



Employee Engagement in the Digital Workplace

DIGITAL SIGNAGE WHITE PAPER



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The New Workforce

The work landscape has changed significantly in the past decade or so. Smartphones and widespread internet access has trained people to get information digitally delivered, on demand - wherever they are and whenever they want it. The largest generation in the workforce, millennials, grew up with the internet, which has shifted their expectations and priorities to be quite different than those of their parents, and technology is behind a lot of what drives that. And it's worth noting that their children, called Generation Z or iGen, are growing up with smartphones and tablets, and they will be even more technology-focused than their parents.

As a result of this shift in expectations, the communications industry is now focusing on creating a more *consumer-like experience* for everything, from retail advertising to internal corporate communications. The idea is that the more communications efforts align with the way people are used to getting their information, the more they will use that channel, and the more "loyal" they will become.

Individualism

The mobile digital communications revolution has also made access to information customizable and personalized. Just look at five people's smartphones – none of them will have their home screens arranged in the same way, and different people prefer different apps. Successful communication strategies now incorporate ideas from User Experience Design (UX, UXD, UED or XD – a term originally for human-computer interaction design), and also from what's known as CX, or Customer Experience.

Social media has also had a massive impact on expectations. While urban dwellers use social networks the most, even more than 50% of rural residents use them (see Pew's [recent report](#)). A lot of the time you see someone staring at their phone screen, they are waiting for reactions to posts or pictures or videos they've shared. This has created a psychological need for instant feedback, which is something organizations need to start supplying steadily in order to engage these new workers and managers.

Impact

And millennials that aren't engaged will simply leave the company for another one (and Gen Z are even more social media focused than millennials, as [this article](#) at We.Are. Social notes). Perhaps because of such an intense interest in being part of a larger community, these two generations also feel that it's important to work for organizations that give back in some way – through sustainability efforts, volunteerism, charity work and so on. They also want more flexibility at work and the option to work from home (or elsewhere) at least some of the time.

We are seeing change at an unprecedented scale and rate, and organizations that respond quickly will thrive, while those that don't will get left behind. Tools that organizations can use for digital engagement include intranets, chat rooms, messaging software, discussion forums, internet blogs and videos, social networks, tracking and CASE software (for example, an online help desk) and digital signage.

Of these, digital signage is perhaps the most powerful tool in an organization's arsenal – it's reach is wide, it's flexible and responsive, and can drive traffic to other communication portals. A combination of all these technologies makes up the modern digital workplace, which is where all competitive organizations are headed.

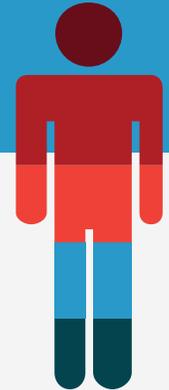
YOU SHOULD KNOW

- Today's workers want more flexibility at work and sense of community
- 54% say that a strong sense of community kept them at a company
- 78% of millennials see workplace quality as important when deciding where to work
- 33% of employees say the ability to collaborate makes them more loyal
- Millennials that aren't engaged will simply leave one company for another

Infographic: 7 Ways to Use Corporate Communications Technology Better

7 WAYS TO USE CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY BETTER

When employees feel engaged and included, they have a greater commitment to getting the job done, trust managers' decisions more readily and have higher morale. This lets your organization run more smoothly and increases productivity. Here are seven tips to better use technology tools for corporate communications:



1

EMAIL

According to Reuters, US Workers spend 3.2 hours devoted to work emails each day. That's a tremendous amount of time, so your messages need to be streamlined and spot on:

- Write a clear, concise and meaningful subject line
- Start with the most important info and then give details
- Keep paragraphs short, use section headers and bullets
- Bold or highlight deadlines, or use email program reminders
- Only mark messages High Importance if it's truly urgent
- Proofread to see if you can shorten an email, and use spellchecker
- Don't CC, BCC or Reply All unless absolutely necessary



US Workers spend
3.2 HOURS
devoted to work emails
EACH DAY



3

VIDEOCONFERENCING

Videoconferencing helps people feel more connected than an email or phone call, and 94% of businesses that utilize videoconferencing say it increases productivity. (Wainhouse Research)

- Always test the technology prior to the conference
- Look directly into the camera as often as possible
- Make sure that all participants are close to the microphone
- Do not hold side conversations or rustle papers close to the mic
- Call on individuals to avoid cross-talk and interruptions



94% of
businesses that utilize
videoconferencing say it
increases productivity

2

INTRANETS

Your intranet should be a one-stop shop where employees can find what they need quickly and easily:

- Keep the design clean and simple, within your brand standards
- Make sure navigation is straightforward, and have a search option
- Show what's new at the top of the homepage for quick reference
- Consider using a database or library plug-in for documents
- Make sure your site design is responsive for mobile devices



4

DIGITAL SIGNS

Digital signage allows you to engage people across your organization to reinforce culture, boost morale, increase effectiveness and foster inclusion. Content management software lets you publish compelling communications across your entire organization from a central source:

- Keep messages short and sweet, with eye-catching designs
- Deliver the right content to the right screen, at the right time
- Retire old messages and keep your screens fresh to attract viewers
- Consider using interactive screens to improve the experience



