

## Titans of the Digital Signage Industry: Simon Sugar, Amscreen CEO

Welcome to the first of our Titans of the Digital Signage Industry features. In this new series, we'll be interviewing some of digital signage's most influential people and finding out their thoughts on innovations, the industry's future, and their own experiences.

In this edition, we speak to Amscreen's CEO, Simon Sugar. [Amscreen](#) are world leaders in digital signage solutions for the outdoor advertising market, operating in 12 world markets. Its focus is on delivering large format LCD sunlight readable advertising display solutions to the digital out-of-home (DOOH) market.



Simon Sugar leads and oversees all areas of Amscreen's vision, operations and partnerships. With a reputation for delivering outstanding digital solutions, we were excited to hear more about his work and his wider thoughts on the industry.

### What is exciting you about the digital signage industry right now?

I think the market, as a whole, is exciting right now.

In the sector we're in, we're seeing huge expansion of digital outdoor deployments, not just the UK, but Europe too. It's been a long time coming but we're very excited about the market right now and its potential.



There's been an increased take-up from media owners, and a growing acceptance from local councils and municipalities. We can see the mindset is clearly changing with clients and municipalities seeing the benefits of what digital signage can bring through the vast experience of technology and flexibility we are able to offer. Most importantly though it is the brands/advertisers who are benefiting from the many favorable aspects of digital media versus traditional static paper.



## What is your favorite recent signage project or application?

At Amscreen, our recent roll-out with Clear Channel France in Monaco was really exciting, with some truly fantastic deployments in the most beautiful locations. In the UK, Clear Channel's bold national expansion of Adshel Live has been incredibly exciting. The network has become the largest in the UK, truly giving brands and advertisers digital reach at scale.





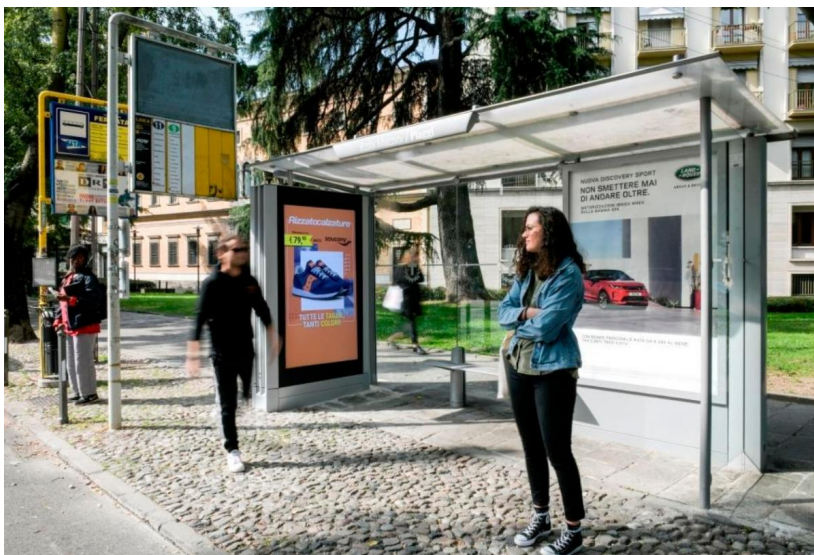
In terms of other recent signage products, I've seen lots of new LED deployments. I particularly like the Storm Cromination located at Cromwell Road in London which is made up of six giant screens, totaling 72m long with digital nameplates and bespoke lighting. It is quite a sight and one that brands really enjoy using.

## Where do you see digital signage in five years' time?

I'm seeing the market accelerating right now, so I can only think that in five years' time, we're going to see a greater volume of screens as well as more screen types available, and a greater variety of environments and applications. I can imagine going beyond screens for advertising, with screens existing in your homes. It's a very exciting time.

We keep in very close contact with the technology side to make sure that prices enable us to roll-out in volume. At the moment, it's still quite expensive to roll-out good quality signage products but I see prices coming down over the next five years. I also think the technology is going to become a lot more fluid as well, which will enable speedy roll-outs.

