

Digital Signage is More Important Than Ever for Brick-and-Mortar Retail Stores



Brick-and-mortar retailers have been in an existential fight in the last few years the likes of which they have never seen in human history. Not only do they have to contend with the traditional competition of other brick-and-mortar stores, but their trials have been intensified by the newest foe on the block, e-commerce. This, coupled with a global economic shutdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has many retailers seeking new and better ways to attract attention and boost business with technology. One technology they are taking a fresh look at is digital signage.

As brick-and-mortar stores begin to fully reopen, retailers see digital signage within their spaces as more critical than ever. Digital signage will continue to be used by retailers to promote product and service offerings and increasingly for informational purposes to communicate current policies and expectations for in-store shoppers.

Will Kiosks be King?

Prior to the pandemic, retailers were beginning to incorporate a number of technologies, such as kiosks with touchscreen functionalities designed to enhance the customer experience. During the pandemic, most of those items had to be removed because, to avoid spreading germs and viruses, people did not want to physically touch anything that other people had been touching. That spurred a shift from the interactivity point being touchscreen displays to the customer's mobile device. This works well in certain situations, but there are many applications such as self-checkout, gift registries, viewing inventory and so on, where a kiosk is far more useful. As such, retailers are beginning to double down on the use of kiosks by adding even larger displays.

Omnichannel Experiences

There has been a push in retail for some time to engage the consumer in an omnichannel approach. This means delivering a seamless, integrated and consistent customer experience, whether the engagement is online, on a mobile device or in-person/in-store. Digital signage will bolster this trend with technologies that provide interactive digital information and empower applications such as “buy online, pickup in store” and endless aisle, where retailers provide in-store customers with the opportunity to order products that the store doesn't usually sell, or that are currently out of stock. As websites are designed to guide visitors on a specific, customized shopping journey, retailers are using digital signage for in-store wayfinding, in-store product comparisons, product recommendations/suggestive selling and other omnichannel purposes. It is the expectation of today's consumer that a retailer will engage with them in a consistent manner whether online or in-store. The same product options, availability of information, and product recommendations that are readily available online must also be made available in-store.

Supply Chain Hiccups

The global supply chain has been hit by the pandemic in ways that will continue to be felt for years. When shipping delays are coupled with product runs on certain items, in-stock inventory has been, and will continue to be an area of concern. Retailers are using digital signage front and center at the front of store to communicate current policies and expectations for shoppers as well as in-stock/out-of-stock items. Digital signage continues to be a focus for promotional messaging, with kiosks being central to the self-service



approach that many customers embrace. The ability to quickly change messaging from a centralized location in real time makes digital signage ideal for these use cases.

Continuous Quest for Quality

As retailers add new interactive experiences fueled by data rich and smart digital signage applications, consumers will naturally raise their expectations for quality and clarity. Many retailers have learned the hard way that consumer TVs are simply not an appropriate substitute for commercial displays. Today, 4K displays are the acceptable norm and within a few short years, those will be supplanted by displays that boast 8K resolution. The bar

will continue to rise in the future, for instance, the market will see similar advancements in direct view LED, which is used for video wall technology that can deliver beautiful, seamless images scaled to any size or shape. This technology is expected to see a massive adoption rate for brick-and-mortar retail applications as prices continue to come down over time.

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