DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS:
Filling an Information Gap

How Digital Signage Works as First Line of Offense in
a Real-time World

From highway billboards that warn us about traffic delays to airport signs that steer us through the terminal and even the smartphones in our pockets, we take it for granted that we're never far from a screen that can deliver information to us when and where we need it.

Yet when companies need to extract more value from the vast amounts of data generated by their IT systems, they underestimate or completely overlook the potential of digital communications to transform the business. And the stakes are high: In a recent IDG survey conducted with Omnivex, respondents

Most Concerning Potential Impacts if Information Can't be Easily Accessed or Shared

Information security risks	58%
Loss of competitive edge	50%
Inefficiency/cost increases	48%
Lost revenue or lost business opportunities	42%
Customer dissatisfaction/attrition	42%
Employee dissatisfaction/attrition	36%
Human safety risks	32%

expressed concern about the potential for security risks, loss of competitive edge, and growing inefficiency when information can't be shared quickly and easily.

In this age of Digital Transformation, information — and the insights generated from that data — has become crucial for success. Increasingly, digital communications are the first line of offense in a real-time world, spurring a move by IT from systems of record to systems of engagement, according to Chris Devlin, president of Omnivex Corporation.

"Digital transformation isn't just disrupting business models. It's changing the way technology itself is deployed," says Devlin. "Screens are increasingly everywhere, to the point where we

expect to see them and actively look for them. They enable businesses to get the right information to the right people at the right time."

As digital transformation gains momentum, IT leaders have begun to include the customer in their priorities and metrics. IDG's 2019 Digital Business Study shows that 63% of organizations cite "excellent customer experience" as the top KPI for measuring digital success.

"IT departments exist to help companies leverage technology and data to grow and serve their customers," says Devlin. "It's time for us to move from simply collecting data to using that data to keep people engaged. This improves the user experience and helps drive better decision-making, without forcing people to go looking for information."

Getting More Value

Digital communications systems can help organizations to use more of the data they generate and capture, and get more value from the data they're already have, Devlin insists.

"It's all about the ability to change content as the data changes," he says. "For example, by directing people to the airport security line with the shortest wait. This leverages data to enhance passenger experience and optimizes resources."

"The ability to pull real-time data from internal and external systems and show it all on one screen is the key," Devlin says. "Say your factory can show safety, production, weather, and materials handling stats on a single screen, all updating independently. This saves time, improves productivity, and breaks the silos of organizational information."

To that end, Devlin says digital signage is an application platform, unique in its ability to go beyond simply providing information. With its real-time capabilities and low code

characteristics, organizations can rapidly deploy digital applications that leverage information from existing systems.

"Information's ability to flow correctly depends completely on the system used to deliver it. Dynamically changing screens grab attention and improve engagement, which helps drive and influence behavior," he says. These screens not only drive revenue but they can also help educate and de-stress situations.

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Picture a global manufacturer with a dozen plants wanting to boost productivity. If every plant has one screen comparing real-time stats with every other plant, people will start feeling competitive. "You're motivating them through greater visibility of data that already exists," says Devlin. Pulling together and sharing information from a single source of truth also makes the customer experience less stressful while improving data quality.

Digital communication can also provide important safety information. Devlin offers this example:

"Virtually all organizations need to have a way to notify their employees, customers, or visitors of potential fire, health or safety hazards. While audio alarms have long been the standard, digital communications provide a new and unique way to get real-time alerts and information out to people where and when they need it," he says. "During inclement weather, such as tornados or hurricanes, digital screens can be used to notify people of the safest exit or evacuation procedures. As well, in safety situations, screens can be used to provide important details and visuals."

Beyond Social Media
With social media, messaging and the information is controlled by the public. This leads to a lot of misinformation. Digital communications platforms help organizations eliminate misinformation by placing the power of communications in their hands. They can control how an endpoint behaves and what content and information is displayed, and even have that change based on a limitless range of external factors, including time of day, crowd size, and inventory.

Communications control is especially critical when looking at things like public safety information. An alarm is useful for getting people to pay attention, but the alarm itself doesn't tell them what to do. In situations like disasters and accidents, you need a single official source of truth for key information, such as whether to evacuate or shelter in place, or which doors are safe to use and which are blocked. Digital Signage can deliver the answer and is spatially aware, so even in large facilities it can direct people appropriately to the best and safest possible direction or instructions.

The key is to make sure the right people get the right information at the right time, and on the right screen. There are a couple of key considerations here.

First, Devlin says they have to determine what the right information is. "Then they have to determine who should get it and on which screen, including mobile," he says. Using metadata to categorize individuals and groups determines which content they should receive, from where, and whether it should be pushed to their phone, a large screen, or both.

They will also want to take advantage of edge technology like sensors, facial recognition, or RFID badges, with agile integration so they can share data to screens that also live at the edge.

"The edge is where the people are, so when you can share more and better data from and at the edge, in real time, and marry it with historical data, you can extend it to more people in the way that best serves them," says Devlin. "That's how you improve their user experience and quality of life."

For more on digital signage's role in information sharing, click here. **https://www.omnivex.com/**