

Bolstering Engagement & Profits With Digital Displays

A White Paper – sponsored by LG Electronics Business Solutions

INTRODUCTION

Creating relevant content, generating experiences that captivate, ensuring effective consumption and communication – these formidable, crucial concepts are firmly embedded in the modern-day hospitality lexicon, and hoteliers are increasingly seeking opportunities to triumph with each one, ultimately boosting guest satisfaction, seeing increasing profits, and distinguishing themselves from the competition.

Digital displays, including wayfinding kiosks, menu displays and large video walls – all with their rich visual appeal and strong messaging component – **have emerged as one of the most powerful solutions that let hoteliers win “customer engagement” by providing the content, experiences and communications guests expect.**

Connecting with consumers on a digital level that resonates with them – whether by sharing information such as real-time news or sports, providing navigational assistance around a hotel or convention space, showcasing menu boards, or attracting them with the “wow” factor – can foster long-term guest loyalty and, as a result, lucrative revenue streams.

With its product portfolio and expertise, LG Electronics Business Solutions remains on the cutting-edge of digital solutions that positively enhance a hotel’s brand image, elevate the guest experience, and produce a return on investment.



CURATING CONTENT – CRAFTING THE MESSAGE

Digital displays serve multiple hospitality needs, but at the core, the ones that succeed are those carefully curated to either capture guests’ attention, prompt action, or fulfill a distinct need. **Within the framework of the creative expression afforded by digital display opportunities, content remains king because content drives customer engagement.**

Content management systems permit hoteliers to conceive targeted communications (and amend the messaging as necessary) and display real-time data from virtually any source. The ability to change-out content is extremely appealing because of the enhanced control it affords hoteliers in delivering information and experiences to guests. **The capacity to change what’s being displayed in seconds means quick decision-making and action, plus fresh content streams to keep customers engaged.**

LG’s ENGAGE web-based content management software for video walls works seamlessly regardless of the number of screens, which can run from two to 100. Visuals on video walls can even be divided among the number of screens to encompass direct messaging (such as timely and important announcements) and live television. For digital signage (such as wayfinding kiosks and menu boards), LG’s ENGAGEPHD is a content management solution that affords hoteliers the power, flexibility and convenience of easily swapping out content from any laptop, desktop, tablet or smart phone globally.



The vibrant video wall at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas (above and below).



MGM RESORTS INTERNATIONAL

MAKING DISPLAYS DYNAMIC

The message being conveyed through digital displays is paramount – it should be relevant and engaging for the audience – but **the medium through which that message is delivered is no less crucial. The more superior the quality of the technology, the more impactful and powerful the message and the resulting engagement.** What makes a first-rate, effective display?

- Picture quality – the glass panel itself (think of it as a digital canvas) on which the high-resolution images are featured
- Technology platform – and the power behind it
- Professional-grade, reliable equipment
- Superior technical services to rapidly assess problems (such as screens going down) and fix the system with minimal delay or negative impact on the guest experience

For enhanced picture quality, LG's VH7B (Clover) Video Wall (available in 49" and 55" screens) features what's considered the world's narrowest bezel (less than 2 mm), image gap reduction between multiple screens, and IPS panel technology – so the medium for the message delivers vivid imagery to spur audience response.

An often overlooked aspect of digital display quality is the architectural element – the strategic installation of displays relating to proper viewing angles. **Digital displays should be curated to the specific type of hotel so they are aesthetically pleasing, sensibly mounted with respect to where they'll be viewed from by consumers, and ultimately complement the space in which they live.** What is right for a convention center reception area or a large Las Vegas hotel isn't the right fit for a boutique or historical property.

Furthermore, the architectural aspect of digital display installation takes on new meaning as the trend of hotel

lobbies emerging as "living rooms" continues to rise across the globe. "Architects are designing lobbies that encourage guests to spend time there, and they are incorporating multiple lobby displays, which is compelling," noted Bob Combie, Vice President Asset Management, Sunstone Hotel Investors. "More design intent needs to be placed on how flat panels are installed."

A customized digital solution that incorporates a strong eye toward design is crucial for maximizing opportunities to connect with customers in a designated space.

