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Digital Signage for Hospitality

How Restaurants and Hotels Can Use the
System to Improve Communications and
Customer Service



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An important aspect that differentiates this sector from others is its focus on making people feel at home in an unfamiliar environment

Communication is a key tactic to meet this goal, as guests must first know about the services and facilities offered before they can enjoy them. Conventional wisdom tells us that people's communication patterns registered a shift in preference from printed, static channels to the ever-dynamic digital ones.

Reflect the outside world

According to Joe Fernandez, technology writer and blogger for Futurity Media and Orange, this is *"a world where technology shapes lifestyles and businesses reap the benefits."*^[1]

Or, as Joseph Tripodi, Coca Cola's Chief Marketing Officer puts it we live in a revolutionary culture that is *"highly informed, empowered and instantly connected to sympathetic friends and allies everywhere."*^[2]

The Hospitality sector and digital communication technologies

With mobile technology and location-based services going strong, missing on the digital game comes at an even greater cost. Do you still wonder if you need to jump on the digital bandwagon?

Your guests are 'armed' with digital devices. If you limit your communications to printed, static channels when they are in your hotel, restaurant or pub you end up disconnecting yourself from a critical audience.

1 'Keeping the dream of upward mobility above' Joe Fernandez, Orange Blog, February 29, 2012 <http://blogs.orange-business.com/enterprising-business/2012/02/keeping-the-dream-of-upward-mobility-above.html>

2 'Cannes Lions Festival 2012. Coca- Cola- A digital and cultural revolution', Marketing Magazine, June 27, 2012



DIGITAL SIGNAGE FOR HOSPITALITY

There are 206,000 hospitality outlets across the UK (State of the Nation Report, 2011).

The entire industry employs 9.5 million people across the European Union (HOTREC Europe).

The sector accounts for 4.9% of UK's total economic output (State of the Nation Report, 2011).

“Lodging sector recovery is a fact; resurgence is no longer far away.” (Ernst & Young- ‘2011 To See Reawakening of Hospitality Sector’)

Location-based services (Foursquare, NFC, digital signage) drove a 50% increase in footfall. 7 in 10 people are willing to receive location-based messages (O2 Media Ad Effectiveness Benchmarking Statistics, January 2012).

The typical location-based user: 49% have college degrees and an average annual household income of \$150,000 (Asif Khan, Location Based Marketing Association).

Location-based services attract the interest of a large public, mostly educated and affluent.

Key facts and figures for hospitality and location-based services



Business travelers:

- watch more advertisements in their hotel rooms than at home
- spend over 3 hours watching TV (Brand Republic- Dial room service to reach business travelers)

Guests are spending over 1.5 billion nights in hotels and similar establishments in the EU (HOTREC Europe).

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A recent legislative provision in the U.S. makes it mandatory for restaurateurs with 20 + locations to offer detailed nutritional information on their menus and menu boards (Digital Signage Today^[1]).

The concern about healthier menu choices is not confined to the US only, as obesity rates are rising in Europe too- acknowledges by the [Medical News Today](#). In these circumstances, many in the industry will consider using digital menu boards in an effort to comply with the new legislation and reassure clients about the healthiness of their food.

Where does digital signage fit into this?

Digital signage is an audio-visual technology that allows you to send targeted, relevant messages to your audience via indoor screens (LCDs, plasma screens etc.).

This technology enables you to display a wide range of information- from menus, news, welcome messages, alerts and entertainment in the format of your choice (from JPGs to HD videos, from social media feeds to IPTV channels).

^[1] "Obamacare may ramp up digital menu board adoption" Digital Signage Today, July 5, 2012
<http://www.digitalsignagetoday.com/article/196907/Obamacare-may-ramp-up-digital-menu-board-adoption>

Digital Signage for Restaurants



The context- the new legislation in the United States and the increased focus on healthy menu choices.

Digital signage isn't only about timely, location- based information but also about 'open' technologies that can "communicate" with each other.



