



Keys to Audience Engagement & Motivation

DIGITAL SIGNAGE WHITE PAPER

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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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Why Engagement Matters

Whether you're a company executive, HR professional, college dean or communications specialist, your highest priorities are education, morale and motivation. Engagement is the key to all of these.

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% higher return to shareholders. And according to Gallup, 70% of US workers don't feel engaged. That means we still have work to do.

According to 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

If you're at a college campus, hospital or local government, it's also important to foster a sense of community and improve the on-site experience for students and visitors through good communications, in addition to engaging your employees.

For your external audiences, better engagement can result in:

- Improved visitor experience
- Higher involvement
- Increased event attendance
- More retail sales
- Increased feeling of community
- Improved safety

Regardless of the setting, you want to boost morale, build trust and increase productivity. But this isn't only about making people feel included – this is a bottom-line imperative.

When employees see a direct connection between what they do every day and the company's goals, they have a greater commitment to getting the job done. When students and visitors feel more included, they'll actively participate in your activities and become more loyal to your organization.

To increase productivity and drive change, you need to ensure everyone understands how they affect the overall business and inspire them to reach your goals.

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Types of Engagement

You can have different goals for different audiences and the actions you want them to take.

Messages to your manufacturing floor may be very different than ones to your accounting department. If you're communicating with visitors or customers, your strategies will definitely be different for them than those for internal employees.

Here are some different types of audience engagement goals to consider, along with example communications you might use to achieve them:

- Inform – new policies, training, wayfinding and directions, weather and news
- Include – welcome visitors, new hires, birthdays and anniversaries
- Compel – benefits enrollment, social media participation, charity drives
- Motivate – employee rewards, stocks and profit-sharing, internal contests
- Recognize – company, team and individual achievements, safety benchmarks
- Warn – severe weather, fire and HAZMAT emergencies, security threats

No matter what you're trying to achieve with your communications, you need a system in place that ensures people will see and interact with your messages, and take action.



Why Digital Signage?

Digital signage is a great medium to deliver engaging communications because it's bright, colorful and dynamic. We're all conditioned to look at screens for information, so this is a natural fit for a modern communications system.

You can place screens at entrances, in gathering areas, near meeting rooms – anywhere you want to connect with your audience. Because you can show more than one thing on screens at a time, and multiple messages throughout the day, you can continually attract and engage viewers.

- Deliver more messages, more frequently
- Show a broad mix of digital content types
- Offer interactivity to engage users
- Control where and when messages play
- Improve safety with alerts
- Reduce paper and waste

This isn't to say that digital signage is the only medium you should use. The most successful communications platforms combine a variety of deliver methods, so audiences can access information how, where and when they prefer.

Keys to Engagement with Digital Signage

Slapping a screen on the wall and feeding messages to it doesn't guarantee your audience will respond. If you're going to use digital signage to engage your viewers, you'll need some understanding of how to craft compelling communications.

Use Attractors to Grab Attention

The first step is attracting attention. If your viewers don't look at the screens, you've missed an opportunity to engage them. Use attractors to make sure your audience is always interested in what's on your screens.

Show something new. We all walk by that poster from six months ago, and it's no different with digital signs. People will look for new information, and if they don't see it each time they tune in, they'll eventually tune out, possibly permanently.

Change layouts frequently. Moving things around on screen is a great way to catch the eye of passers-by. This is especially important if you have a standard playlist of messages that stays up for a day or two. Even though the content isn't changing, moving it around on screen can "trick" viewers into believing they're seeing something new so they pay attention.

Include visual hooks. Help your audience by giving them timely, relevant data on screens that they care about. As they become more reliant on your digital signs for this information, they'll tune in more frequently to see not only these items, and see your other announcements as well:

- Current time
- Day and date
- Weather (current and forecast)
- News headlines
- Social media feeds

Use auto-updating content. These are messages or ticker feeds that, after a one-time set up, update all on their own. This is great for your communications team, because it alleviates the burden of having to create these messages one-at-a-time every day. It's engaging for viewers, because they always get the most current information on screens.

- Event schedules
- Webpages and intranets
- SharePoint pages
- Excel and XML data
- Any RSS feed
- All items in the "visual hooks" list above



Target Viewers with Campaigns

Like all advertising, communications is about getting the right message to the right person at the right time. Also like advertising, a series of consistent communications works better than one-off messages. You need to think about who, how and where you want to engage your audience.

Launch campaigns. If you use a single message design to communicate something – no matter how many times you show it – it will become stale and viewers will tune out. Also, different people are attracted to different designs, so you want to use campaigns (the same message delivered in different forms) over a sustained period of time for message saturation.

Think long-tail. Long-tail theory says that around half your audience will respond quickly, but the other half will need more time to get around to it. So you need to start campaigns early.

Use teasers to peak interest before you launch your campaign, and try to tell a story to engage viewers, so they'll want to see what comes next.

If you're advertising an event, start at least two weeks before the event to give people time to see the message, decide to attend and take the next step (get details, purchase tickets, invite friends, etc.). And the same can be said for benefits enrollment, charity drives – anything that has a defined time period.

