



Digital Signage in the Covid-Aware World

There's an old saying that goes, "in the face of difficulty lies opportunity." These difficult times have created tremendous opportunities for digital signage.

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DIGITAL SIGNAGE IN THE COVID-AWARE WORLD

While digital signage has long been a feature of indoor environments, in the past few years it's emerged as a key communication tool in outdoor settings as well.

Figures vary, but a recent report compiled by research firm MarketsandMarkets predicts that the digital signage market will grow by an estimated 11.2 percent annual rate over the next several years, reaching \$27.8 billion by 2026. The growth of the outdoor signage segment is expected to exceed that rate, the firm says, driven in part by new applications, improvements in LCD display enclosures and developments in fine-pitch dvLED displays. The COVID-19 pandemic combined with an increasing shift towards self-service has opened the floodgates of opportunity for outdoor digital signage.

Here are just a few of the applications where the use of outdoor digital signage is on the rise:

Window-facing signage: Traditional malls were already experiencing declining foot traffic before the pandemic, while open-air shopping centers were on the rise. That trend has picked up in recent years and created a host of new use cases for outdoor digital signage in the process.

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Because much of the customer flow past open-air retail outlets include consumers that are either driving by or passing on the sidewalk, window-facing signage will be a key way of capturing their attention. Such signage can promote current sales, provide information about curbside pickup and direct shoppers to the correct entrance.

And when incorporating a double-sided mount, signage can display eye-catching content that can be seen from both inside and outside a store window.

Curbside pickup signage: “Buy online – pick up in-store,” also known as BOPIS, has emerged as a key retail channel as shoppers increasingly opt for a curbside, contactless experience, although the tagline of “Buy online – pick up curbside” might be a better description. Just pull into a designated parking space, pop open the trunk and let a store associate load up your purchases. Even the acronym BOPUC has a nice, vaguely familiar ring to it.

And while printed signage has handled many of the communication chores related to BOPUC, a system that can be updated in real-time might be a better solution. Customers could have the capability to simply pull into a parking space, text a number displayed on digital signage to let the store know they’ve arrived and what space they are in. In response, the signage could display an estimate of how long it will be before an associate arrives along with any information the shopper needs to provide to complete their purchase. And as business patterns change throughout the day, signage could switch between “Designated curbside pickup” and “Open parking” to free up additional spaces.

Outdoor signage for restaurants: As the COVID-19 pandemic spread in early 2020, many restaurant operators survived by incorporated mobile ordering systems, curbside pickup and third-party delivery. Even quick-serve restaurants with drive-thrus found themselves coping with a new service channel: those customers who expected to be able to skip the line and delivery drivers in a hurry to get on their way.

Although many have been able to resume indoor service, trends such as curbside pickup, delivery service and even grab-n-go pickup from a shelf in

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Image Source: Zero-In

the restaurant will likely remain with us for the foreseeable future. According to a survey conducted by the National Restaurant Association, nearly 70 percent of adults say they're more likely to purchase food for takeout than they were before the outbreak, and 60 percent say they're more likely to order food for delivery now than they were in the past.

What that means is that many restaurants will be serving customers through as many as three separate channels: In the restaurant, at the curb and via the drive-thru. The use of outdoor menu boards has been on the rise for years, and many operators will see a need for additional directional signage in the parking lot. Digital directional signage can be easily updated throughout the day to adjust to changing customer flow, directing them to the proper lane and informing them when pickup orders are ready.

One trend that went relatively unnoticed during the pandemic was that of restaurants trimming down their menu to speed up service. Outdoor menu boards at the drive-thru allow those changes to occur seamlessly in real time and without the added costs associated with printing new menu signage. And if the restaurant happened to be overstocked on a particular menu item, a quick “manager’s special” promoted on the board can help work down that overstock, improving the bottom line by preventing waste.

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“Smart city” kiosks: As with other digital signage trends, the growth of smart city kiosks was a trend that was on the rise before the pandemic and is expected to accelerate as city life returns to some semblance of normalcy. Smart city kiosks allow cities to promote local businesses, offer wayfinding services and provide emergency messaging while at the same time offering the potential to generate revenue via advertising sales.

In Las Vegas, for example, a pilot program promoted by the city leverages kiosks to manage curb loading areas for taxis and ride-hailing services. Cameras incorporated into the kiosk capture vehicle and license plate information, starting a countdown timer on the kiosk that incentivizes drivers to move on quickly.

And in Tampa, Fla., the city plans to deploy 30 wayfinding kiosks as part of a program that won't cost taxpayers a dime, thanks to expected revenue from ads displayed on the devices. Users can look up information on the kiosks about nearby attractions and have it sent by text to their smartphones.

Ensuring peak performance

When it comes to deploying signage outdoors, several considerations must be taken into account to ensure displays accomplish their intended goal.

Unlike indoor signage, where lighting conditions, temperature and humidity levels can be controlled, outdoor signage must be visible even when subject to direct sunlight. It must function flawlessly in temperatures ranging from -20° to 100° Fahrenheit or greater, and have the ability to perform in weather conditions including high humidity near the coast or the dryness of the desert as well as thunderstorms, blizzards, or any other types of weather.