DIGITAL SIGNAGE FOR HOSPITALITY

A simple example of multichannel marketing would be displaying QR codes that once scanned, offer guests more information on a particular topic (such as nutritional information) or allow them to participate in a game or a prize draw.

Encourage your clients to check in via Foursquare in order to lower the price of a certain menu and keep them informed on the progress of the operation via the screen (see [how a Swedish supermarket did it](#)).

Have them join a conversation on Twitter and then display their tweets on your screens (but only after curating them). This two-way communication involves smartphones and tablets, devices largely used while dining.

According to a study by Lab42 quoted by Mashable^[1], **24% of the interviewed consumers take pictures of their entrees.**

As a restaurateur, wouldn't you like to see and make use of these pictures?

They would be a great marketing tool.

[1] 'More Smartphone Users Taking Pictures, Updating Statuses at Restaurants', Mashable Tech, April 7, 2012, <http://mashable.com/2012/04/07/smartphone-pics-restaurants-infographic/>

Enter the multichannel game



Show them on your screens as a way to inspire your customers and promote your food. Bring social media into the equation again and 'brag' about your customers and dishes on two platforms simultaneously!

As the study shows, **19% of people using smartphones during meals do so to update their Facebook status.**

This is a great opportunity for you to remind them that, guess what, you've got a Facebook page that they should 'Like' to get special offers and tips. And since they're here, politely invite them to tag your restaurant or share that photo of the meal they've just snapped on your page.

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You can't really do this with any media. Leaflets, if used, get lost, frayed and crumpled (especially during a meal) so a digital display would serve this purpose best (and many other).

If you're somehow involved in marketing, you know the importance of search engine optimization for promoting your business. Why not **use a digital menu board to ingrain in your clients' minds the keywords you would like them to use to find you?** 'Best restaurants in... (a certain area)', 'best dining deals in...' or any other terms you rank well for (or you're trying to) can be part of your boards' content.

Enter the multichannel game


Follow Google's advice and combine paid search campaigns with organic ones and maximize their efficiency by enhancing customer recall of targeted keywords with digital displays in your locations.




[1] 'More Smartphone Users Taking Pictures, Updating Statuses at Restaurants', Mashable Tech, April 7, 2012, <http://mashable.com/2012/04/07/smartphone-pics-restaurants-infographic/>

Digital signage complements your other communications channels and can reinforce them. Here's a quick comparison that supports this argument, highlighting how this platform differentiates itself from other communications vehicles and how it can be used to promote them.

Comparing between communication channels

Digital Signage	Email	Website	Social Media
	<p>Guests may miss emails or may lack the necessary devices to check their inbox on the go (i.e. smartphones, tablets)</p> <p>Digital signage will allow you to connect to them when they're most interested in what you have to offer- when in your locations.</p>	<p>Digital displays can reiterate and summarise the information on your website.</p> <p>Remind your guests about your special offers, new menu, new booking system or about any other news advertised online.</p>	<p>Not all of your guests are social-media aficionados and so not all will be 'tweeting', 'following and 'liking' you for the latest offers & news.</p> <p>Make this information available to everybody when it matters the most. It makes sense to announce discounts and other news in your locations before anywhere else.</p>



Digital Signage	Email	Website	Social Media
	<p>A digital display is less intrusive than emails. It allows guests to absorb information at their own pace.</p>	<p>While doing so, you can always display your website's address or even better, a QR code that would take people to it. Tell them about your cool blog, photo gallery or other</p>	<p>You can also display social media content (tweets or your Facebook page) as a way to keep your screens' fresh and encourage people to 'follow' and 'like' you.</p>
	<p>Use the screens to remind people to subscribe to your newsletter briefly telling them why. Use a QR code to take them straight to the sign-up page. Post your last newsletter's key information on your screens and make it available to non-subscribers too.</p>	<p>interesting piece of information they can find online.</p>	<p>Social media has its own limitations- mainly privacy and space-related. By using digital displays you actually own the medium and so you can use it as you please.</p>

Tip: Always include a **call to action** in your messages. Tell your guests what action to take based on the information provided (order, sign up, enquire, 'follow').



