

# Is Content Still King?

Digital technology, says Mood Media, only works when the content strategy is right. So content must still be king when preparing digital media solutions.

**T**ouch screens, 3D, virtual reality, holographics, hand-held devices and more are all new technologies and all are entering the retail space! Over the past 12 months, Mood Media has seen growth in the demand for digital media across not only the retail sector but also traditional outdoor.

As leading retailers adopt these technologies, this company is especially keen to comment that if the content on these technologies is wrong, the solution just will not be as effective as if you get it right. So, in order to remain competitive, especially with the fight to attract, keep and retain customers in today's tough economic climate, getting your digital solutions right becomes more vital than ever.

As consumers, we expect to interact with digital signage networks as we shop and there are a number of factors driving this demand. Consumers are actually listening less to the commercial messages broadcast across more traditional media channels and are showing far more interest in digital content.

In 2009, Razorfish released its Digital Brand Study, reporting that digital brand experiences help to actually create new customers and, more importantly perhaps, it also helps to keep them. In fact, 65% of consumers reported in the survey that a digital brand experience has changed their opinion of that brand. And 97% of the consumers in the study stated that the digital experience influenced their purchasing decision.

We're also seeing significant improvements in technology, particularly as rule based software and intelligent dynamic content delivery continues to improve. Mood Media is more interested in these behind the scenes software developments that allow it to manage content strategies more robustly.

With some exciting developments in digital media and with new technologies showing no signs of abating, it's easy to get caught up in the 'wow' factor. And there's a danger in adopting technology for technology's sake: little consideration is actually given to the functionality of new technology; whether it will

meet objectives and ultimately, if it will deliver a return on investment.

## It pays to talk

Content strategies and discussions still need to dominate the adoption of any new digital media. If you don't think about what you want to communicate and how you wish to do it, you can't deploy the right technology to help you broadcast it!

No matter what shape or size a display may be, content is the fundamental element. It ultimately leads to the very success, or indeed failure, of a screen media or digital signage network. Digital content itself can come in many rich media formats but the messages conveyed must remain simple and most importantly, relevant to the experience and activities that customers engage with in-store.

Content should not be created in isolation! And that's important as it should always link to content that is used across other digital networks such as cinema, TV, PC and mobile. Your message also should be clear across every channel then you can be sure that the experience that consumers take away is good.

These types of experiences can also bridge on-line and mobile experiences with in-store digital media. Linking your on-line, commercial messages via social networks or posting discount codes, event invitations or even special offers is also a powerful means of promoting messages as consumers often check you out on-line, before even entering your store. Remember though, without compelling content in place when they get to store, your message is lost!

With over 70% of purchasing decisions being made in-store, the need is great to ensure that digital content is compelling and engaging customers. Engaging content, properly packaged across all media channels is vital but unless customers can see it, understand it and interact with it, that content has little value.

Mood Media has seen the engagement factor in digital signage take huge leaps in late 2009 with various implementations

including Nuffield Health's digital notice boards and telecommunication retailer SFR moving to a totally paperless and interactive digital format. ING has continued to roll out its digital network across 350 branches and leading retailer Carrefour is currently testing its digital concept in its City stores across France.

#### Cases in point

SFR, one of the top three French telecommunication operators has aggressive expansion plans, challenging French Telecom for the top position. This company understands media and communication and understandably wants to partner with a media solutions company that ensures SFR's brand and store experience is better than the competition.

With its six week promotion cycle, SFR needs digital communication tools that broadcast promotions, give consumers valued sales information and ultimately help increase in-store sales. New products and services are introduced every six weeks too. So the right content strategy is vital and the chosen technology has to work hard to support that. With Mood Media's solution, the technology and content are indeed working together, creating a truly digital retail experience.

Rexel has some 2600 outlets, boasting the largest international wholesaler of electronic equipment across Europe. Currently, the company has 250 stores in France alone. Rexel wanted to entertain and communicate directly with its customers while they waited, sometimes for up to 30 minutes, for their orders to be processed.

Content for Rexel had to promote brand image, give sales information and be easily updated. The resultant Rexel TV delivers a perfect mix of entertainment and advertising. And recent studies reveal that 90% of customers who watch it, find it a valuable



source of information. Rexel TV simply does not work without its content quality but it is also heavily reliant on good technology to deliver it.

Banking, insurance and asset management services hybrid ING Group primarily operates in the Benelux market arena. Other growth markets for it include Asia/Pacific, Europe and North America. ING recognised that retail spaces were investing in the shopping experience and that banking needed to do the same to ensure that consumers visited its branches.

ING's solution was to include digital media as part and parcel of its refurbishment programme in a concept that created an open branch feel. Customers can enter its branches without boundaries and interact with digital media as part of the services available. Its content strategy blended sales and entertainment 'info-mercials' and broadcast them through a hybrid of technologies: traditional digital signage CMS working with a queuing infrastructure. Notably, without either content or the technology working together in tandem, ING TV simply would not work.

#### Tip top considerations

So what do you need to consider when embarking on screen media or digital signage network technology?

Take a look at the type of content you want to display and consider whether it needs to be a mix of static images, motion graphics, RSS feeds, live TV, HD or more. Consider how many stores and screens you want to broadcast content to in store whether that content needs to be the same on each screen. Or do you want to show different content on different screens?

Managing content, including the ability to change and update it is important. Consider also whether you want or indeed need to remotely control content. Do you need to confirm when content has been played out on the system or on individual screens on a system?

On installation issues, you need to consider the location of displays and whether there are likely to be potential security issues. Can someone simply turn off a display, change channels or even tamper with or remove the player? On delivery, check that the planned or installed network system has the bandwidth to support digital signage traffic.

Finally, review exactly what you are trying to achieve with digital media, whether the system is for promotion, entertainment, increased sales or a better brand experience or a mix, for example, and double check that your content plans are on target to achieve your required results.

Regardless of how simple or complex you plan to make a digital solution, it's essential to ask that vital question: what content will I broadcast? Once you know, you can move on to the technology that best delivers it for you. Digital media has many benefits and ultimately should work to deliver a return on investment. Simply, we should not be implementing for implementation's sake.

When done right, and often the simplest of concepts work best, the benefits are there for the taking. But always remember, without compelling content in place, your message will get lost and customer experience will not benefit!

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