

KeyWest

TECHNOLOGY

DIGITAL SIGNAGE
A WINNING STRATEGY
FOR THE GAMING INDUSTRY



WHITE PAPER



The U.S. gaming industry in general and casinos in particular this year are experiencing something they aren't accustomed to: a falloff in revenue. Recent statistics from the Nevada Gaming Control Board show casino revenue on the Las Vegas Strip, the largest gambling spot in the nation, fell to \$510 million in January.

In Atlantic City, NJ, the next largest gambling destination in the United States, gaming proceeds dropped to \$310 million for the month -down 20 percent on the tables and 19 percent on the slots, according to the New Jersey Gaming commission.



While the figures are disappointing for a sector of the economy that has remained largely immune to previous economic downturns, they underscore just how important it is at this particular time for the gaming industry to maximize the effectiveness of every investment made and every project undertaken.

One area of casino operations inviting serious re-evaluation is the portion of the marketing, advertising and communications budget devoted to on-premise promotion. It is not uncommon for many casinos to budget tens of thousands of dollars per month or more on design, printing, posting and updating traditional posters, banners and Duratrans signs.

These signs are essential components of multi-layered communications strategies intended to promote entertainment acts, new gaming



features, changing menus, or any one of a hundred different marketing communications goals. Signage assumes this important role in casinos by providing a easily referenced touch point for customers to guide them as they evaluate how and where to spend their money on premise. Particularly now, as the gaming industry experiences an overall revenue drop and individual casinos must compete even more effectively to protect and grow their revenue, keeping patrons up-to-date on the latest gaming and entertainment offerings has never been more important.

“With the savings we are realizing using the Keywest Technology systems, we’ll be able to pay for our 33 channels of digital signage within the first two years.”

**— Ryan Dunn,
Television Manager
Prairie Meadows
Race Track Casino**

DIGITAL SIGNAGE: A SURE BET

Using traditional signage media presents a nearly impossible hurdle to surmount for casinos dedicated to maintaining fresh, current printed promotions. Not only is the sequence of steps necessary to print signs, – including design, approval, press set up, printing, drying and delivery– time consuming, but also a casino’s print job is only one of many that is assigned a place in the printer’s queue, often requiring hefty rush charges to go to the front of the line.



As a result, many casinos have begun turning to digital signs as an affordable alternative. While the initial outlay for a digital signage network is more expensive than an individual print job, it does not take long for the savings realized from reducing or eliminating print to



offset the cost of a digital signage network. Some casinos and gaming facilities have reported the time needed to break even on a digital signage network to be as little as 12 to 18 months.

Evaluating the merit of replacing printed signs with a digital signage network solely on savings, however, is rather myopic. Digital signs deliver other significant benefits as well. Perhaps the biggest of these is flexibility. Unlike print, marketing and promotional messages delivered via digital signs are fast and easy to change. As a result, promotional opportunities that likely went ignored when print was the only alternative can be fully exploited.

Consider major entertainment acts. Booked months or years in advance, these types of shows give casinos ample time to prepare all aspects of advertising, including on-premise promotional signage. However, unforeseen circumstances before a scheduled show opening or even during its run can cause producers to change headlines, recast ensemble players or even cancel entire shows. In such circumstances, digital signage gives casinos

Prairie Meadows Racetrack Casino turns to MediaXtreme for extensive digital signage installation

Prairie Meadows Racetrack and Casino has setup an extensive digital signage network with 33 Keywest Technology MediaXtreme digital signage controllers.

The Des Moines, IA, -based pari-mutuel track and casino's digital signage network serves three major functions: to direct patrons looking for the right meeting room at the facility's new event center; to promote an ever-changing stream of shows and concerts, and other special offers and services; and to keep the casino's workers up to date on a wide variety of employment related news.

Keeping the MediaXtremes supplied with current data about the constantly changing events and activities at the casino is accomplished with a Keywest Technology software plug-in that retrieves data from Prairie Meadows' Delphi property management scheduling database and automatically populates pre-built graphical templates with times, places and directions to minimize the time casino personnel interact with the system.

The Keywest Technology-powered digital signage network fulfills a core mission of the facility: maximizing the revenue the casino and racetrack produce for Polk County and the state of Iowa. "Our mission statement, says we exist to give back to the community," said Ryan Dunn, television manager Prairie Meadows Race Track Casino.