5

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is already an established public communications tool, but a growing number of companies – more than half surveyed in a Towers Watson report – are leveraging social networks for internal communications:

- Use the social networks your employees already use
- Post a blend of corporate and employee content
- Enable networking across all hierarchies and locations
- Publish policies so people know the do's and don'ts

6

COLLABORATION SOFTWARE

Collaboration isn't just a buzzword – it's a bottom-line imperative. These software tools let teams manage tasks and collaborate on projects in real time:

- Make sure the tool is accessible online for people on the go
- Exploit all features – task lists, timelines, document libraries, conferencing
- Take advantage of checklists and progress graphs
- Appoint a team leader and clarify who can overwrite changes



7

SCHEDULING SOFTWARE

Meetings are a big part of business. To keep spaces and staff organized, you need a good scheduling tool and guidelines in place. Apps like Microsoft Exchange and Google Calendar let everyone in your company see availability and book rooms with a few clicks:

- Use a calendar app that everyone can access
- Give people details on what's in each room
- Publish policies and event naming conventions
- Send meeting reminders 24-hours in advance



Over 50% of
companies are leveraging
social networks for internal
communications

Progressive Engagement

Digital signage can help modernize your employee communications to match your progressive culture. By reinforcing benefits and perks available to your workforce, you can increase their happiness and productivity, and make sure everyone gets the information they need, when they need it, no matter where they are. Today, more than ever before, getting employees engaged and boosting morale are major priorities for organizations that want to keep up with the times.

Morale

A happy workforce not only stays in the job longer, but is more productive. You can increase morale by remembering birthdays and work anniversaries, celebrating births, marriages and milestones, and recognizing individuals and teams for achieving goals and meeting targets. A pat on the back put on big screens for all to see will make people feel good about the work they do.

Workers say that recognition directly impacts their happiness and the [overall quality of their work](#). Generation Xers are very concerned with things seeming fair, and with transparency in their workplace. Millennials especially need frequent feedback on performance, and values-based recognition helps get them through the drop in engagement that usually follows their first-year anniversary on the job.

Reminding people of how the company takes care of them also boosts positive feelings towards an employer. Digital signs showing information on benefits programs and perks, as well as enrollment deadlines, reminds everyone of what they get out of working for you besides a paycheck.

Perks

It's the little things that add up and make people happy to be where they are, doing what they're doing. Employees say perks matter – [more than half say they'd trade certain perks for salary increases](#). And perks are also a major factor in recruitment – over half of adult workers say that perks are “very” to “moderately” important when considering a new job.

For all of your perks, digital signage is there to spread the word. With displays at high traffic points, you can make sure the maximum number of people see your messages and are reminded of all the extras that make working for you worthwhile. Even if a particular employee doesn't take advantage of all of your offerings, just knowing that they have those options is a morale booster.

Kids

Maternity leave is a legal requirement in many places, but modern companies also offer paternity leave for fathers. As the kids get older, having on-site daycare helps make employees' lives quite a bit easier.

Many companies are going even further – at Spotify, they offer a month of flexible work schedules to parents returning from leave, and they pay for egg freezing and fertility assistance. Facebook offers new parents \$4,000 in Baby Cash when they have a newborn, and Zillow will pay for overnight shipping of a new mother's breast milk if she is traveling for work.

At-Work Incentives

Many companies are offering all sorts of micro-incentives to make their workers want to be there and feel appreciated. These include:

- Free snacks
- Catered lunches
- On-site chair massages and acupuncture
- Allowing dogs at work
- Free car washes and oil changes
- Board games and video game rooms
- Nap rooms

Outside-Work Incentives

Some companies go beyond the workplace and offer perks to make their employees' lives easier outside the office, such as:

- Home maid services
- Monthly transit passes
- Gym membership reimbursement
- Pet insurance
- Concierge services
- Student loan payment relief
- Paid time off for volunteer work

When a perk involves a specific location in your facility – such as a game room or massage – you can use your digital signage to let workers schedule those spaces. Room signs are small displays that integrate with your office calendar app, so employees can schedule time in a space and management can track who uses the rooms, when and how often.

Wellness

The new buzzword in Human Resources is “wellness.” Health issues have become very important to modern people, and many companies are responding by offering health risk assessment programs, nutrition education, tobacco cessation programs, running clubs, health coaching, and sponsoring mobile farmer’s markets, in-house chair massages and more.

Digital signage is an optimal way to promote these programs, but you can do even more. Display tips and tricks, healthy recipes, and coupons from local vendors specializing in wellness. Give advice for allergy and hay fever sufferers. Show videos about the benefits of various exercises. You can even run contests where you solicit your workers for their own tips and tricks.