Deliver on target. Consider the type of audience you're appealing to, where they are and when they'll be there. You don't want to deliver your most important messages during off hours, and you don't want to show announcements for faculty to students who don't need them.

- Define audience demographics and interest
- Choose locations (geographical or individual screens)
- Plan around traffic flows

Reinforce your message. It's highly unlikely that you'll use digital signage exclusively for communications. You'll want to coordinate your campaigns across all channels – screens, websites, intranets, social media and print – to be sure you're consistent. This also helps with message saturation – people will see your communications in different places, which is reinforcing.



Design Beautiful Content

The best-planned campaign can be ruined by poor design. Good content means attractive, clear messages that grab attention, are easily understood and motivate people to do something.

Remember – this is not print! You can't use the same methods for screens that you do for newsletters or posters.

Start with the screen. You need to consider the aspect ratio and resolution of the design, where it will be on the screen and what else will be on screen with it. Also, will this be on just one screen or a bank of screens? If you have touchscreens, you have a whole set of design options open to you that don't exist for static screens.

- Horizontal or vertical
- Layout and juxtaposition
- Single display, group of screens or video wall
- Interactive or static design

Think about layouts. As we mentioned above, changing layouts can help attract attention. Change your layouts several times a day on every screen, so your audiences always see something new.

As always, you have to consider your audience. The faster they pass, the less you want on screen. If you have screens in a hallway, your viewers are on the move and need to be able to get the message at a quick glance. You can show more detailed layouts in waiting areas and lounges where your audience will be hanging around.

- Change layouts throughout the day
- Use both full-screen and multi-zone layouts
- Design layouts for the audience

Design clear messages. When you create messages for your campaigns, you'll want to use the basic rules for digital design. If you'd like more detail on these, download our white paper – *Design Standards for Digital Signage Content*.

- Good contrast and legibility
- Don't overcrowd the message with text
- Don't use too many images or fonts
- Understand colors and mixing
- Use focus techniques through placement of elements
- Preview your designs on a screen from 6-feet away



Call Your Audience to Action

You don't just want your audience to see communications, you want them to react to them in some way – sign up for something, attend an event, tune in for the webinar, share the info with a colleague or friend, or just learn more about the subject.

In order to motivate viewers to act, you need to include some clear direction in your messages, so they know how to get more information, take the next step or give feedback. By including a clear call to action in your message, your audience can engage with your communications and become part of the process.

It's great when your viewers participate, but can you report on just how successful your campaign was? You can if you include measurable ROI triggers.

If you can quickly count the number of times an action's taken, it's measurable. This lets you see how viewers reach to different motivations, so you can tailor future campaigns to meet their preferences. It also gives you great reporting data, so you can look at each campaign's progress and success measures.

Include message triggers. There are a lot of different measurable calls to action you can include in your message designs. We go into detail for these in our white paper – Why You Should Care About ROI – but here's the quick list:

- QR tags
- SMS response
- Smartphone snaps
- Interactive surveys and polls
- Social media
- Coupons or codes
- Designated URLs
- Bluetooth triggers

Use interactivity. Touching screens to get information is becoming commonplace – we do it every day with smartphones and tablets. And large touchscreens are becoming more ubiquitous for things like wayfinding and queuing systems.

As the price of touchscreens continues to drop, the technology continues to evolve. If you can include interactive kiosks or room signs, your audience will be motivated to use them because they're more fun than static screens. And because people have to interact with them (by definition), you can be sure your audience is participating in the communications process.



Think of it this way – anything that would work well as a webpage will probably work on a touchscreen. That doesn't mean you want to design your content like a webpage, but some of the same principles apply.

- You can provide more information on screen through multiple “pages”
- You can mix interactive and non-interactive elements
- Navigation should be clean and clear to the user

We have a whole white paper on this subject - *Get Interactive with Touchscreen Digital Signage Designs* – but here are some interactive designs you might consider:

- Wayfinding and directories
- Room booking
- Donor boards
- Menus and ordering
- Queuing systems
- Real-time shuttle mapping
- Building energy dashboards
- Archives and slideshows
- Info kiosks

No matter what industry you're in, you want your audience to feel engaged, inspired and included.

Whether you already have digital signage or want to launch a new system, Visix can help you to encourage collaboration, promote safety, recognize achievement and motivate action.

Go Remote

Remote work is here, and here to stay. So, every communicator has to be thinking about engaging remote employees and how they'll fold new tools, technologies and techniques into their strategy.

The fact is that if remote employees are happy, they'll spread the word. And if they aren't, they'll also spread that around as well. Or worse, they'll leave. Organizations that haven't embraced the digital workforce will need to adopt a new mindset and start thinking of remote work as the norm instead of an outlier.

Just as global firms have always had to knit their distributed workforce together, the same will become more and more common for companies of all sizes and types.

To keep remote workers engaged, you can publish your digital signage playlists to webpages, intranets, collaboration apps, or even embed a link to an HTML5 playlist in emails. This lets your remote audience choose the way they want to interact and engage with your messages, and bridges communications between your in-office and WFH workforce.



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