According to Dunn, the Keywest Technology MediaXtremes are allowing Prairie Meadows to realize significant savings from what would have been necessary to print various promotional signs. "With the savings we are realizing using the Keywest Technology systems, we'll be able to pay for our 33 channels of digital signage within the first two years."



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far more flexibility in delivering promotional messages that take into account these sorts of changes. Similarly, in smaller entertainment venues –such as lounges and comedy clubs– digital signage offers management a quick, convenient way to respond quickly with messaging to reflect regularly changing acts.

Another major advantage of digital signage is the ability to incorporate dynamic media elements into digital sign messaging. Video, animation, text crawls and other types of dynamic media are easy to integrate into digital signage messages. Video, for instance, can be particularly effective.

Since June 1999 when the U.S. Supreme Court cleared the way for casinos to advertise on television in *Greater New Orleans Broadcast Association v. United States*, commercial casinos have literally spent millions of dollars on TV commercials. Digital signage gives these casinos the chance to integrate video elements from their TV advertising campaigns into on-premise promotional messages. Doing so advances the strategic twofold marketing goal of reinforcing their television commercials in the minds of patrons and building their brands through clear, consistent messaging. Similar attempts centered on printed signs would pale in comparison to exciting, full-motion video clips.

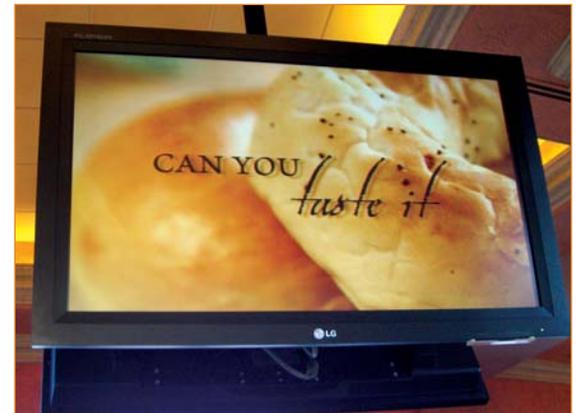




The availability of video playback on digital signage also opens up casinos to tapping into powerful cross-promotional opportunities. The same digital sign that directs patrons to the slot pit or the gaming tables can be used to playback cross-promotional video advertising. Often, successful casinos employ a technique known as dayparting to integrate time-specific messaging into their cross promotions. For example, the same group of signs used to welcome patrons to a casino can promote special dining features, ranging from all-you-can-eat buffets to fine dining, at the dinner hour. Later, the same signs can integrate video promotions to featured lounge acts or shows. They even can be used to promote other casinos of common ownership.

COMMON APPLICATIONS

Although the gaming industry is putting digital signage to work in a number of different ways, most of these applications can be grouped into five areas: advertising, wayfinding, off-site advertising, informational/utility signage and interactive.



Advertising

While casinos and the gaming industry have not been immune to the ongoing recession, the latest figures from the American Gaming Association reveal that for the period of 2003 to 2007 (the latest period available), average annual gross gambling revenue stood at just under \$31 billion in the United States. The primary use of on-premise digital signage at casinos is advertising in support of that revenue generation. New gaming features, entertainment, shopping, restaurants and lounges are among the top casino features advertised with digital signage.



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Wayfinding

Another high-use digital signage application is wayfinding. Given the cavernous size of casinos and their typical design, wayfinding signage featuring maps, arrows and directions to popular on-premise attractions is common. Digital signs strategically placed near high-traffic routes can offer valuable assistance to patrons and provide a dependable backup to casino staff who might not be present at the moment to offer directions.

Off-Site Advertising

While the goal of most casinos is to attract and keep patrons on premise as they spend their gaming and entertainment dollars, some companies own multiple casinos in the same city. In some cases, these casino owners even offer bus transportation between their casinos. Digital signage used to advertise off-site gambling at commonly owned casinos can be effective in enticing patrons to continue to spend their money with the same company, albeit at a different casino. Digital signage can be used in a variety of ways to support this goal, ranging from attractive advertising to whet the appetites of patrons to visit sister casinos to common informational use like posting shuttle bus schedules.



Informational/Utility

A variety of related sorts of digital signage applications fall under the umbrella of “informational/utility” at casinos and gaming facilities. These can range from digital reader boards used to display the



name of a certain activity, such as a Texas Hold 'em tournament, to a digital menu board at the entrance of a casino restaurant. While the specifics are different, functionally they are quite similar, offering clear, concise information to patrons at a glance.