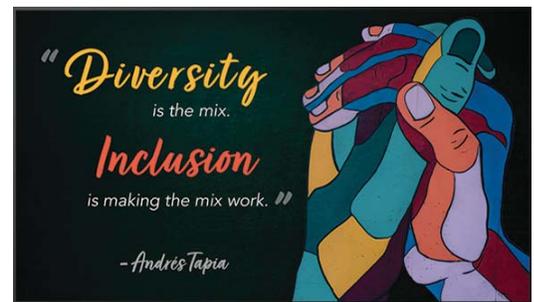
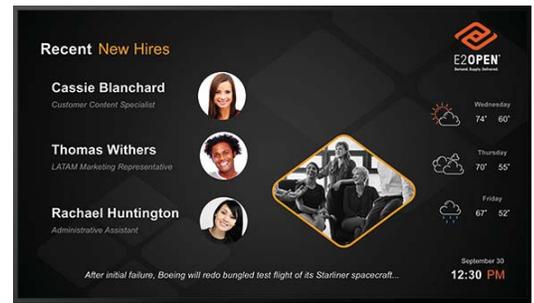
Flexibility

Flex hours are becoming more and more popular, especially among millennials or parents with daycare issues. Many workers today find this to be one of the most important perks a company can offer. This means that people will be coming through your facility at all hours and, while their managers may be out for the day, your digital signage is always there to relay news and messages.

Because digital signage is generally web-based, it allows you to connect geographically separated locations, and ensure the right people are getting the information you want them to, no matter where they are.

You can publish digital signage playlists to your intranet for remote offices or workers at home. And even people on the road can get a feed on their laptops or mobile devices so they don't miss important announcements. Your signage can follow your employees to wherever they are.

Creating a supportive infrastructure for your employees is the key. Workplaces have changed since the innovations of the early DotCom era, and employers are responding in the way they attract and retain talent by modernizing their offices and offerings.



Remote Engagement

The average desk costs \$10,000 a year, so wasted space can cost you a fortune annually, and optimizing space usage can be a key factor in a business's success. The [Staples Workplace Index](#) finds that 59% of millennials believe flexibility will increase their productivity and 49% say it increases their happiness; [Randstad](#) says that 19% of millennials and Gen Z taken together say flexibility is the most important workplace benefit. But flexibility isn't just how the office is physically configured – it's about using technology to the fullest to allow employees a greater degree of freedom than they've ever known before. With people always on the go, using web-based digital signage to support mobile technology and telecommuting makes more and more sense.

Some of this is perception – being seen as a leader in current technology trends. [Adobe](#) says that 85% of employees who feel their company's technology is ahead of the curve say they love their jobs, and [Sungard](#) says 36% of employees would leave their current job for an employer who is more "digitally progressive".

Not that long ago, that meant email, but email is not used much by younger workers, especially once they leave the office. In fact, [Samanage](#) finds that a full one-fifth of all workers feel negative feelings toward receiving emails outside of work. And when employees do check email, they increasingly do so on their mobile devices – that same study says almost one in four US adults receive company emails on such devices.

BYOD Signage

Not only are more people connected to the web than ever before, but more and more of them are connected with mobile devices – smartphones, tablets, laptops, and wearable computing such as smartwatches. That means there are lots of additional screens being looked at inside and outside of your organization. Each of these can be part of a BYOD digital signage system, no matter who your audience is.

- Recent studies show a huge increase in the use of mobile computing devices:
- 68% of American adults now own a smartphone and 45% have tablets
- Mobile devices are now being used more often than desktop computers
- 60% of people worldwide use their mobile device as their primary internet access
- Over half of all e-commerce traffic comes from mobiles devices
- 76% of millennials (people between 18 and 34) own a smartphone, and 87% of them say they always have their devices within arm's reach
- 20% of adults say they would rather give up their computer for one week than their smartphone (21% would give up their shoes and 22% would give up their toothbrush)

Employers are gradually adapting to using mobile technology to communicate, and they should because that's what employees want. [The Economist Intelligence Unit](#) reports that employees who rated their employers as "pioneers" in supporting mobile tech were 16% more productive, 18% more creative, 21% more loyal and 23% more satisfied.

The thing about mobile is that it can be accessed from anywhere, and a lot of modern workers are beginning to ask if they even need to come in to the office at all to do their jobs. According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), almost one-quarter of all workers did either some or all of their work from home in 2015. [Leadership IQ](#) finds that only 24% of desk-bound workers say they "love" their jobs, compared with 38% of mobile workers and 45% of telecommuters. This is especially true of parents. [Flexijobs](#) says that a whopping 98% of parents say having a job with flexibility, including the option to work sometimes from home, would have a positive impact on their lives. And the same is true of the fastest growing segment of the workforce – millennials. [Deloitte](#) finds that 75% of millennials would prefer working from home, but only 43% even have the option to.

One barrier to telecommuting is the perception that when people work from home, they don't really work. In fact, the opposite is true – [The Harvard Business Review](#), [The Society for Human Resource Management](#), [Hubstaff](#) and many others find that people working from home are more productive than those working in the office (they even work when they are sick). Another objection is that telecommuting workers will feel disconnected from work. This is where your digital signage can help.

Publish Direct

If you have a web-based content management system for your digital signage, people can contribute messages from anywhere, simply by logging into a URL. That means mobile employees and managers can still contribute to your communications, even if they're not in the office.

A lot of content management systems let you send messages directly to desktops and smartphones using add-on apps in Microsoft Teams or other collaboration tools. If you can integrate with apps your team is already using, you'll extend your reach.

Drive to the Web

Publish your digital signage messages on a webpage so people can get your content even when they aren't physically in your space (like when they're working from home). If possible, publish your message playlists as HTML5 feeds that people can view on your intranet, or from a direct link that you can share in messengers and email. Make HTML5 messages interactive by letting people click out to a URL for more info.