DIGITAL SIGNAGE FOR HOSPITALITY

This is a legitimate question when you've been using printed menus for quite a while. We don't imply that standard menus should be dumped altogether, but just to draw your attention to the value added brought by a digital menu board.

1) They can support much more information than standard ones. Not only extra- nutritional data (that could easily load the printed menus) but also dynamic images and videos of your food and chefs in action. 'Food can be beautiful' and digital menus can present it in a dynamic manner that drives up appetite and creates the right atmosphere.

2) If changes occur, information can be quickly amended. When prices and/ or menus need to be altered, you would be able to adjust them in a timely and cost- effective manner. While reprinting implies extra- costs and delays, updating your screens to reflect those changes it's a zero- cost, minutes- long exercise.

Why digital menu boards?



Digital menu boards run by Dynamax's POVng

3) The digital menu can be personalized to reflect its location.

You may decide to offer different food in different locations to reflect local tastes. With digital menu board, you can easily personalize menus on screens from different regions without incurring any supplementary expenses. Just send different content to the selected displays.

Need more inspiration? Discover other ideas of [how restaurants can use location- based services](#).

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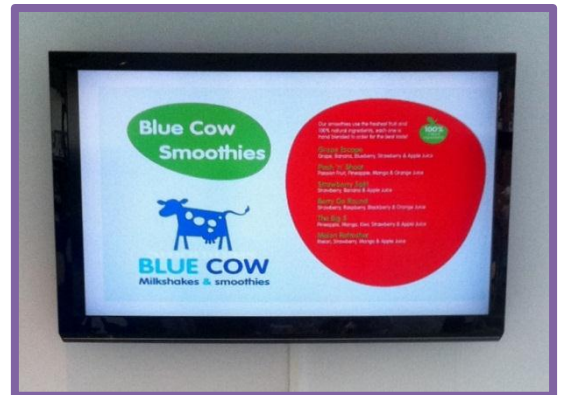


4) Local staff can be involved in the process. This 'personalisation' can be carried out by staff from different locations that can update the boards with photos of their venue, of the food they cook and of the clients they serve. All this while maintaining headquarter control over who displays what and where.

5) You can respond to important events in real time. Has a certain football team won the match or has a certain tennis player won the tournament? Post the news on your screens along with your menu and encourage supporters to celebrate the victory. Certain restaurants even partner with local sports teams, offering dinner deals, menu specials and even free food when these win.

Capitalise on these partnerships, advertise them on your screens and encourage your customers to take part in whatever activities you organize on these occasions. Because the system can be updated in real-time you can always display some other content if the teams don't happen to win.

Why digital menu boards?



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DIGITAL SIGNAGE FOR HOSPITALITY

An article of the international publication *Hotel Innovation and Technologies*^[1] reminds us that those that follow lack the competitive advantage of those that lead and this stays true for new technologies as well. There's no doubt that a hotel could get by without a mobile solution, a hotel management system or web- based digital signage but it will inevitably be left behind by the ones that do. Guests expect efficiency and zero errors.

Another interesting observation was that, in today's scheme of things, the fast eat the slow and not so much the big eat the small. Cloud- based technologies and social media brought the game to a new level.

The rise of cloud- computing has simplified the technical aspect of running a network of screens and [has removed the need to maintain servers](#). This means that hotels with fewer resources are now offered access to a system once used by major players only.

[1] Hotel Innovations and Technologies, Special Report, February 2012

Digital Signage for Hotels



However, for large multi-national hotel chains [an on-premise digital signage solution](#) might be more appropriate. It is highly secure but also expensive as it implies that the hotel has to buy and maintain servers.

If you're not sure which digital signage system is the best for you- a cloud-based or an on-premise one- [request a free consultation today](#).

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Way- finding

Tell your guests how to get to important areas of your hotel (to the restaurant, lounge, bar, fitness room, swimming pool etc.)

These messages are suitable for screens located on corridors and hallways and not so much for those in reception and lounge areas.