Interactive

With the addition of the right sensing equipment, digital signs can easily be used as information kiosks. Touch-screen sensors, proximity sensors, and infrared detectors are only three of many input devices used to launch interactive digital signage applications. In a casino setting, interactive digital signage can be used to support a variety of communications goals, ranging from wayfinding to interactive directories of the latest attractions.

OTHER BUSINESS BENEFITS

As previously discussed, digital signage offers casinos and gaming facilities a high degree of flexibility in messaging, reduced or eliminated recurring printing expenses and the ability to leverage existing television commercial segments to re-enforce marketing messages and build brand identity. Casinos can also accrue several other benefits from digital signage.

Digital signage promotes and directs at Yonkers Raceway

When Yonkers Raceway transformed itself a few years ago from a storied race track to a mega raceway and casino, it needed a way to ensure patrons could find their way around the new 120,000 square-foot complex. Digital signage delivering directional wayfinding at strategic locations throughout the new facility seemed like the right approach, so the raceway turned to Keywest Technology. Employing an initial 30 MediaXtreme digital signage player/controllers, Yonkers Raceway began meeting its wayfinding requirements, directing patrons to everything from special attractions to restrooms and valet stations. It didn't take long for the raceway to see the potential for digital signage and begin expanding both the number of digital signs mounted from the ceiling and the type of content being played back. "Then Marketing got involved with the digital signage, which now carries monthly media content promoting upcoming bands, happy hour specials and other promotions in addition to the wayfinding signage," said Ben Shapiro, broadcast supervisor at Yonkers Raceway.

A variety of in-house and contract graphics professionals primarily use Adobe Photoshop to create a steady stream of fresh content that Shapiro schedules and manages for playback from the MediaXtremes. Most graphics are stored as JPEGs, while text and transitions between discrete content elements are generated with the MediaXtreme.

To be sure, digital signage keeps Yonkers Raceway patrons directed towards where they want to go and informed about the latest entertainment and promotions. Just as important, however, the impressive array of digital signs and the messages they convey help the casino cut through the surrounding noise and excitement and deliver information of high importance to the raceway and its patrons.

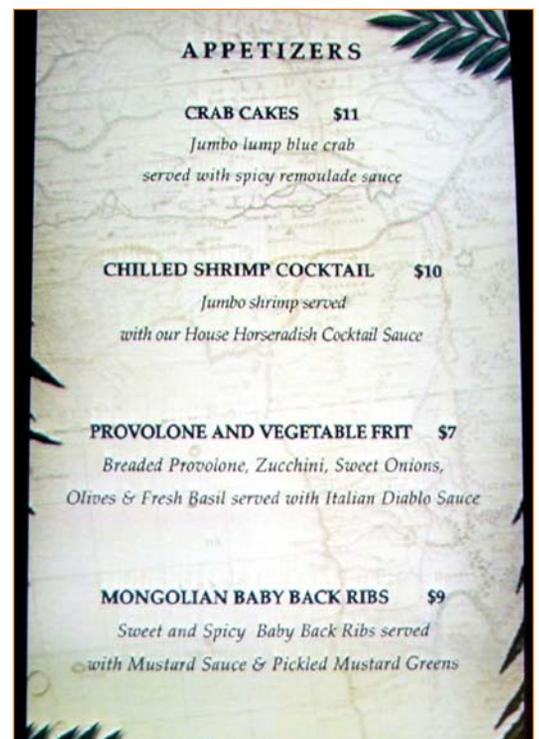


High on this list is patron self-service via interactive digital signage. Rather than requiring customers to stand in long lines for information from finite staff resources, interactive digital signage kiosks offer a convenient alternative. For instance, self-directed exploration of a casino directory not only can get patrons the information they desire quickly, but it also can expose them to other features, attractions and opportunities they may not have known of where they can spend their gaming and entertainment dollars.

Interactive touch-screen technology paired with digital signage also can expedite the process of making reservations for meals, shows and other attractions as well as support automatic dispensing of show tickets.

Digital signage used in menu board applications offers powerful marketing benefits to casinos as well. While digital signs make it quick and easy to update menus based on the time of day, availability of specialty items and pricing changes, they also support playback of video. Rather than telling potential patrons about the filet mignon with text alone, video of the steak as it's being prepared can tantalize those reading the menu board while they evaluate where they wish to dine.

Closely related to this menu board benefit is the opportunity for casinos to sell co-op advertising to food and beverage





vendors. The same attractive power of video in showing the sizzling preparation of a steak can be used to encourage patrons to select certain menu items, wines and spirits. But key to cashing in on co-op advertising is the ability to display video, something digital signage menu boards are well equipped to do.