VIDEO WALLS AS ATTRACTIONS

The multitude of screens that comprise a video wall craft an immersive experience – an impactful digital statement – that can drive customer behavior and satisfaction. **The vast potential of video walls encourages content creativity, inspiring hotels to consider different strategies for sharing information and propelling engagement.**

The team at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas has shown how the power of video walls combined with keen imagination has allowed the hotel to harness its multi-million-dollar digital infrastructure.

“In our 5,000-room hotel, it’s not a surprise to have some long check-in lines at particularly high periods. So, we developed a digital Twitter wall comprised of three 4’ x 4’ video walls with 55” screens in our lobby to take some attention off of the check-in and wait-time, and we put a promotion into action on New Year’s Eve several years ago,” shared Randy Dearborn, Vice President Multi-Media & Guest Technology, MGM Resorts International. “We gave the wall its own Twitter handle [@MGMLVideoWall], and encouraged live voting of what team will win, what fighter will win, your favorite song from an artist performing in the Grand Garden Area, what’s the best thing you saw at CES, etc.”

The Twitter screen was linked to the actual Twitter feed so people could follow the posts and interactivity. The customer response exploded. Responses were scrolling on the wall. Guests could see the percentage of live votes. And now, all the MGM properties in Las Vegas have Twitter and Instagram walls. Various hotel restaurants in the portfolio have started using the Twitter walls to promote instant promotions to consumers, and they’ve been largely successful. For them, it has been

the right platform and touch-point to inspire guests into action. And, positive engagement leads to heightened guest satisfaction.

Further tapping into the power of their digital signage ecosystem, MGM developed an effort to bolster ticket sales to one of its summer shows at the Mirage. It is about acquiring content and disseminating it accordingly. They promoted, via placement on screens throughout the hotel and the @MGMLVideoWall Twitter handle, that show tickets were hidden in the gift shop and asked guests to come seek them out. Within 15 minutes, 300 people were in the gift shop searching for tickets. And, within a 10-day period, 1,090 tickets were sold earning \$86,000 in revenue. The promotion was verbally tracked – people had to state “Summer” at the time of purchase to link back to the promotion.

Dearborn said that on the Las Vegas strip alone, he is responsible for 42,000 guest rooms, 350 food and beverage outlets, 450 retail outlets, three million square feet of convention space, one-and-a-half million square feet of casino floor, and two arenas, 15 theaters and shows. “We’ve spent millions in capital for the enormous digital infrastructure we’ve built, and the next step is to bring the true horsepower to it,” explained Dearborn. “The infrastructure is like a Ferrari idling in the garage. We’re just scratching the surface of how to leverage this machine.”

The need to update is a draw for a video wall solution. To make the National Pastime Sports Bar and Grill at the Marriott Gaylord National in Washington, D.C. more palatable, the hotel recently replaced its aging projectors with a video wall of 34 55” screens, successfully converting the space into one that’s energetic and stimulating.

Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre has taken the video wall concept to world-record heights. In 2013, the facility achieved the Guinness World Record for “Largest High-Definition Video Wall.” Known as the “Big Picture,” the now-iconic part of the convention space’s façade welcomes visitors, providing mesmerizing content on a huge scale. The video wall features 664 full high-definition LED screens (100 percent LG panels), spanning an area of nearly 6,000 square feet.

WHERE EMBRACING INNOVATION LEADS

Digital displays offer an opportunity for hotels to showcase innovation and gain an edge on the competition. It’s not all about ostentation – the Peppermill Resort Spa Casino in Reno, NV, a member of Preferred Hotels & Resorts, has taken a different approach by launching an immersive experience for guests that captivates with compelling imagery. The “Windows on the World” video art program is the hotel’s response to the question pondered by Joe Ness, Peppermill’s Director of Technical Services – how can we generate 24/7 content that isn’t advertising related but creates a transformative feeling in the space?



Scenes from the Windows on the World video art program at the Peppermill Resort Spa Casino in Reno.



