the company.

3) Lobbying for favourable stances for the organization;

4) Reputation management and branding. Organisational image creation and maintenance;

…and different types of content.

Business- related content

This information is meant to educate staff about important company-related matters:

- Product updates and developments.
- Sales targets and actual levels.
- Industry or company's product innovations
- Competitor updates
- Updates on current initiatives within the business
- "Did you know?" from subject matter experts
- "Housekeeping" updates such as; use of meeting rooms, car parks etc.
- Latest survey results
- Summary of key internal staff vacancies
- Updates and news. E.g. what's new on the intranet, performance updates, IT and systems updates etc.

Employee- related content

Inform all employees about subjects of interest to them and help them know each other by communicating:

- New hires, promotions and other staff moves;
- Staff special offers- gym membership discounts, restaurant offers;
- Short interviews- ''a day in the life of…''
- Employee achievements.

Fun/ non- business content

This content is intended to lighten up the atmosphere and help employees relax during their breaks. To be displayed on screens in cafeterias, break rooms, lounges.

- Competitions and winners
- Fun events such as denim or loud shirt day etc.
- Health tips
- Promotion and reviews of staff social events
- Humor - Funny images, typos, memories, license plates.

All this information can take a **variety of formats**. From JPG or Flash files, to SD/ HD videos and RSS feeds, the system allows you to repurpose existing resources. Because the content depends on the software you're using, it's crucial that you're making the right choice.

Types of information you can display

Visitors- related content

This is all about branding and promoting your company in front of the public. Publishing this information on displays in reception areas, you are actually taking advantage of people's visits to communicate key facts about your business, products and achievements.

You can:

•Present products or services that your company offers;

•Sales/ discounts or contests you are running;

•Acknowledge new partnerships/ present your partners

•Advertise prizes and awards won by your company

•New customers, show photos of completed projects

•Customer testimonials (text or videos)

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CHAPTER 5: Choosing the right type of digital signage system

A hosted system implies that you will have to buy the server software (thus owning it), build your servers and maintain them.

The advantage is that the system is very secure, if you are hosting your digital signage software nobody from outside your organization has access to your servers.

The downside is that you have to become a specialist in that piece of software; you are maintaining it as you are maintaining the servers too which takes up time, effort, money and IT staff.

A cloud- based system on the other side, reliefs the end user from the task of maintaining servers, backing up data, worrying about band width and data storage.

The advantage is that the technical knowledge and effort required of the user are minimal. Most vendors, such as ourselves, offer automatic and free of charge software updates ensuring that you will always use the latest and best version of their digital signage software solution, at no extra- costs.

The disadvantage is that you don't have the same level of control as for the previous option.

Not sure which system is the best for you? Contact us for a free consultation.

Cloud- based digital signage explained

The rise of cloud- computing has made digital signage more cost- effective and thus available to organisations and institutions of all sizes.

Here's how the system delivers your message to your screens, via the cloud.

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After uploading, scheduling and publishing your content, **this will be loaded** onto the **cloud** (i.e. the Internet) then it will be **redirected to the media players** that will store it and **send it to the screens** in your locations at the time you have specified.

The entire operation takes seconds allowing your message to appear on your screens in almost real-time.

Tips for evaluating digital signage software

1. Your software should allow you to get started quickly.

SaaS applications should be suitable for DIY digital signage systems (provided you can handle the installation bit). You should be able to create an account in less than a minute and configure your player without much hassle.

Ask for a User Guide and if it still doesn't seem straightforward enough get to the next vendor.

