

Digital Signage Buyers' Guide

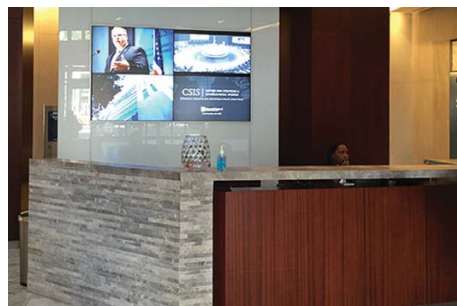
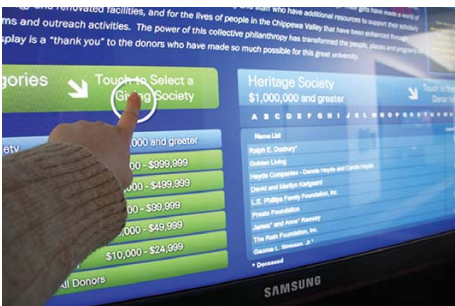
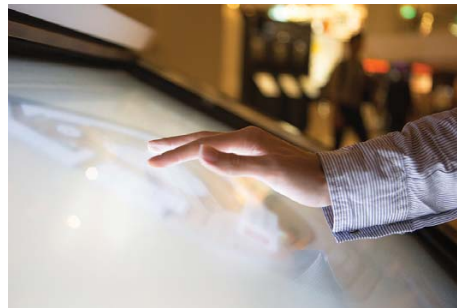


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We're here to help! If you have any questions about your application or our products, please contact us at **800.572.4935** or **salesteam@visix.com**.

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Modern digital signage is much more than just PowerPoint running on a TV. Anything with a screen can be a digital sign – large displays, desktop monitors, room signs, BYOD devices like smartphones and tablets, and interactive touchscreens can be used singly or combined for a dynamic visual communications strategy.

Organizations of any size can benefit from using digital signage – from a single screen in the lobby to video walls and kiosks placed across a campus, or across facilities around the globe. And it's scalable, so small deployments can easily be expanded into larger ones.

You can post daily announcements, display timely alerts in an emergency, reinforce and market your brand, connect with your employees and the public, and get people engaged and motivated.

20 Reasons to Use Digital Signage

Digital signage not only attracts and informs more people through creative presentation of your messages, but also reaches them instantly and reliably. It's a modern approach to communications that draws in viewers with dynamic graphics and interactivity.



1. Capture attention with bright, animated screen content that engages viewers

2. Lessen the burden on receptionists and staff by answering questions on screens



3. Show unified communications across your organization to build community

4. Display multiple things on screen at once, in any combination you choose



5. Target what gets delivered where, down to a single zone on a screen

6. Retire messages automatically without any user intervention



7. Let more people participate in the communications process with defined user roles

8. Use one medium to reach all types of learners – readers, visual, experiential, etc.



9. Import a wide variety of media you already have – videos, PowerPoint, etc.

10. Use fill-in-the-blank templates to make message creation faster and easier



11. Deliver breaking news and important announcements in real-time

12. Easily integrate event schedules, current weather and other data sources



13. Visualize data to show progress to goals and improve productivity

14. Publish alert notifications across the entire system, or on chosen screens



15. Engage employees and increase morale with kudos and recognition

16. Improve the visitor experience with touchscreens for wayfinding and directories



17. Promote new products, services, special offers and benefits information

18. Show queuing data on screens to reduce perceived wait times



19. Entertain, inform and educate viewers at meeting points and in waiting areas

20. Save paper, waste, time and money by replacing printed posters and plaques

Bottom-Line Benefits

You communicate with multiple audiences each day, so you need a centralized tool that's easy, flexible and scalable enough to connect people and ideas across the entire organization. Digital signage lets you reach the right people, at the right time, with the right message.



Executive Management Increase productivity and drive change

Employee engagement is the key to success in today's business world. It's no longer effective to rely on email, meetings and memos – there's just too much in the inbox and information gets lost. You need the tools and knowledge to empower your workforce for positive results. Digital signage can help.