The brainchild of Ness, this unique visual narrative features a collection of 10,000 images from around the world – such as a close-up of a gorilla’s face from Rwanda, the underwater world of Bora Bora, the Sydney Opera House at sunset – that are featured on between 500 and 600 displays of varied size across the property (this counts for approximately 60 percent of all monitors at the hotel). One 30-foot wide, 2.5-mm, LED panoramic screen with 4K imagery is situated behind the front desk in the lobby. In the casino, a mix of displays (70”, 80” and 90” flat screens and multiple-monitor displays up to 12’ wide) play the images amongst the action of slot machines and gaming tables.

This extremely high-quality content (all taken by Ness himself, who travels around the world twice a year to gather images for the video art collection) is displayed randomly, features very subtle

motion, and stays on the screen for an average of between 20 seconds and one minute. The effect is fascinating – a dichotomy of these near-still images within a loud, hyper-bustling casino environment – and a testament to how **innovation mixed with the power of digital displays can make an enormous impact and successfully engross guests.** Technology was utilized to establish a visual museum.

“It’s amazing that in this flashy casino space people stop and stare at the video art screens. They get transfixed by the high-resolution, artfully integrated images. We’ve captured guests with something visually simple and stunning,” noted Ness. “Windows on the World is so different from the regular activity in the casino. Guests are almost numb to the glitz, but this video art fascinates them. They remember it, and that memory is invaluable.”

Due to the overwhelmingly positive response from guests, Peppermill plays the images on a loop on four dedicated channels on the in-room television – successfully incorporating another digital touch-point into the display scheme.

For this project, which launched a decade ago, \$22 million was spent for 1,200 screens across all seven properties in the Peppermill portfolio; 50 percent of the financial investment was spent on screens at the Peppermill Resort Spa Casino. According to Ness, this large investment became an indirect revenue stream positively impacting the hotel’s bottom line – he says the hotel has been at the top of the market since the video art program began 10 years ago.

WE EAT AND DRINK WITH OUR EYES

Food and beverage is a vital revenue stream for hotels, and digital displays are a powerful conduit for boosting that financial flow into a property. The incredible resolution of today’s digital panels means one can truly see the filet mignon’s juiciness, or nearly taste the richness of a decadent dessert, or almost feel the tickle of champagne bubbles. **These vibrant displays – such as interactive menu boards outside restaurants and bars as well as ones strategically located in high-traffic areas – are digital triggers that encourage hotel guests to make their way to food and beverage establishments.**

MGM Resorts in Las Vegas has embraced the potential of this visual force. The MGM Grand hotel showcased enticing photo content of its beverage and snack offerings on digital menus that they featured in lounges – and they increased sales by 37 percent in the first month.

Once-static menu board signage now functions more dynamically at MGM. Signage changes throughout the day to guide people to restaurants and bars at the right times – such as publicizing breakfast and lunch in the morning, and dinner and entertainment later in the day. The result of dynamic pricing in the hotel’s food and beverage outlets yielded incremental revenue of \$100,000 in six weeks.

Once customers are in the food and beverage space, opportunities exist for fostering higher sales by leveraging the influence of digital displays. LG’s SuperSign high-definition television products (ranging in size from 43” to 65”) and digital signage solution software allow hoteliers to present live television alongside targeted messaging, such as a promotion of food and drink specials – that can be effortlessly spread among multiple screens in a dining or bar establishment. Content is easily generated and modified so hoteliers can strategically push out messaging. SuperSign televisions come with tuner, speaker, USB plug-and-play, free software (which allows hotels to control up to 50 televisions), and 75 pre-installed design templates. Depending on a property’s needs, SuperSigns can be displayed as either single screens or a video wall of multiple screens.

IMPROVING NAVIGATION FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD

In large properties and convention facilities, where the lay of the land is vast and unfamiliar, navigating a maze of hallways and multiple floors can be challenging. **Guests crave the assistance of a modernized “yellow brick road” – something to easily guide them along the path to where they need to be.**

Wayfinding kiosks are a manifestation of how digital displays serve an important purpose for guests and satisfy a distinct need. These self-service, strategically located kiosks expediently point guests on the right course thanks to directional arrows, which properties can easily change depending on events happening on-property and where guests need to be led as quickly as possible. Their interactive capabilities, with touchscreens to access directories and traditional two-dimensional or three-dimensional walk-through maps, boost efficiency.