QR codes on your in-house messages can encourage people to go out to your webpage, or a separate dedicated URL that offers further information on the topic or event (this also helps you track ROI for specific messages.) People can then reference the information they saw even when they're not in your facility.

Mobile Wayfinding

You may have interactive wayfinding or maps on digital signs, but what happens when they walk away from the screen? Creating apps that allow people to interact with your organization as they move through it can get much more personalized.

Bluetooth-enabled devices can automatically trigger content being pushed to their mobile devices just by walking past a sensor. Wayfinding apps can send directions directly to someone's smartphone or tablet, with turn-by-turn directions and pictures of landmarks to help guide them on their way. A geofence can send a prompt to download the app for first time visitors, or automatically activate the app on a device that already has it.

Have a BYOD Policy

If you're going to give your audience the option of getting additional content on their personal devices, publish a simple, clear policy. Make sure their access is password protected, with a password they choose themselves. Require a strong password (minimum six characters with numbers and upper- and lower-case letters). Consider requiring passwords to be changed every 90 days, to keep things secure.

You want to make sure they check the feed regularly, so make sure to include action items and keep the content fresh and lively. You can even create a playlist just for them, with messages that are specific and relevant to remote employees.

If the concept of the office now includes remote locations, the concept of digital signage can do the same. Remember that literally anything with a screen can be a digital sign.

The Digital World

We aren't all walking around with computers in our bodies yet, but the lines between the physical and digital worlds are blurring faster and faster, so much so that it might make sense to talk about a new hybrid digital world.

There's a term in use about this change – *digital disruption*. This term describes the changes that occur when new technologies and business models affect the perceived benefits of goods and services that already exist. Examples of recent disruptions include Uber (disrupting the taxi industry), Netflix (changing the way video and on-demand content is delivered), Airbnb (affecting the hotel market) and Skype (the world's largest phone company). An [article by SiliconRepublic](#) makes the interesting point that none of these companies actually own any physical assets – they simply use digital technologies to facilitate their services. Yet they operate in the real, physical world.

Infographic: 10 Reasons for a Digital vs. Physical Workplace

10 Reasons for a Digital vs. Physical Workplace

To attract and engage modern employees, you need to rethink your approach to the workplace and the technologies your people use to communicate and produce. Here are 10 statistics proving employees favor digital solutions...



Employers rated by employees as "pioneers" in supporting mobile technology saw **better productivity (16%), creativity (18%), satisfaction (23%) and loyalty (21%)**



85% of employees who feel their company's technology is ahead of the curve say they love their jobs



At **\$10,000 per desk** each year, wasted space costs you a fortune



24% of workers do either some or all of their work at home



36% of employees say they would leave for a job with a more "digitally progressive" employer



59% of millennials say flexibility will improve productivity, **49%** say it'll improve their happiness



19% of both Gen Z and millennials say flexibility is their most important workplace benefit



75% of millennials would prefer to work from home or other locations where they feel they could be most productive (only 43% currently are allowed to)



45% of telecommuters say they love their jobs, compared to 38% of mobile workers and 24% of employees who worked every day in their offices



98% of working parents believe that having a job with flexibility would have a positive impact on their overall quality of life

Rather than being a disruption, this is really more of a *digital opportunity*. The ubiquity of technology has made it possible to communicate with more people in more interesting ways than ever before in human history. Agility is key for modern-day businesses and organizations. If you can't keep up with the changes happening right now, then you will fall behind. That's why it's vital to take a bit of a long view and think about what's coming down the line in the near future.

To do that, you also have to take a quick look at the past: the World Wide Web was invented in 1989 by Tim Berners-Lee, introduced to the public in 1991 and took off in 1995; computers got smaller and faster, mobile phones started becoming commonplace in the mid to late 90s (as did broadband networks). Wi-Fi was introduced in 1998, cloud computing really started in 2006, and smartphones exploded onto the market in 2007. Today, three-fourths of Americans own a smartphone (which is predicted to rise to over 80% by 2022), and rely on it for everything for work, private and social life.

Tech Tools

Forbes contributor [Gil Press](#) recently outlined a summary and analysis of Forrester's report "[Top Technologies for Digital Predators, 2017](#)", which includes a chart showing four types of technological systems and the scope of change they initiate. We have things like insight platforms, security automation, customer journey analytics, and personal identity and data management giving companies that use them a major advantage over their competitors. Whole industries are being changed right now with the increase of cloud-native app platforms, real-time interaction management, edge computing and IoT analytics (the Internet of Things used to analyze patterns of data for market insights).

And the world as we know it will change drastically with hybrid wireless networks, interactive digital environments like augmented and virtual reality, cognitive computing models and artificial intelligence, intelligent agents (AI-like solutions that interact with users and learn their behavior, even making decisions for them) and IoT software solutions that map the physical world into a detailed digital one, with connected devices constantly talking to one another everywhere.

All these new tools are blurring the lines between the digital and analog worlds. These technologies are not just ideas – they are coming now, and will most likely be commonplace within ten to fifteen years. By the middle of this century, everything we do, everything we interact with, will get communicated to a vast, world-encompassing mind-like digital system of intelligent programs that will use our past behavior to guess what we want next, and offer it to us before we even know we want it. By the end of the century, this will be so pervasive and commonplace that people will wonder how on earth others survived without this technologically-networked system (much how, in 1999, we looked back at the pre-automobile era and wondered how people survived with just horses and trains for travel).