As the manufacturing process improves, we hope that screens will also be much better for the environment as well, using less power. When you compare to where we were five years ago with screens to today, we're now using far less energy so I think we'll continue to become more eco-friendly. I'm also interested in e-ink and the impact that will have in the market going forward as the technology improves.



## What differentiates Amscreen from others?

Amscreen have been a technology business from the start. Our background is in wireless communications.





We have our own engineers and software people that enable us to design signage products, fit for purpose from day one.

Lots of our competitors out there work more like integrators, where they handle deployments in smaller volumes, more on a bespoke level. Our focus is more on mass scale roll out but still allowing local markets and municipalities some level of bespoke customisation. From our side, it is key to keep simplicity which will only improve quality and serviceability.

What we've seen in signage is there's so many different applications within the signage sector - you've got monitoring, the computer, the sales software that loads the adverts, and, of course, the screen itself. At Amscreen, what we're trying to do is standardise all of these elements to make it simpler for everyone. I think that's what sets us apart from others and what's enabled us to roll-out over 3500 screens with our partners in a short space of time in challenging outdoor locations requiring permits from municipalities.

Given our background is from the technology side we own many of our own patents particularly around monitoring and communication between screens. The monitoring side is crucial for media owners - they need to know that screens are on, adverts are being played out for their customers, their advertisers, and agencies. We are certainly market leaders in this monitoring area and one that we still strive to improve on a regular basis.

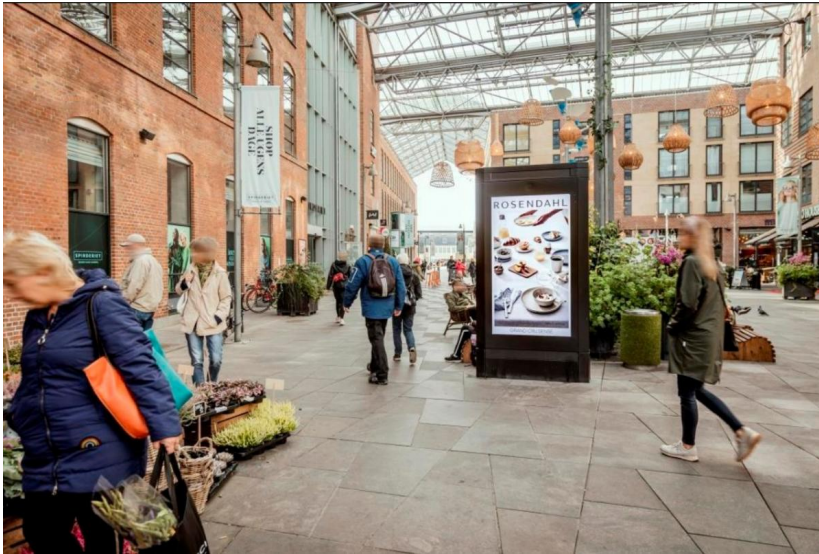


## **If you could give one piece of advice for somebody new considering entering the digital signage business, what would it be?**

You need to have a focus.

There's so much you can do with digital signage. Before you start a business, you need to work out what your objectives are. Once you've got these established, you need to be committed and stay focused.

As I said, there are lots of integrators out there. Some do a fantastic job. However, there are also some average integrators who give the signage market a bad name. There's nothing worse than going past the screen and seeing it switched off or half working. Any new entry into this market need to realize they must not run before they can walk.



## What's your favorite source of signage news or updates?

I'm a big user of social media. I get a lot of my information and news from either on Twitter or LinkedIn. Most importantly, we have our own innovations leader at Amscreen whose main role is looking at new and emerging technologies.

## What's the one digital signage event that you do not want to miss?

I primarily go to exhibitions to meet people - I find visiting exhibitions a good opportunity to meet people all in the same location.

In our experience, there is very little benefit, if any at all, in exhibiting in our existing company setup. In terms of screen suppliers, the market is very limited. We have enjoyed a good and long-standing relationship with Samsung. Providing that their quality remains and their product range continues to evolve around the needs of our business, we will remain long-term partners.

To find out more about how Simon Sugar and Amscreen work together with Samsung PID, read our [case study about their DOOH solutions](#).