These kiosks can also provide live weather, sports and news, plus they offer an occasion for hotels to generate revenue with targeted advertising (for example, products being sold in on-site retail outlets, food and beverage specials, spa services, etc.). LG’s commercial-grade, 46” high-definition kiosks, accompanied by media players so graphics and video can be displayed on screens, are a valuable solution to usher customers along their way with ease and convenience.

IN-ROOM TVS – A MODERN-DAY COMPUTER

The in-room television set is a familiar, comfortable part of the hotel accommodations’ layout, and its progression has been an impressive reflection of technological advancements and rising customer expectations.

“The television has evolved from a simple TV to a mini-computer with vast features and functionalities including the ability to make restaurant and golf reservations,” said Richard Lewis, Senior Vice President, Research and Technology, Zenith Electronics. “If the experience is positive in that guests don’t have to work too hard to use it, then they are more likely to remain loyal to a hotel and return in the future.”

“The power of the television microprocessor exceeds what’s needed for a TV to be just a TV,” Lewis continued. “You can do almost anything on the TV that you can do on the computer, which is the beauty of TV’s evolution.”

Guests don’t expect to have control over digital displays in public spaces, but the perception with in-room televisions is different. For consuming content in-room, guests want to watch what they want when they want. Today, smart TVs (where the external control box is now built within the television itself) mean services that previously weren’t accessible (like Hulu) can now be enjoyed by viewers.

“We look at the in-room TV as a marketing tool that we never had before,” noted Dearborn. “Thanks to technology and the scope of our digital network, a new level of customization is possible. We can change the first channel of the TV when a guest first turns it on. Upon arrival, the TV menu is more of a welcome, an introduction. When guests are getting ready to leave, the TV menu becomes a chance to entice them about extending their stay.”

Commercialized versions of applications create a one-to-one relationship (between the guest and the in-room set) that is unlike the relationship with any other television in a hotel. The LG UX970H 4K Smart TV with webOS 2.0 (available in 79”, 65”, 55” and 49” screen sizes) features Pro Centric software for a customized user experience, ultra surround-sound effect via front speakers, elegant design with narrow bezel and premium “ribbon” stand, and much more – making it a power machine with tremendous potential to meet and exceed guests expectations and deepen loyalty.

EMERGING TRENDS – MORE COLOR & MORE MONEY

Advancements in today’s technology has allowed for digital displays, including large video walls, to showcase huge images with exceptional clarity that span a large spectrum of vivid colors. Hotels, casinos, convention centers, shopping centers and other facilities have embraced this matured technology to drive consumer engagement and even make a statement about their creative mindset. And, **as rich as the colors seem today, future digital displays look to feature hues that reflect more of how we actually view the world, and more than 50 shades of gray.**

“We see infinite colors through our eyes, and the industry is trying to improve upon this with emerging technologies of High Dynamic Range and Wide Color Gamut,” explained Lewis. “More pixels and color bits translate to finer resolution and more realistic images with natural colors, which fosters a connection to guests and spurs a fascinated audience.”

The emphasis on **driving revenue through advertising on the digital ecosystem will endure.** For example, MGM Resorts International and Incentient (a wholly owned entity of Holt Media Companies) signed an exclusive agreement so that advertisers will have access to the vast digital network across all 12 of the MGM Resorts’ hotel and casino properties in Las Vegas – including 750 iPad wine list screens, 48,000 in-room television and 14 outdoor marquees – providing direct brand exposure to these hotel guests.

CONCLUSION

High-quality digital displays can foster meaningful customer engagement and fulfill distinct needs (such as “information on demand”) in ways completely different than a print brochure or static signage. By thinking beyond the traditional, hotels are crafting multiple digital statements that possess a substantial shelf-life and distinguish a property from the competition.

Digital displays – with their interactivity capabilities and ability to both assist and captivate guests – shape the travel experience and drive loyalty and repeat visits, which positively impact the bottom line.

The right digital display solution must pay attention to the rapid-fire speed of technology’s creation and implementation as well as consider the ever-evolving desires of today’s travelers. LG’s extensive product portfolio, expertise and customized solutions allow hoteliers to **maintain relevancy in messaging, which is key to content success and building thoughtful connections with hotel guests.**

LG ELECTRONICS

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