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DSE 2010 Apex Bronze Award: Maple Leaf Sports + Entertainment

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Fans entering the Air Canada Centre through the main gate immediately see the Gate 1 Video Sculpture consisting of 42 displays populated with a wide range of brilliant sponsorship, advertising, merchandising and branding content.

NOMINEE: [Maple Leaf Sports + Entertainment](#), Toronto
NOMINATING COMPANIES: [Digital Display & Communications](#), Waterloo, Ont.; [Omnivex](#), Concord, Ont.
CATEGORY: Stadiums, Arenas
PROJECT: To create a truly unique fan experience at Toronto's Air Canada Center through the deployment of an extensive, attention-grabbing digital signage network.

OVERVIEW

For the new digital signage network at Air Canada Centre (ACC) in Toronto this past September, Maple Leaf Sports + Entertainment (MLSE) brought on Digital Display & Communications as a consultant in the early stages of the project and then contracted the company to design, build and integrate the system.

The \$3M digital signage network, part of the \$48M upgrade, features 52 media players driving content to 320 display screens. The 320 LCD displays, ranging in size from 32 to 82 inches, have been strategically placed for maximum impact and configured in unique ways to add to the aesthetic appeal of the facility. Many of the screens are near seamless LCDs – with barely a mullion, so they are ideal for video walls and other unique configurations.

DDC used 52 powerful yet compact TTuff media players. The display configurations varied quite a bit: Sometimes one player for one screen, or one player driving a four-screen diamond, and even one player driving 42 screens that form a multi dimensional video sculpture. The system is powered by Omnivex's "Moxie" digital signage content management platform

OBJECTIVES

MLSE's primary objectives were:

- Provide a best-in-class environment for its sponsors and corporate partners to reach the fan base of the Toronto NBA and NHL teams and numerous concert fans attending other events at the ACC.
- Present visually stunning graphics on intricately configured screens located at high traffic areas throughout the ACC to create a truly unique fan experience and improve the aesthetic appeal of the venue.
- Deliver revenue growth opportunities, by installing a system that could manage very complex content playlists based on pre-defined rules.
- Present the Air Canada Center as a "destination," not just a sporting event venue.

CHALLENGES

Gathering, organizing and articulating all the critical business and communication objectives of this very complex network in a usable manner was the first challenge. The summation of this information had to bridge the interests of various groups (sales, creative, marketing, operations, IT and purchasing). Great attention had to be given to both current and future operational needs, especially with regard to the system design and software platform.

With very tight timelines, a truly collaborative team effort had to be well planned and executed within a complex supply chain.

A totally new paradigm had to be sold through to the current corporate partners requiring support collateral in terms of any creative challenges/opportunities and the notion of "time" on a network vs. simply buying space on a billboard.

SOLUTIONS

This deployment owed its success to planning, planning, planning and applying deep experienced-based best practices. It also involved tight adherence to a project plan and collaboration, including the following:

- Ongoing communication between all parties involved was critical in the success of this deployment, all based on the very well defined communication and business objectives. These were established through a series of workshops designed to enable the various stakeholders to articulate and prioritize needs, wants and wishes.
- As a turnkey partner, DDC's creative team lent their digital signage expertise to a talented in-house studio at MLSE.



These "media walls" have portrait banners on each side that display MLSE franchise branding. During the game, a 2x2 component of the wall receives the live game feed as seen on the wall diamonds.



While the top three displays in this "digital photo wall" are reserved for the major sponsor of the sport, the other five displays play appropriate content for the event that day.



This "wall diamond," one of 14 fixed to the wall in various locations, is designed as an alternative to putting a bunch of TVs on the wall. During the game, two of the four screens show the live game feed.



Portrait digital screens in a concession area called "Lord Stanley's Mug" cycle through the major brewery sponsor's brands. The long banners (2x11 screens) offer MLSE branding for its various sports franchises and allow for feeds from various sports channels to entertain guests with other games.

relationships by providing our corporate partners with a more powerful tool to reach their audience...our digital signage deployment has delivered that and much more." – *Bob Hunter, executive vice-president, Venues & Entertainment, MLSE*

"The digital signage package from Maple Leafs Sports and Entertainment has given us a significantly more dynamic communications package that allows us to display stronger video creative to support our brand, and gives us much more flexibility to keep the message timely and relevant for the consumer." – *Terry Spyropoulos, partnerships and events manager, Ford Motor Company of Canada*

RESULTS

Results are best summed up by the following quotes:

"Digital signage has been a very positive addition to the fan's entertainment experience at our facility having added a new dynamic, visual stimulation to our concourses. Versus our old backlit static signage, we now have an "attention grabber" both from a vibrant advertising standpoint but also allowing us to display key guest messaging and promotion of upcoming events and features.

"One of the main goals was to retain and grow our sponsorship