A Watson Wyatt study shows that effective communication drives employee engagement and increases financial performance. Over a five-year period, companies ranked as "highly effective communicators" had a 47 percent higher return to shareholders. And according to Gallup, 70 percent of U.S. workers don't feel engaged. That means there is still work to do. Per that same Gallup poll, engagement through effective communications drives:

- 21% higher productivity
- 22% higher profitability
- 10% higher customer ratings
- 37% lower absenteeism
- Up to 65% lower turnover
- 48% fewer safety incidents
- 41% fewer quality defects
- 28% less shrinkage

This isn't only about making people feel included – employee engagement is a bottom-line imperative. When employees see a direct connection between what they do every day and what the company's goals are, they have a greater commitment to getting the job done, trust managers' decisions more readily and have fewer on-the-job conflicts. This lets the organization run more smoothly and increases productivity.

Using digital signage effectively helps ensure that your employees understand how they affect the overall business and inspires them to reach your goals.



Internal Communications Educate and motivate on the same screen

Whether you're a Human Resources professional or an Internal Communications specialist, your highest priorities are employee education, morale and retention. Employee engagement is the key to all of these and digital signage is a proven medium for unifying and motivating your workforce.

You can publish compelling communications across your entire organization from a central source. Showcase employee achievements, share upcoming events and spotlight social media to build participation and community. Digital signage can help shape your culture and inspire collaboration within your entire workforce, no matter if it's in a single building or scattered across the globe.

- Reinforces the consistency of your brand, culture and goals
- Decreases the impact of rumors and water cooler conversations
- Motivates through timely performance updates and recognition
- Improves response time for action items
- Increases trust and reliance on corporate communications
- Reduces paper and waste by replacing printed materials



Facilities Management Improve safety and efficiencies on site

Digital signage has changed the way facilities are managed. You're no longer stuck with placards and arrows for wayfinding, sirens for safety, and boring plaques for meeting rooms.

Digital signage lets you reach both staff or visitors by publishing dynamic messages, media and alerts across a building or across an entire campus. Show visitor greetings, staff announcements, energy dashboards and real-time shuttle mapping to enhance the visitor experience and improve safety.

- Publish messages to a single screen or across multiple facilities
- Use CAP-compliant alert triggers for safety notices
- Enhance the visitor experience with interactive directories and wayfinding
- Use room signs to manage shared spaces more efficiently

When people visit your facility, you want to make a good impression by greeting and guiding them from the moment they step through the doors. Convenient self-service kiosks with interactive wayfinding maps and touchscreen directories can help visitors navigate your building or campus quickly and easily.

And, whether it's a corporate headquarters, a college campus or a hospital, digital room signs can help you manage your shared spaces more efficiently. You can use affordable e-paper signs for office hoteling or interactive models to show schedules and digital signage messages outside meeting room doors. Combining all of these digital signage options gives you a comprehensive, state-of-the-art solution for modern facility management.

Types of Messaging

Your communications need to reach a variety of audiences, and digital signage can help with all of them. Since you can target what goes on which screen, there's virtually no limit to what you can post and who you can engage.

Internal Communications

Digital signage is a great tool to inform, educate and motivate your workforce. Update staff on procedures, give them real-time data about company goals and performance, introduce new employees and managers, promote teambuilding events and remind people about meetings.

Educational facilities can target teachers, faculty and staff with messages about deadlines, upcoming events and certification programs. Manufacturing centers can display training opportunities, safety tips and productivity KPIs. Healthcare centers can show benefits information, rotation schedules and patient stats. No matter what type of organization, you can use your screens to streamline messaging and cut down on email.

External Communications

Many organizations have visitors that they need to reach out to. Use your digital signage to welcome them to your facility, tell them who's who in the organization, advertise events open to the public, and promote your services. Interactive wayfinding maps and directories also help people navigate your facility without tying up staff and improve the visitor experience.

Advertising

Promote new products or sale pricing on screens to drum up interest. You can allow local vendors to advertise on your screens, or use their signs to carry your own messages to their patrons and customers. This lets both of you extend the reach of your brands and marketing efforts. And this isn't limited to paid promotions. You can use screens to advertise community and volunteer programs, to promote upcoming events, and recruit for clubs and association memberships.

