

Create Captivating Digital Signage Content: Insights and Advice from Rich Daugherty



A growing number of companies and institutions are turning to digital signage as a means to connect with customers and audiences, as well as to deliver their messages. Learn about the opportunities to customize and relay those messages in innovative ways that

complement a complete integrated audiovisual (AV) strategy in this interview with Rich Daugherty, Digital Media Content Specialist for AVI-SPL.

Q: Digital signage is becoming increasingly popular across a broad spectrum of businesses. Why is this, and what are some of its benefits?

RD: Small- and medium-sized businesses can now make the same impact as large companies because reduced costs in displays and hardware have made digital signage more affordable. Software platforms are also becoming easier to use.

Digital signage delivers your message but eliminates the expense and waiting for printed brochures and other materials. You can update the message at any time, instantly. And using moving graphics and animation is a way to attract attention to promotions, information, and news. Clients are in control of what is displayed, and they have the ability to show and change relevant information depending on when they decide is best.

Q: Who should consider digital signage, and where should they consider placing it?

RD: The opportunities for digital signage are everywhere. Hotels have them in lobbies, breakfast areas, and even inside elevators. Corporations, hospitals, and universities place digital signage throughout their buildings and on every floor with a lot of visibility and traffic. In retail, the rule is that if the competition has digital signage, so should you. It's a way to keep your brand fresh and engaging. The bottom line is that

digital signage effectively and efficiently communicates your messages to customers, students, and employees.

Q: How do you go about determining a client's content management capabilities?

RD: First, we look at the capabilities of a solution platform and align it with what the organization is trying to display. Then we look for the perfect fit. We offer different solution levels for content management. If the organization is small or if they don't have a dedicated team, we have an entry-level solution that's easy to use and can be managed by one or more people. For other types of organizations, we have medium and advanced platforms that can accomplish complex tasks like interactive signage, wayfinding, and database integration.

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Q: What are your suggestions for creating and obtaining content?

RD: There are several different approaches. If the customer has an internal team or agency, we suggest using quality photographs and graphics instead of clip art, which can detract from the impact of the content. We recommend investing in a subscription service for videos and graphics to keep content fresh and engaging. We also push clients to refresh their screens every two weeks with new content. Some signage platforms display weather, time and date, and an

RSS news feed. Those features are really important because sometimes people look at the screen just for that information, and everything else is a bonus.

There are solutions for every organization. Some integrators, like AVI-SPL, also provide content creation services, from initial setup to full software platform training.



A clean example of digital signage. All areas are clearly laid out, with the main focus being the video.

Q: What are the major considerations when designing content for a particular organization or audience?

RD: The intended demographic has the most impact on the design approach. When I design content, I create display zones. For example, I create zones for time and date, weather, RSS feeds, images, and text. But the demographic matters. In a retirement or assisted-living home, that may be too much information. I talk with the client and find out what's most important to them and what they want on the screen. That older demographic needs large text and easy-to-follow signage. But with the teen/young adult demographic, you can take a heavy graphics approach with cool-looking content and still keep information and graphics sized according to importance. Regardless of the audience, content should be on the screen long enough that people can comfortably read it twice.

Building a screen means working with a hierarchy of information. The largest thing on the screen is the most important. Make the screen interesting and informative to the people who look at it. AVI-SPL offers best-practice training to address these considerations.

Q: How can an integrator simplify the implementation and management of a digital signage program?

RD: The best integrator can assist clients at every level, from help desk support to managing the content solution. AVI-SPL

has the ability to manage the entire process. We assess the client's needs, talk with the people in charge, and find out what they want to say to get the right content on the screen. We can also make sure your digital signage solution works well with existing AV solutions such as training equipment or mass notification systems. We can supplement these solutions with emergency messaging, live-streaming video for special events, and video-on-demand for training.

Q: What are some interesting ways you see digital signage being used?

RD: Recently at the Digital Signage Expo I saw very impressive holographic signage, as well as digital signage on glass. This technology is now used on storefront windows and places like the glass doors on refrigerated food cases. It can also be interactive. This solution is innovative and engaging. A 12-screen interactive video wall at the expo provided an unlimited multi-user, multi-touch, interactive experience. Instead of one person interacting at a time, several people at once can have unique experiences.

Q: What future trends do you see in digital signage?

RD: Tablets and smartphones are now commonplace. Interactive digital signage will follow suit. Features like swiping and pinch and enlarge will make interactive experiences richer and able to deliver a stronger message than static ones. And even though QR codes never became popular in the U.S., there is a trend poised to improve on that concept. Retailers will be able to send data—like coupons or promotions—to smartphones in a hotspot at a store or mall. Digital signage opens up the door to opportunity, pushing customers to spend or to share with a friend.



About AVI-SPL

AVI-SPL is the world's leading AV and video communications partner, one that designs, builds, integrates and supports the systems and environments that enable communication and collaboration for all types of organizations. Our certified designers will work with you to find a digital signage solution that can help your company grow without a complicated redesign. We offer resources that address issues like strategy assessment, message distribution, content format, creative support, and management.