Human Focus

And while much of this upcoming change is digital, it's really about people. Organizations are not going to become soulless places where people are some sort of hindrance to the efficient workings of technology. Instead, the offices, schools and other facilities people spend time in (either physically or online) will become communities in themselves, and not just tied to a single venue. What is most important for organizations today, at the beginning of all this change, is to see this as a real opportunity to humanize their offerings. Corporate culture needs to become human-focused – that is the real meaning of a digital-savvy organization in the 21st century.

To remain relevant to their audience, organizations need to start embracing the blurring lines of the emerging digital world, even encouraging it. How can organizations today cope with this sea change? How can they begin to humanize their environments and culture? One answer already exists in the lobby, in the corridors, in the cafeteria – digital signage.

User Experience

Digital signage is everywhere your audience is. Hopefully, they're used to getting valuable information from your screens, and techniques such as [gamification](#) and limited-time offers keep them engaged and following your calls to action. But you want to take it further – strive to provide a one-stop immersive signage source for your communications. Aggregating information that's popular, and using interactivity can provide more personalized signage, where they pick and choose the content that interests them most. Everything should focus on the user experience.

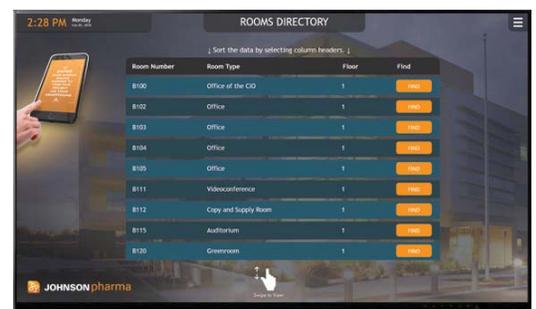
Using online content means pushing information that's already on the web or network to your displays, through the use of RSS feeds, webpages, and real-time data – information like local weather and traffic, as well as internal metrics displayed as easy-to-read graphs and charts. Social media feeds are another way to bring part of your online presence to your digital signs. And you can also get people to interact with your online offerings by using short URLs and QR codes that take people to a dedicated webpage for more information.

An easy-to-use interactive interface let's people sift through enormous amounts of information quickly and intuitively. If you have interactive touchscreens, people can simply open a browser window with the touch of a button right there at the display. They can view webpages specifically built to be used in conjunction with your digital signs (so you can control exactly the information available, as well as track how many people take advantage of the online information), or fill out forms, surveys and questionnaires, see training videos, etc. You can even ask them to post on your social networks, and they'll see their comments immediately on the big screen.

Basically, we need to stop thinking of digital signage and these emerging technologies as a push system. They aren't. These are tools to help people communicate across boundaries and are becoming another facet of everyday life.

You want to create an environment that immerses your audience in your organizational culture and offers rich and deep information for them to choose from and interact with. And as the technology evolves, the people who use it also evolve. You want your digital signage and communications – both internal and external – to evolve as well.

That's how organizations of all types can turn digital disruption into digital opportunity, and remain at the cutting edge as the digital and physical worlds continue to blend into a digical one.



Bridging Online and Offline

This is a time when you can literally look up Academy Award winners in the 1990s while standing on top of a mountain, or make restaurant reservations while out on a boat in the middle of a lake. Yet despite dire predictions that we would all become disconnected from one another, all this connectedness actually makes people want more real-world interactions.

Back at the dawn of virtual reality research, college students who spent hundreds of hours immersed in digital worlds for a study then found themselves hungering for physical human interaction, becoming more interested in campus clubs and groups, and attending more events and parties.

Organizations today already have a website and social media pages, at the very least, in addition to a physical location. There's a lot of talk on the web about the "integrated customer experience" or the "holistic customer experience" or "cross-channel" strategies, and this is usually about how to increase brand awareness and loyalty in an effort to boost sales. But getting people to get together in real-time has multiple advantages beyond just revenue streams.

For a school or university, students bond together according to mutual interests to create a vibrant and appealing campus culture; at a company, employees who feel engaged and that their work environment offers variety are happier and work harder.

If a lot of people are dog owners, consider holding a PoochFest, where people can bring their dogs to your facility and talk with other dog owners. There can be treats, contests, a talent show and more dog-related fun. While people are there, they'll see your digital signs, which has messages specifically targeted to them and their interests.

If you want to increase the number of likes on your page, advertise it on your digital signs. You can even gamify this for a short time, encouraging your employees or students to get their friends on board by offering a prize for everyone in your organization if a defined number of new likes are reached in a certain time frame.

If you have an interest in increasing traffic at your facility, and exposing a wider audience to your digital signage messages, advertise on the web and your social media that there's something extra on your screens. In the example above of the food event, write a post saying there's a special extra ingredient list on your digital screens, and people should come in to get it. And this works in reverse as well – create a message on your screens that tells people to get something extra from your social media page.

Unique Experiences

People love surprises. There's an art movement that started in New York City where poets write short poems and replace labels in second-hand clothing with them – so the purchaser one day finds this completely unexpected surprise in their new favorite shirt. Another group goes around crowded areas and compliments people.

