

Transforming Hospitality with Digital Signage



Hospitality establishments and entertainment venues are in a unique position today.

Because the bulk of the customer experience exists in the real world for hospitality companies, hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, bars, and entertainment venues can make use of their physical spaces to attract, inform and entertain consumers. The key to engaging customers lies in three digital display technologies: Projectors, dvLED and large format displays.

This guide to digital signage shows how these two technologies are changing the game for hospitality businesses.

An Introduction to Digital Signage and Projection Solutions

Hospitality companies have traditionally used poster board products to share promotions and announcements with their customers. While large paper signs may have sufficed when they were the only option available, large format screens and laser projectors now provide more versatile and engaging solutions.

dvLED and LCD Screens

Due to manual wear-and-tear and the elements – or the information on it rapidly becoming outdated – paper signage hasn't always been a reliable or practical way to communicate with hospitality patrons. Digital signage in the form of commercial dvLED and LCD displays, however, is changing that.

Improvements in dvLED and LCD technologies allow hospitality businesses to use digital signage in many new ways. Here are just some of the options hospitality can adopt for entertainment, promotional and customer service purposes:

- Hotel room or over-the-bar TV screens
- Wayfinding screens
- Self-service kiosk screens
- Drive-through or counter-side digital menu boards
- Video walls
- Indoor and outdoor display panels
- Large-screen displays for conferences, quiz nights and other group gatherings

Digital signage enables hospitality establishments to transform wall space into something larger and much more engaging and informative. They can present a wide variety of content on these screens, ranging from branded promotions and interactive social media challenges to instant travel alerts, up-to-date menu content and upcoming specials. And because they sit on a digital display instead of a piece of paper, messages can be updated in real time.

Projection

The interior and exterior of hospitality venues are filled with surfaces suitable for projected images. Projectors can transform these surfaces to create an eye-catching, captivating and customizable experience for customers.

Projection has become an attractive option for many businesses because laser projectors are simply a smarter choice than traditional lamp-based projectors. That's because laser projectors are brighter, quieter, last longer and are easier to maintain.

An exciting imaging technique, called projection mapping, enables hospitality establishments to go way beyond standard projection to transform spaces into something much more engaging. Laser projectors are particularly well-suited to map colors, images, videos, and even 3D content onto irregular surfaces, such as building exteriors and indoor spaces.

Here are some creative ways hospitality businesses can use projection to boost customer engagement:

- Display branded images or video content onto any wall for signage purposes.
- Change the texture of a surface (for example, from transparent to opaque).
- Share a broadcast of an event to keep visitors or customers entertained while they wait.
- Mount a projector at an odd angle to shade a certain space with color.
- Convert a lobby from a daytime atmosphere to one more fitting for nightlife.
- Use edge blending to combine more than one projected image into a larger image.

What to Consider Before Choosing a Digital Signage Solution

Before adopting any new technology for your hospitality business, take time to weigh your needs against what you get in return. Here are some of the most important considerations to keep in mind when thinking about display devices:

Cost

When considering cost, don't just look at the price tag of the display device because they're not all created equally. Consider what your total cost of ownership will be if you invest in something less expensive now. Standard maintenance, repairs and earlier replacement of the signage could cost you much more in the long run. Don't forget about installation and energy costs.

Warranty

When it comes to commercial technology, you'll likely see warranties ranging from one to three years, though you can find them for up to five years. If you want to protect your investment, look for longer warranty terms, as well as speedy repair or replacement guarantees to minimize downtime.

Durability

You have a choice of where to place your digital signage, but indoor and outdoor placements can lead to undesirable circumstances if your technology isn't made specifically for them. Consider investing in rugged, commercial-grade tech that can withstand heat (for kitchens), resist water (for outdoor placements) and fight glare (for screens).

Purpose

Give some thought to what you need, what content you want to create and who you aim to deliver it to. Do immersive projections or engaging signage make more sense?

Surfaces

Once you've sorted out the purpose of your signage, think about where it will go in terms of surfaces and mounts. Laser projections can display images over much larger spaces, so keep that in mind. They can also be less physically intrusive than digital signage because projectors sit out of harm's way while the projected image can be found on most any surface.

Run times

In some cases, digital signage won't be needed all day. In others, you may need extended runtimes (like venues in Times Square or Las Vegas that are open all day and night).

Your Establishment

When new signage is installed in or around your establishment, someone will be affected by it. If you're driving new promotions on an external display, is your kitchen prepared to handle the influx of traffic? If you're shining a spotlight on a new act performing at the club, have you worked out the kinks in your sound system? Think ahead to ensure your new digital signage complements your capabilities and workflows.

The Future of Signage

Hospitality venues stand to gain a lot from using new digital display technologies. This engaging style of marketing:

- Provides a more welcoming or engaging ambience.
- Draws attention to new or special features, events and offers.
- Updates content and venue information in real time.
- Increases customer dwell times and spend.
- Improves the speed and accuracy of the ordering experience.
- Boosts customer engagement through interactivity or keyed events, which helps to improve revenue in a retail environment.

Because of the highly unique way in which digital signage can be used, hospitality establishments can now change the typical everyday image or video into something truly engaging and extraordinary.

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