Window-facing signage will need to be mounted in a manner that disguises cabling and doesn't detract from the overall appearance of the location, while outdoor signage must be resistant to vandalism or tampering. And most of all, signage must include the ability to update content remotely. That's why it's important that anyone considering outdoor or window-facing signage, or even indoor signage that can be seen from the sidewalk, work with a vendor experienced in those types of signage.

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When it comes to digital signage solutions, Aurora, Ill.-based Peerless-AV® has been at the forefront of the field for as long as such signage has been a feature of the marketplace.

Specifically, when it comes to window-facing and indoor signage, Peerless-AV recently unveiled new dedicated flat-to-wall models to its SEAMLESS Kitted Series of dvLED Video Wall Mounts. The new mounting systems are designed exclusively for leading direct-view LED display manufacturers, offering slim, space-saving, and aesthetically appealing designs for multiple configurations. The systems feature integrated cable management, easy-hang hardware and a lightweight aluminum frame.

Peerless-AV also offers start-to-finish project support through its SEAMLESS dvLED Video Wall Integration Program, providing an expert team that specializes in dvLED mounting solutions, as well as project execution, to ensure every customer receives optimal product support and service.

Other indoor signage mounting options include an array of Portrait or Landscape Kiosk enclosures designed for the latest digital signage displays. Choose from a versatile array of sleek, slim and attractive standard kiosk enclosures or create a completely unique kiosk solution fit for a wide range of



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applications, including restaurants, transportation terminals, retail stores, banks or museums. Peerless-AV kiosks are customizable to fit your needs - from the choice of technology to custom paint and vinyl wraps. If you can envision it, then Peerless-AV can make it happen.

When it comes to improving restaurant operations in the drive-thru, Peerless-AV's Outdoor Digital Menu Boards offer a low operating cost, thin profile, modular design and an easy, two-man installation process. The optional Xtreme™ High Bright Outdoor Display offers full HD 1080p resolution for a bright crisp picture, even in direct sunlight. By making the switch to digital, content can be updated remotely and in real-time, creating a seamless drive-thru experience for customers and a more efficient restaurant.

For outstanding visibility in even the brightest ambient light conditions and harshest weather, Peerless-AV recently added to its line of outdoor signage with its 65” Xtreme™ High Bright Outdoor Display. The new model features an all-weather IP66 rated design, as well as Peerless-AV's patented Dynamic Thermal Transfer™ System that allows the display to operate in extreme temperatures ranging from -31°F to 140°F.

The 65” Xtreme™ High Bright Outdoor Display includes cover glass that is optically bonded to cut down on glare. The High Bright line of commercial displays offers 2500 nits of light output to combat high ambient lighting

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conditions, while an integrated light sensor automatically adjusts the display’s brightness to optimize power consumption and enhance the overall viewing experience. The displays are maintenance-free and offer protection against moisture as well as any potential debris or vandalism, making them the perfect outdoor digital signage solution for nearly any outdoor application.

And with a focus on functionality and aesthetics, Peerless AV’s Smart City Kiosks are designed to be modern, approachable, practical, and endure the rigors of everyday use. Installation is easy without the need for cranes or forklifts, and a locking rear door offers quick access to the display for maintenance. The kiosks can be outfitted with a 55” Xtreme™ High Bright Outdoor Display, offering full HD1080p resolution for a bright, crisp picture, even in direct sunlight. An optional 10-point IR touch overlay makes the kiosk interactive for all users. The kiosks are ideal for sharing community information, travel, and weather details, as well as wayfinding, advertising, entertainment, and more.

A changing world

There’s little doubt that the events of the past have dramatically changed the landscape for both business and pleasure. The desire for self-service and

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contactless experiences is on the rise, and businesses of all types are seeking new, more efficient ways of communicating with their clientele.

Not all signage is created equal. When choosing a signage vendor, it's important to select the company with a long-standing record of providing quality products and world-class service.



Image Source: Pacific Digital Signs

Not just for the sidewalk

Digital signage doesn't always need to be located outdoors to grab the attention of passersby. Even signage in the store can accomplish the task. A video wall behind the counter that can be seen from the sidewalk can draw people in through the content and visual enticement when a location is open, and generate interest even at night after the location has closed.

Peerless-AV recently worked with Pacific Digital Signs and Visit Napa Valley to create an engaging and powerful solution to draw visitors closer to the beauty of the Valley, and also for the fantastic resources offered by the center. This high visibility, high-traffic center was the perfect vehicle for this video wall.

ABOUT THE SPONSOR:

For over 80 years, passion and innovation continue to drive Peerless-AV forward. We proudly design and manufacture the highest quality products, including outdoor displays and TVs, dvLED and LCD video wall systems, complete integrated kiosks, professional carts and stands, and more. Whether a full-scale global deployment or high-volume custom project, Peerless-AV develops meaningful relationships and delivers world-class service. In partnership with Peerless-AV, you are trusting an award-winning team of experts who will support your business every step of the way.

For more information, visit www.peerless-av.com.