There's a well-circulated story about a man who joked on Twitter about his favorite steakhouse bringing him a porterhouse at the airport when he arrived. They had been tracking use of their name on Twitter, saw the post, and delivered him a steak at the airport. He was completely surprised, and of course he posted about it. That's great PR for the steakhouse.

Think of ways to surprise and delight your audience. One great way is with scavenger hunts. If you want people to come to your facility, have the hunt there, with clues and hints on both your digital signs and your social media pages. If you're trying to get more people to use an underutilized park in the area, for example, then hold it there, with clues on social media but special extras available on your digital signs to reward those who come in.

User-Generated Content

The fact is, there are a lot of very creative people out there. Get them involved by encouraging them to come up with posts for social media and messages for your screens. They might even have ideas for offline events that would help your organization's reputation and the local community. Area businesses will be happy to participate, since they are also getting PR.

By creating offline experiences that bring people together, you help build community, brand recognition and brand loyalty. Using your digitals signage to promote events to those on-site, and your social media to promote things to people off-site, and to increase both audiences, leverages the tools you're already using. Combine all your efforts into a focused campaign that gets the word out and gets people together, across all platforms.

Collaborative Communities

Community in the workplace comes from many different directions – great coworkers, following a common mission, celebrating milestones, and opportunities to collaborate. In a collaborative working environment, employees feel valued and connected at work, which energizes them to do their very best.

The Stats

Collaboration is an important part of any successful business. Employees want it – according to [The Economist Intelligence Unit](#), 33% of employees say the ability to collaborate makes them more loyal. And loyal workers stay around longer, reducing the expense needed to replace someone. [Gusto](#) reports that 37% of employees say “working with a great team” is their primary reason for staying at a company, and 54% say that a strong sense of community kept them at a company longer than was in their best interest.

Infographic: 10 Reasons Collaboration is Key

10 Important Reasons Collaboration is Key



To attract and engage modern employees, you need to rethink your approach to the workplace and the technologies your people use to communicate and collaborate. Here are 10 statistics showing why collaboration is so important...

75%

of employers rate team work and collaboration as “very important”, yet only **18%** of employees get communication evaluations at their performance reviews.

39%

of surveyed employees believe that people in their own organization don't collaborate enough

37%

of employees say “working with a great team” is their primary reason for staying

33%

of employees say the ability to collaborate makes them more loyal

97%

of employees and executives believe lack of alignment within a team impacts the outcome of a task or project

86%

of employees and executives cite lack of collaboration or ineffective communication for workplace failures

33%

of millennials want collaborative workspaces

78%

of millennials see workplace quality as important when choosing an employer

49%

of millennials support social tools for workplace collaboration

54%

of employees say a strong sense of community (great coworkers, celebrating milestones, a common mission) kept them at a company longer than was in their best interest

Sources:
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www.brynjolfa.com/blog/ok-company-culture-of-collaboration
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Millennials certainly want and expect collaboration. [Mercer](#) has a survey on Absence Management which says that 78% of millennials see workplace quality as important when deciding where to work, and a full third say they actively want collaborative spaces.

Yet [Queen's University](#) in Charlotte, NC finds that 39% of employees believe that people in their organization don't collaborate enough. They also say that, while 75% of employers say teamwork and collaboration are both "very important", only 18% of employees get communication evaluations in their performance reviews.

When it comes to millennials, Queen's find nearly half of them want and expect social tools for workplace collaboration. [Salesforce](#) says that 97% of both employees and executives think "lack of alignment" within a team directly impacts the outcome of a task or project, and 86% say workplace failures are mainly caused by lack of collaboration or ineffective communication.

Collaborative Signage

Companies with digital signage already know that it's one of the most powerful tools they have for both widespread and targeted communications within the organization. But can it also help with collaboration?

An article by [Forbes](#) lists 12 habits of success factors used by collaborative organizations:

1. They lead by example
2. They focus on individual benefits as well as corporate ones
3. They work on strategy before developing technology or systems
4. They get out of the way and trust their employees
5. They listen to employees
6. They have integrated collaboration into workflows
7. They create a supportive environment
8. They measure what matters
9. They are persistent
10. They adapt and evolve
11. They recognize that collaboration also benefits the customer
12. They understand that collaboration can make the world a better place

There's a lot written about the benefits of collaboration, and how to foster it. [American Express](#) likens small businesses to superhero teams – company expectations and goals are communicated and set, a creative atmosphere exists, and people know one another and build cohesion through leveraging team member strengths.

[Nutcache](#) says collaboration not only makes happier employees who will stay with a company longer, but promotes self-analysis, results in problem-solving, develops employee skills, and makes things go more efficiently and faster. [Ingram Micro Technology Solutions](#) adds that companies that collaborate are more flexible, and collaboration speeds up onboarding of new employees as well as allowing remote or telecommuting workers to participate in real time.

Digital signage can help with all of these things. It's pervasive on site, and a web-based platform allows a company to extend their messages to mobile devices and remote locations. Meeting room signs let a company convert static locations in the office into dynamic workspaces where collaboration can happen.

It's all about the messages that get displayed on the screens. Putting messages about the company goals and mission in the playlist reminds people to look at the bigger picture. When the company has a success, or an impact in the world outside the organization, that information can also go up on screens to show people that what they're doing matters and give them a sense of accomplishment.