Safety Alerts

Digital signage is a great addition to your crisis communications strategy. In the event of an emergency, screens can be immediately overridden with alert information that describes the nature of the emergency (extreme weather, fire, etc.) as well as instructions about what to do and where to go. Common Alerting Protocol allows you to gather data from multiple sources, and tie in directly with local emergency responders, such as the fire department or the police. Digital signage can help make sure that everyone is safe and up to date in an emergency.

Quick Content Ideas

Corporate

- Show event schedules and room calendars
- Promote mission statements and HR information
- Boost morale with awards and recognition
- Manage call center traffic with real-time data
- Display financial market data and stock trends
- Welcome visitors with greetings and interactive maps

Banking & Retail

- Advertise your products and services
- Share special promotions with deadlines
- Advertise loyalty and reward programs
- Display queuing data and wait times
- Offer self-service tools on touchscreens
- Keep staff updated on sales & performance trends

Government

- Show current policies and procedures
- Advertise community and networking events
- Reduce perceived wait times with live queuing data
- Promote local partners and businesses
- Share weather alerts or Homeland Security updates
- Display messages in multiple languages

Manufacturing

- Broadcast KPIs and progress to goals
- Monitor inventory and resources
- Recognize individual and team accomplishments
- Show health and safety announcements
- Advertise training opportunities and requirements
- Promote company events and teambuilding activities

K-12 Schools

- Promote student clubs and extracurricular activities
- Centralize morning announcements
- Showcase student work, honors and awards
- Broadcast safety alerts and directions
- Target internal announcements to staff rooms
- Replace outdated and messy bulletin boards

Higher Education

- Post admissions announcements and registration schedules
- Advertise bookstore, café or other campus shop offerings
- Display academic programs or remote lectures
- Share athletics information and game schedules
- Advertise volunteer and community outreach programs
- Show live shuttle routes and bus schedules

Healthcare

- Display wellness tips and education schedules
- Show pharmacy information or local partner locations
- Advertise gift shop products and special offers
- Promote upcoming events and vaccination schedules
- Update staff with schedules, training and patient data
- Thank patrons and encourage giving with donor boards

Hotels & Hospitality

- Welcome groups with personalized messages
- Show event schedules and "quiet zone" locations
- Promote loyalty programs and registration benefits
- Advertise upcoming events and entertainment schedules
- Share live weather and traffic information
- Display directories, wayfinding and room availability

Want some more inspiration? Check out our gallery at [Visix.com/Gallery](https://www.visix.com/Gallery)

What's in a System?

All digital signage systems have three main technology components:

Displays

Anything with a screen is a potential display for your system – LCDs and projection displays, video walls and touchscreens, desktop monitors and smartphones. Mounted screens are usually placed in high-traffic areas for public viewing, and in common rooms like lounges for employees. And don't forget about your website or intranet. You can publish your message playlists on webpages to reach remote workers and students.