Corporate messages:

- Post a summary of your history and achievements;
- Announce new partnerships that are relevant to your guests;
- Present your core values and reinforce your corporate culture. Besides influencing your guests, remember that those messages are seen by your staff too.
- Raise awareness about any charity work that your organisation is involved in. Post photos, figures, press coverage and any other information related to the contribution you make. Give information about your corporate social responsibility policy and what you and your staff are doing about it.

The purposes the system can serve

- Advertise prizes and awards won by Has one of your executives been invited as a speaker at an industry conference? Display a short video of his/her presentation.
- These messages are suitable for reception areas and lounges, the best locations to present information of general interest, particularly important for new customers and business partners.

Tip: Make sure you deliver the right message to the right location for maximum impact and relevance.

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Fun/ non-business related messages

This is the type of content you generally use to attract attention and make the medium more interesting so that people will look at the screens and take in your business- related messages.

Here are some ideas that you can adopt or dismiss based on your organisational culture.

In any case, include some fun elements:

- Interesting facts about your region, town/city or venue;
- Announce raffles, prizes and winners;
- Health- related information on screens near the fitness-room;
- Interesting culinary aspects from your region on screens around the dining area.

Add interesting did- you- knows.



The purposes the system can serve

The advantage of digital signage over printed or static communication channels is its ability to support a wide range of media files- from photos to HD videos, to Twitter and Flickr feeds.

Tip: re-use content already created for the web.

Need more help?

[Check out these content lessons we've learned from our clients.](#)

[Discover the 7 digital signage content errors that could slash your system's ROI](#)

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DIGITAL SIGNAGE FOR HOSPITALITY

Digital signage is not only allowing you to send the right message to the right location but it also allows you to send it at the right time. If you need to communicate any time-sensitive information (and what hotelier or restaurateur doesn't), make sure you take advantage of this capability.

Show your breakfast menu in the morning, lunch and dinner menus at appropriate times and other messages that match the mood of your customers throughout the day. Update your communications quickly and easily to reflect changes in external conditions (including seasons, weather, holidays and celebrations).

The right content, at the right time



The scheduling feature in digitalsignage.NET



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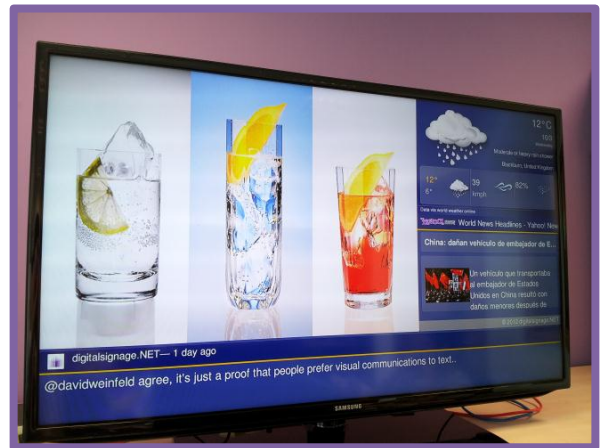
The fact that location- based digital communications are useful is almost a truism, propped by players from various industries. According to Katie DeTitta, International Social Media Manager at Orange, location-based services are helping people avoid getting lost or missing their appointments, while enabling venues to manage foot-traffic flows, for example ([Innovation in the Air, blogs.orange-business.com](http://blogs.orange-business.com)).

The Location- Based Marketing Association itself encourages brands and businesses to use online media to drive local commerce, social media apps to target influencers based on their geography and to immerse themselves in the world of location- based digital marketing for maximum financial impact.

“ Target influencers based on their geography and use social media to drive business offline. ”

CONCLUSIONS

Digital media “on the go ” is becoming a necessity as people’s attention spans lower every day and traditional media just can’t keep up. Dynamic messages based on the time of the day, day of the week and your guests’ location for example can make your communications more poignant and relevant.



Display showing three HTML5 widgets (news, weather, Twitter feeds) in digitalsignage.NET

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