Individuals and teams can be recognized company-wide for their achievements and innovations. Graphically displaying real-time data shows current progress towards team goals and can influence behavior immediately.

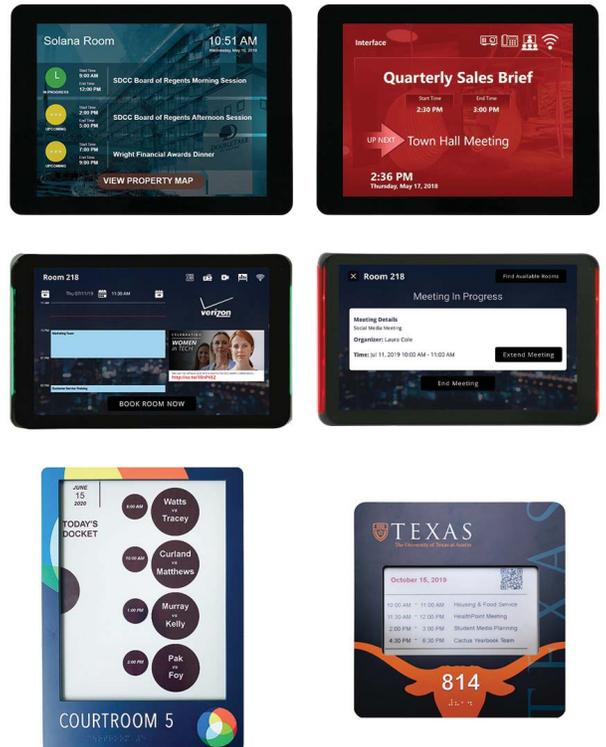
Digital signage is more than just messages, however. It can be integrated into training programs – messages can show tips and “trivia” questions relevant to the company and needed skills. Interactive touchscreens can be self-service training centers themselves, with multi-layered information available whenever an employee has the time.

Collaborative Spaces

In the workplace itself, employees don’t have to be tied to their desks. Many companies are experimenting with a variety of innovative workspaces, like hoteling desks (for people who come in rarely or only need a physical space for a short time), huddle spaces and standing zones (spaces where a few people can spontaneously get together for a quick collaborative session, video zones (booths or small rooms that are set up for videoconferencing with remote workers or clients), casual spaces (like lounges or on-site cafes, where people can relax and work at the same time, and run into one another casually, fostering creative interactions).

Meeting rooms signs can make reserving such spaces fast and easy. They’re tied to the company’s calendaring system, so any reservations made or cancelled are automatically updated everywhere. There are no double bookings, are people don’t have to wander around looking for a free space to meet and collaborate – a quick look at the screens tells them what’s available. EPS room signs are wireless, so they can be moved anywhere they’re needed, like hoteling desks or video zones, to show reservations.

If a company already has digital signage, it just takes a little work to start creating a collaborative atmosphere, where collaboration is the norm rather than the exception. For an organization thinking of purchasing a digital signage system, these considerations should be part of the planning process, so the workplace becomes a flexible and innovative place on day one of the deployment.



Enterprise Signage

Even though digital signage can be as simple as a laptop playing a PowerPoint slideshow hooked up to a single display, its real advantage is that it’s designed to reach large audiences. Some organizations spread out over multiple floors, multiple buildings or even multiple geographical locations. When you are operating at that scale, the basics just won’t do the job as well as a robust content management system with enterprise features can. The key at the enterprise level is to focus on communications strategy combined with efficiencies.

Scalability

The goal these days is to create a more consumer-like experience for your audience, which means a more customizable experience. More and more people want and expect to be able to interact with the information around them, and features such as touchscreen kiosking can allow people to decide what to interact with and how. This is today’s signage trend and represents a kind of scalability. For example, you probably have a weather widget showing current weather information for the area. A way to scale that up for the consumer is to allow them to simply tap an icon and expand out to a five- or seven-day forecast.

Another type of scalability is, of course, the size of your physical network and deployment. But there’s also the number of people who can use the system – people who create and schedule content, develop longtail campaigns, and help create more customizable experiences for your audience.

Enterprise features such as integration with Active Directory can help streamline passwords and security as more and more people are given access to the system. User rights and roles can also be clearly defined in advance, so no mishaps occur, and people only see what they need to in order to accomplish their tasks.

Interoperability

This is the ability to connect to multiple data sources, importing information in a hands-off manner. Integration with live data sources like event calendaring software, weather feeds, news headlines, social media and other on-site systems is vital if you want to have accurate information available in real-time for your audience. You can also import data from Excel spreadsheets and XML for dynamic data sets, as well as pull in webpages and other web-based content.

Pulling in data from various sources is a more efficient model than having someone go out, gather the information, create a message and then schedule it. Showing data from auto-updating feeds saves time and keeps your content up-to-the-moment fresh and accurate. You can drastically increase the number of data you make available without putting undue stress on your content creation and management team.

Large digital signage deployments can also benefit from tools such as daypart scheduling that lets you better target audiences by showing the right message at the right time.