Cloud- based digital signage

Cloud- based digital signage

Your data

Media player

Your PC

Screens in your locations

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Tips for evaluating digital signage software
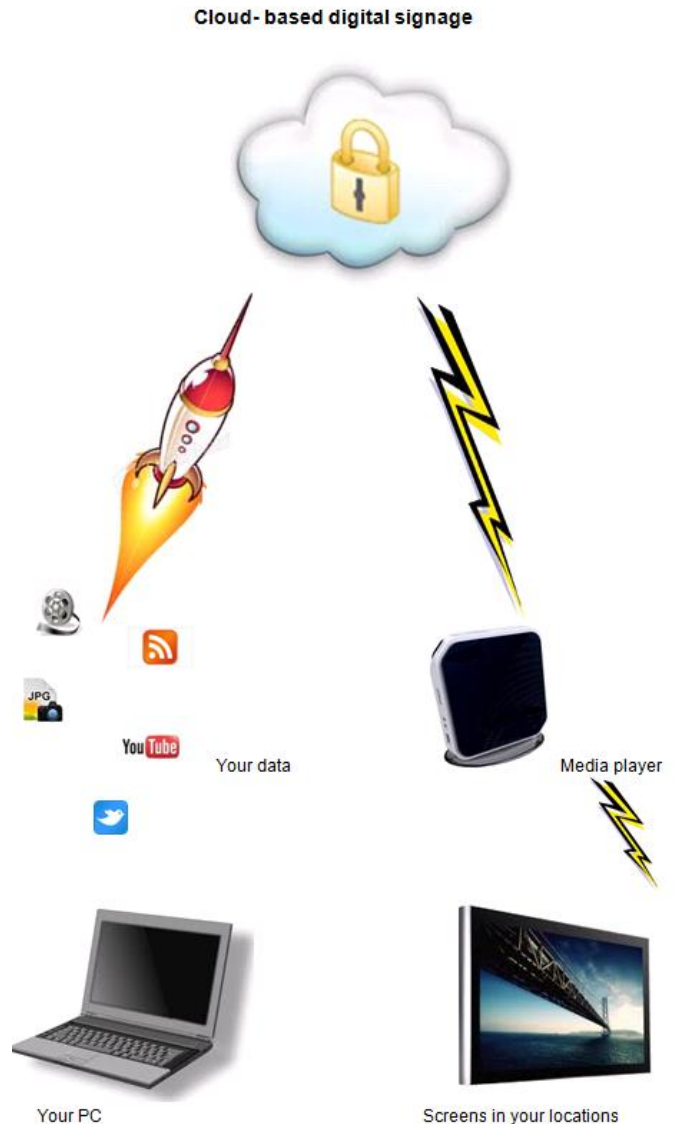
2. The software should allow you to know where and when your files have been played

A reporting feature would allow you to know if your files have been shown on the screens and check the system's performance at any time. If you're accountable towards a 3rd party then this feature will prove particularly useful. Make sure it's there.

3. Look for a proven history of successful, scalable deployments.

Search for case- studies and press releases about the vendor's performance and its suitability for a long- term partnership. If other customers were happy with the services provided, chances are that you'll be pleased with them too.

4. Check that you can test the software

Any serious digital signage software provider will allow you to see how the product work before making any commitments.

We, for example, are offering our users the chance to set up an account for free and use it to upload and schedule media files. They pay only when they're ready to go live.

**5. Look at the pricing structure**

Do you have to pay for software updates or additional features? Is support free or for a fee?

Can you pay monthly? Make sure you are offered the flexibility you need and that there are no hidden costs.

Ready to dive in?
Test digitalsignage.NET for free!

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CHAPTER 6: Other examples of digital signage for corporate communications
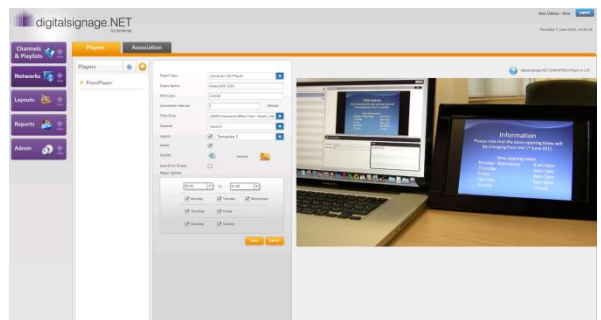
Commercial property owner MEPC uses digital signage in its new office

MEPC, a prominent name in the UK commercial property for more than 60 years, uses digital signage to promote its properties and create an impressive presentation room in their new office at Chineham Business Park in Basingstoke, UK.

By using our solution, MEPC is now able to run an eye- catching company presentation continuously on a 42'' LCD screen installed in a prominent area of the reception.

In its state of the art marketing suite, the company is using [POVng, our on-premise software](#) to run three 26''LCD screens and a 42'' one to showcase its different building to visitors, potential customers and business partners.

Global Pharmaceutical company keeps its employees informed with digital information displays[5]

Looking for a staff and visitor information system that would enhance corporate communications and relay information quickly and effectively, the company resorted to digital signage for their UK offices.

The solution consisted of 14 LCD screens (of 46", 42", 37"), 14 corresponding media players loaded with our digital signage software. The solution enabled them to:

• Have centralised content control

• Display web pages and video content

• Upload content via the network

• Present complementary information simultaneously using layouts

[5] The company preferred to remain unidentified.

SIGN UP TO digitalsignage.NET FOR FREE

Put your knowledge to work and take a tour of our digital signage application.

All you need is a standard PC or Mac, an Internet connection and a few photos, videos and RSS feeds to play with and you're all set.

Create your digitalsignage.NET account here.