Top 5 Trends from London Digital Signage Week

What trends will dominate the digital signage of tomorrow? This was the question posed at '*Digital Signage of Tomorrow, Today*' event held as part of London's Digital Signage Week. Organized by RMG Networks and Adrian Cotterill at DailyDOOH, experts from leading European and North American digital signage companies shared their views on the most important trends and installations.

Read more to find out what the top 5 trends are, how they will impact revenue and who is already using them.

Interactive and immersive signage

Successful digital signage needs to be relevant and engaging for millennials and Generation Z, the cohort from their teens to mid-thirties who expect touchscreens, social media, and digital first approaches.

Project Runway workroom, Madame Tussauds New York. Credit: Madame Tussauds New York

Bryan Meszaros from Open Eye Digital discussed how installations at Madame Tussauds NYC and 7-Eleven provide different ways of engaging this audience using digital signage.

Madame Tussauds NYC promotes engagement and advocacy in their visitors through an interactive *Project Runway* themed experience, which allows visitors to create their own high fashion looks on digital displays, which they can then save and share.

Meanwhile, 7-Eleven is using digital signage to elevate their beverage offering and increase purchases volumes, by creating distinct Slurpee® and coffee areas, incorporating touchscreens into their drinks machines and promoting social sharing through "Have a Slurpee, Share a Selfie" messaging.

Maartan Bais from Elo said that [quick serve restaurants (QSRs) without touchscreen self-serve options](#) won't be able to survive, as customers now expect this level of convenience and speed and don't want to order from an app in-store.

In the ruthlessly competitive retail and hospitality sectors, customer experience and delivering that "wow" factor is often the difference between consumer advocates and indifference. As a result, immersive signage is a growing trend according to RMG and is responsible for driving new digital signage installations.

Alex Hughes from Amigo highlighted how an experiential installation at a flagship Odeon cinema provided a strong differentiation from competitors through a unique customer experience. Before entering the theater, customers walk through an experiential corridor which uses digital signage displays and sound showers to create a sensory experience that matches the type of movie they are going to see.

For example, if they are watching a horror film the display might show a path through a dark wood with sudden noises coming from behind them.

AI in action

There were some excellent examples of how AI (Artificial Intelligence) is being integrated with installations to improve customer experience and enhance return on investment.

'Service 1' center, Dubai

Joe Rabah, CEO of RMG, spoke about how they integrated AI into the video wall created for the Dubai Prime Minister's Office, as part of a project which reduced visa wait times from 30 days to 30 minutes. Avatars on the video walls interact with customers, answering questions in either Arabic or English.

AI is also allowing digital signage professionals to tweak installations during the design stage. Fabian Rotberg, Invidis, spoke about how AI simulations pre-installation can predict user interaction with 80% accuracy, making it much easier to avoid the problems that happen when digital signage is added into designs as an afterthought, or when companies are looking to roll out installs to hundreds or thousands of branches.

Better matching hardware to usage

We're seeing the emergence of "Mediawalls 2.0" according to Hughes, who sees that organizations have learned that they need to choose the right hardware for the type of content they want to display. As a content agency, he is finding that they are now often involved in helping their clients choose hardware and suppliers, a change from a few years ago when this was rare.

Bais talked about how including "retail-hardened" hardware is essential for good user experience, both in terms of display quality and ensuring that consumer activity remains locked into the brand ecosystem. For example, many stores still use consumer iPads, which mean that customers could easily bring up a competitor's website.

Providing a 'phygital' retail experience

Bais expertly explained how blending physical and digital to be 'phygital' experience is the next big opportunity for retail digital signage. This is where tech, store associates and customers work together, erasing traditional boundaries between online and offline shopping. Doing so provides unbeatable customer experience and unlocks upsell opportunities, and for digital signage professionals, demonstrates a clear return on investment from installations.

To ensure that retail digital signage creates maximum value, he says that there always needs to be a way for people to "finalize the deal" by either buying or sharing.

Endless aisle displays are one of the simplest ways for retailers to increase revenue and provide better customer experience, but the reality is that these often aren't used to full advantage. To get around this, Bais has found giving sales associate credit for assisted purchases works well, while Rotberg promotes involving customer-facing staff in system development.

Curated big data

Now that we've unlocked the analytics and data potential of DOOH, it's time to get smart about how these metrics are used to measure success.

Rotberg talked about how retailers often need fewer individual data points and a greater focus on actionable insights so that signage can be tweaked to improve performance.

Not all data needs to be collected through display analytics either. Mesazaros discussed how they'd tested a rollout at Santander branches in the U.S., through a combination of A/B testing in matched branches and in-person interviews with customers who visited branches with the signage. This meant that they could show the value of the existing investment and justify rolling it out nationwide.

Thank you to all the speakers for sharing their knowledge!