Extensibility

You want to be able to expand your system in a way that's not disruptive to legacy systems; no one wants to have to start from scratch every year or two. Widgets and apps are a great way to add on what you want without disrupting what you already offer. (Very much like a smartphone or tablet.) The push to create a more consumer-like experience for people includes your own staff as well as your audience.

A widget is a tool within your content management software that performs a task automatically, all the time. Things like date and time, local weather, and RSS feeds are often handled with widgets. Widgets can also handle data mapping to things like spreadsheets and calendars, and asset importing for images, video, streaming feeds and webpages.

An app is a program that runs when you open it. Your content management system might have various apps available so that you can mix and match the features you want, without having to burden your staff with software they don't need. An example might be an alert app that lets you integrate your digital signage system with CAP-compliant triggers to augment and extend your alert system, even automating many of the steps involved in getting the word out quickly in a crisis.

Continuous Improvement

If you're running enterprise communications, you need to think about how you'll collect data on how people are using your system, how many of your calls-to-action are being followed, etc. This allows you to see exactly what is working and what isn't, and gives you the opportunity to improve along the way. Today we want to be constantly improving and adjusting our visual communications to be more and more effective, and for that you need good reporting tools.

You can solicit feedback from your audience to see what viewers respond to or want to see more of. You just need to make it easy – for example, an onscreen keyboard that lets people type in comments that are emailed to an administrator, or a quick multiple-choice survey people can access on touchscreens or via a dedicated webpage that you drive them to with a short URL or QR code. And all data, regardless of where it comes from, can also be shared among departments easily, further increasing interdepartmental communications and efficiencies.

Basically, the bigger your system, the more automated you want it to become. As part of a culture of continuous improvement, your people can spend their time on communications strategy instead of technical tasks. They can concentrate on how to enhance your offering, where and when to display certain types of messages, and which calls-to-action people follow. Then they can create beautiful, effective signage that attracts the eye and reinforces your message.

Infographic: 12 Steps to Engagement on Digital Signs

12 STEPS to **ENGAGEMENT** on DIGITAL SIGNS

Engagement is the goal of all communications, and digital signage gives you a vibrant, dynamic medium to grab attention and inform, educate and entertain your audience. For successful communications, you should concentrate on the user experience at every stage of planning, design and delivery. Here are 12 easy steps to help you ensure your signs are always engaging:



HAVE A DIGITAL SIGNAGE CHAMPION
If you don't have someone dedicated to making your signage a success, it will fall flat. Make sure you have at least one champion who strives to keep your visual communications dynamic.



CHOOSE WHEN TO ENGAGE
Don't send every message to every screen. Instead, display the right thing to the right audience at the right time by choosing your players based on viewers, and use daypart scheduling.



CRAFT BEAUTIFUL DESIGNS
If it's ugly, no one wants to look at it. Use branded templates, coordinated colors and vibrant images; and limit text in messages so the screen doesn't feel too crowded or confusing.



INCLUDE MOTION AND MOVEMENT
Motion attracts the eye, so make sure your screen has at least one thing moving at all times. Simple animated icons, message transitions and videos are an easy value-add for viewers.



USE ATTRACTORS
These are common things like date, time, weather and news headlines. People will check screens often for these items, and then they'll see your other messages alongside attractors.



SHOW WHAT THEY CARE ABOUT
Survey your audience to find out what they want on screens. Walk through periodically to see what catches people's eye. Build on successes and scrap the stuff no one looks at.



CHANGE LAYOUTS FREQUENTLY
Keep your screens dynamic by not only changing messages, but change where they appear on screen by shifting zones around in your layout. It will make the information look brand new.



LIMIT YOUR PLAYLISTS
Make your playlist match your audience. If your screen is somewhere people linger, you can show 20-30 messages. If your viewers are just passing by, keep it to 10 or under.



COMMUNICATE IN CAMPAIGNS
Instead of relying on a single message on screen for a few seconds at a time to get the point across, craft campaigns that tease, communicate and then reinforce a single communication.



GAMIFY YOUR MESSAGES
Put some fun into your messages by offering prizes for participation. Ask viewers to scan a QR tag, visit a website or snap a photo to excite your audience and provide instant ROI.



ALWAYS INCLUDE A CALL TO ACTION
You only know your signs are a success if you can measure ROI. Make sure you ask your viewer to do something once they've read your message – and make that action measurable.



MAKE IT INTERACTIVE
Communication is interactive. Either use touchscreens to provide a personalized viewer experience, or involve them by showing social media feeds and other screen sources they can contribute to.

Conclusion

The Information Age is upon us and it's a digital one. Organizations that recognize this, and adapt to the changing expectations and desires of their employees and well as their clients, will thrive. Since everyone is now a consumer of digital information, all information needs to be presented in a consumer-like way. That goes for everything from fire drills at a K-12 school to corporate board meetings at a multinational.

Digital signage is a constantly-evolving digital method of communication that is perfectly suited to large organizations with an eye to engaging their viewers for measurable results – easy to implement and update, and extremely flexible and scalable. Make sure your content management system has the features you need to streamline the day-to-day tasks, so you can focus on what matters – your audience.

Companies that invest in a system now will see benefits for years to come as millennials and their children, Gen Z, take on leadership roles and continue to push the boundaries of the digital world, and blur the lines between the online and the offline. The future is here. Now.

Want to learn more? Contact us at salesteam@visix.com