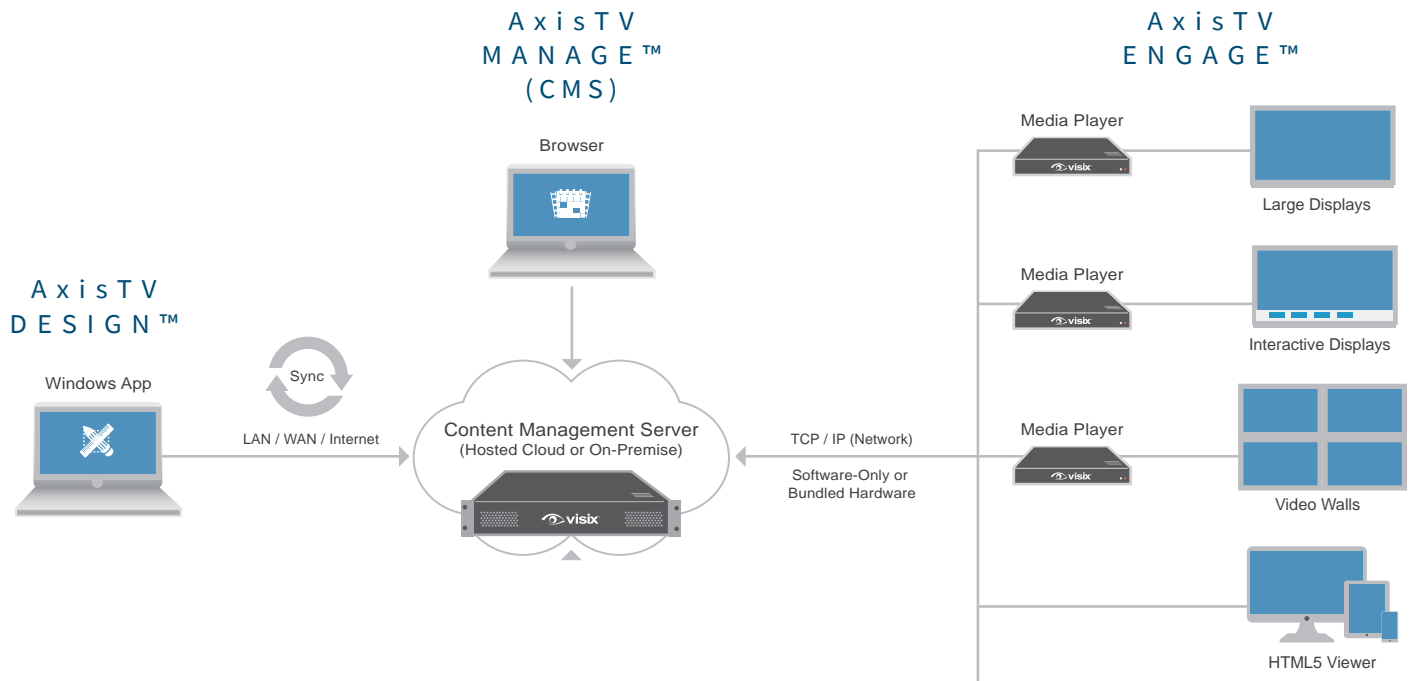
Software

This is how you create, manage, approve and schedule your messages to your displays, choose how long each message stays up, and which messages go to which displays. You can choose a single image that takes up the whole screen, or multiple zones - including tickers, animations, video windows and more, all working seamlessly in a unified screen layout that reinforces your message. The system can be maintained by a single person with a desktop app, or many people at different locations can interact with the system in a networked deployment via the web.

AxisTV Signage Suite leverages three applications: *Design* (content designer), *Manage* (web-based CMS) and *Engage* (playback engine). *Design* is a desktop application with user-friendly design tools and data widgets for messages, templates and layouts that lets users create content and then synchronize to the CMS. *Manage* streamlines content scheduling and playlist management, with drag-n-drop ordering, sophisticated scheduling options, and powerful search and sort tools. *Engage* offers video backgrounds, message animations and elaborate transitions with easy playback and preview of content designs.

Hardware

These are the PCs that distribute and play back your content. You have a content management server, which is where the software and your content files reside. Media players send your scheduled content to displays. In a networked environment, content can be pushed to multiple players at once, or content can be pulled from a server.



The Process

You'll need to get people on board early who understand what it will take to deploy a successful system. If you don't, your digital signage can become orphaned somewhere along the way. That means stale content on screens which will make viewers tune out. Here's what you'll need to do:



Installation

Your screens and other hardware need to be physically installed in your facility. Then you need to configure your digital signage software over your network, and make sure that everything works with your firewall. Data integration – calendars and other programs that will need access to your digital signage system – will also need to be configured and tested early on. Then you need to train all users who will use the software on how it works, and how to create, schedule and manage content.



Management

You may have a large roster of people managing your system and contributing content on a daily basis. Make sure they each know your policies and brand guidelines for creating messages. Using fill-in-the-blank templates will allow less creative people to design attractive designs quickly and easily. Either way, clearly define user roles and the approval process for content scheduling, and publish your policies someplace where everyone who is involved can see them.