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**— Ben Shapiro
Broadcast Supervisor
at Yonkers Raceway.**

OTHER OVERLOOKED OPPORTUNITIES

Digital signs in casinos and other gaming facilities offer other often overlooked opportunities to better serve patrons, including customer messaging and emergency alert display. Because of their size, casinos present a challenge to getting an important message to an individual customer. Using conventional means, such as tracking down a specific individual or paging the customer over a PA is nearly unthinkable at a casino. However, digital signage makes it possible to shrink the expanse of a casino and cut through the din. A scrolling text message displayed on all of the signs in a casino's digital signage network makes delivering an urgent message far simpler.

Similarly, because digital signage networks tie together the distant corners of casinos, offering an informational touch point for patrons throughout a facility, they can easily serve as an emergency alert system in times of trouble.



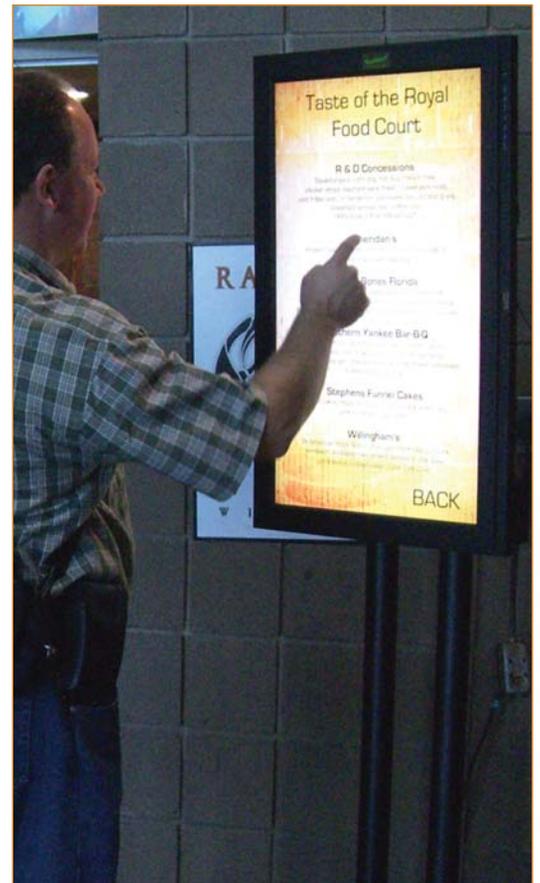


Consider the difficulty of notifying the thousands of patrons visiting a Midwest casino about severe weather conditions, such as a tornado warning. With the right amount of forethought and preparation, digital signage networks can instantly convey a warning along with instructions of where to go and what to do.

Another often-overlooked opportunity to use digital signage is at closely related public facilities. While certainly not always the case, many casinos are immediately adjacent to hotels, convention centers and meeting rooms where digital signage can benefit management and patrons alike. Similar applications, including reader boards, wayfinding and interactive kiosks, are likely to be appropriate in these settings as well. Sharing digital signage content among casino digital signage networks and those located in these sorts of facilities often benefits the overall enterprise.

SOLUTIONS AND PARTNERS

When it comes to digital signage for casinos and gaming facilities, it's a safe bet that one size does not fit all. Individual business needs, facility layout and management concerns frequently require digital signage networks to be customized. Accommodating project-specific requirements often spells the difference between success and failure.





Choosing a vendor with the experience and ability to customize a digital signage network is the first step. Keywest Technology, a Lenexa, KS, based digital signage solutions company, offers the experience and technical expertise to become a trusted partner that can be counted on to meet these individual goals and requirements.

To date, several casinos and pari-mutuel tracks have turned to Keywest Technology as a turnkey provider of digital signage hardware and software as well as for installation, integration and customization. With years of experience developing digital signage playout systems and interactive digital signage, as well as networking and enterprise-level playout, control and monitoring, Keywest Technology offers technological expertise in digital signage second to none. Additionally, Keywest Systems Group has significant experience managing every aspect of large-scale digital signage rollouts, from the kernel of an idea to final installation and training. Keywest Technology also offers world-class digital signage content creation services to relieve customers of the burden of updating designs and maximizing the effectiveness of their messaging.

If implementing a digital signage network makes sense at your casino or gaming facility, why gamble with success? Turn to Keywest Technology for the technical expertise, proven experience and reliable solutions you need to make your investment in digital signage a winner.