Maintenance

Messages will automatically drop off your playlists, but they still hang around in the system. Be sure to regularly schedule time to clean out old content. Your software will also have periodic updates, as will any third-party programs and apps that interact with your system – be sure to stay updated with bug fixes and new features. Hardware will also update drivers occasionally, and you might upgrade to better, more modern equipment. You should also refresh your screen designs and color themes from time to time, to keep your audience interested and your content fresh.



Measurement

Consider how you will measure the effectiveness of your digital signage. Including calls to action in your messages is the easiest way to track results. Some examples include driving traffic to dedicated web pages using short URLs and QR tags, having people answer a question within a certain time frame to receive a gift or discount, or encouraging people to snap a picture with their mobile devices and presenting that at a certain location. Just be sure to include a clear response your audience can give that's easy to measure.

Planning Your Digital Signage System

Buying digital signage requires an understanding of the key elements involved and how they interact. The more you can cover in advance, the fewer surprises and unexpected costs and delays down the road. You need to do some planning before you install a digital signage system and these 10 steps will help.

1. Get the right people involved

- Identify one technical leader – someone in your IT department.
- Identify one content leader – someone in Marketing or Communications with an eye for design, who understands what type of information you'll be sharing with your audience.

2. Agree on your goals

- Nail down what you want to achieve with all stakeholders. Be specific.
- Get input from Human Resources and communications managers, department directors and executives.
- Write down what everyone says in as much detail as possible – this will help you determine ways to measure your ROI.

3. Imagine how you'll use the system

- Draw out workflows for how the system will operate within your organization.
- Let everyone know where the hardware will live and who maintains it.
- Map out which departments will contribute content and manage the system.

4. Plan your content

- List the types and sources for communications you'll want to publish.
- Consider any data integration or applications you'll want to tie into the system.
- Think about using communications you already have as a starting point.

5. Consider creative

- Do you have in-house designers? If not, you may need to budget for creative help.
- Consider touchscreens for wayfinding, directories and other interactive content.
- Think about brand standards, and how you'll set up screen layouts and templates.

6. Plan your policies

- Determine individuals who can contribute content, the hierarchy and approval process.
- List basic branding criteria, formatting rules and policies.
- If you're using the system for emergency alerts, create a separate policy.

7. Map out your screens

- High traffic areas are best for digital signage displays. (Don't let wiring dictate placement.)
- You can mount small displays in cubicles, library stations, or even cafeteria booths.
- Websites, desktops, and phones and tablets can increase your signage real estate.
- Consider digital room signs for conference room management.
- Figure out if you want to use audio for videos or streaming content.
- Make sure you are ADA compliant.

8. Check the specs

- Evaluate and choose vendors for your digital signage system.
- Involve an experienced digital signage AV/IT integrator, and ask them to review your plans.
- Review technical specs and network requirements to make sure the system meets your needs.

9. Write a project plan

Your plan should describe the key action items, timeframes and resources needed:

- The location of displays and which screens will show what
- A budget for installation and ongoing expenses (18-24 months)
- Potential revenue sources like advertising
- IT issues like connectivity, network and security policies
- Support options for maintenance and upgrades

10. Consider a pilot

- Test your equipment, processes and content on a small-scale before rolling it out across your entire organization.
- Lower risks across the board by evaluating goals and resources in a controlled environment.
- Increase stakeholder buy-in through participation in the pilot, adjustment and final roll out of the system.

At the end of the pilot, you'll want to collect data and feedback from all of your stakeholders. You'll see exactly which of your processes and goals succeeded and which need adjustment. This lets you identify where you should make improvements and where you need to bolster resources for a successful digital signage deployment.

Keep in mind that the pilot might be a success even if it didn't exactly meet your goals or match your plan. Sometimes, it's easier to pin down goals and streamline processes after a system has been used in day-to-day operations.

Questions to Ask Before Buying Digital Signage Software

Digital signage is a great tool for communications, but shopping for the right software to power your system can be daunting. Here are some tips to get the conversation started so you can choose the best content management software for your needs:

Is it designed for organizational communications?

Workflows are different in offices and on campus, so you don't want digital signage software that's made for restaurants or airports with just a few features you can use. AxisTV Signage Suite is specifically designed for organizational communications. Our software gives you a powerful set of enterprise features like Active Directory authentication, and administrators can assign predefined user roles or create custom roles to provide the right level of privileges for each user.

Does it have easy design tools?

Not everyone is a graphic designer. Make sure your software has easy design and scheduling tools, as well as good-looking templates so people can create beautiful messages quickly and easily. AxisTV Signage Suite provides a powerful, intuitive interface for creating digital signage layouts, messages and templates right on your desktop. And the CMS has a user interface modeled after familiar Microsoft Office programs, so you'll quickly know your way around.

Does it allow for data integration?

A lot of what you'll want on screen is already in another system you're using. Make sure your software can easily import event schedules, weather, news, Excel, XML, JSON, dashboards, social media, SharePoint, webpages and other data you're already using. AxisTV Signage Suite seamlessly pulls data into a variety of formats. You can map to external sources so your screens always show the most current information, and you can automatically trigger different text and graphics on screens based on data updates.

Can you use it for alert notifications?

Severe weather, safety alerts and other emergency notifications need to override scheduled playlists at the touch of a button. Our AxisTV Alert application lets you override scheduled content with a few clicks – replace all messages on the entire system or choose specific players to override for local alerts. The application is built around Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) standards, and easily integrates with popular third-party alerting suites like Alertus and Rave Mobile Safety.

What kind of signage can I manage?

Digital signage doesn't have to be limited to large, static screens. Since your audience is mobile, you'll want software that can reach them with the right message, on the right screen, at the right time. AxisTV Signage Suite lets you publish content to video walls, touchscreen displays, desktops and room signs throughout your facility, across campus or to multiple locations in different cities across the globe.

What are the purchasing options?

You may already have hardware, or you might need the whole package. Ask vendors if they offer bundled solutions, software-only sales, cloud-based subscriptions, etc. With AxisTV Signage Suite, you can choose from software-only, bundled systems, hosted cloud or on-premise solutions – the choice is yours. We offer subscriptions or perpetual licenses. Expansion is turnkey, so you can start with one product and upgrade to another by simply purchasing new licenses.

The Visix Advantage

We believe in making digital signage as easy as possible for our clients. Our software offers the industry's friendliest user interface with straight-forward and intuitive navigation, and all our products and services are built to help make your communications more efficient and effective.

Visix has a passionate, professional team dedicated to making your digital signage a success. We'll partner with you to recommend systems tailored to your facilities and culture. We believe in service before, during and after the sale to make sure you have everything you need for a successful digital signage deployment.

35+ Years of Experience – We've been making great products since 1980, and our employees stay with us an average of eight years, so you can rely on us to be here to help.

Project Management – Every client has a dedicated project manager to shepherd their project through every stage of the deployment for a successful, on-time launch.

Experienced Consultants – Our consultants work with you to set up your software and craft digital signage campaigns that will engage your audience. We can even handle day-to-day tasks for you.

Award-Winning Creative Services – Our digital signage artists can provide anything from branded background sets to custom interactive wayfinding, donor boards and more.

Implementation – We offer both on-site and remote implementation support, whether you're working independently or with a systems integrator.

Extensive Training – Our training subscription gives you unlimited access to our online LMS for one year, as well as participation in webinars and custom training sessions.

Extensive Knowledgebase – We've developed a vast library of FAQs, guides, videos, white papers, infographics, webinars and articles to help you get the most from our products.

Superior Support – Our team has a 96% CSAT and has been voted the people's favorite in the industry. They can be reached via email, phone or web with coast-to-coast coverage hours.

With 3,000+ active installations, hundreds of thousands of screens and millions of viewers, Visix has the experience and passion to help you communicate better.

How to Get Started

We're here to answer any questions you have. Our team is happy to schedule a complimentary software demo to discuss your specific needs and pricing options.



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