



DIGITAL SIGNAGE

Presents Added Growth Opportunity for Dealers

In an ever-increasing competitive landscape, office technology dealers are seeking a distinct edge, something – anything – that differentiates them from the others. How does a single or even a dual-line multifunction product dealer step up to truly separate itself?

With print volume dropping by as much as eight percent annually, according to market research firm, Gartner, this question may and probably should enter the minds of office technology dealership owners and their sales staffs before they enjoy their first cup of coffee every morning.

With the advent of digital signage as an added line of business, many dealers are proactively addressing this dilemma. Some MFP manufacturers are now providing display technology as an element of their respective product portfolio allowing dealers to accentuate their existing office products with the latest in digital signage.

Dynamic digital presence

Although the digital signage sector is currently about a third of the size of the MFP and printing market, it is – by practically anyone’s estimation – exploding. Dynamic digital displays are more and more becoming a distinct presence virtually anywhere you go from the video wall at your favorite retail outlet to digital menu boards guiding one’s lunch options to the display ribbons providing game scores and corporate branding at the local sporting venue. According to the Economist, digital signage will be a \$5.2 billion business by 2016 and Intel predicts as many as 22 million digital signs will be in place by next year.

While much business is still and for the foreseeable future will be transacted through the medium of paper – the shift to digital adoption is certainly in motion. For those of us who frequent shopping malls and airports can plainly see, more and more people are consuming content digitally on a smartphone, tablet or digital display.

Though there will always be a role for paper in our society and has been since Bi Sheng created the first printing press in the early

- 11th Century, the advance and saturation of new media obviously plays into the hands of those offering digital signage. Dealers seeking to differentiate themselves even further will complement their display technology offerings by providing and managing the accompanying content.

- Since displays much like a lot of other consumer technology currently available is becoming commoditized – think of LCD and LED TVs, laptop and tablet computers – vendors also providing their dealer channel with relevant and compelling content will be viewed as definitive leaders in this burgeoning space.

Content and management

- Marketing communications staffs understand top-notch content creation takes a special talent and is VERY time intensive. Under this premise; many companies simply do not have the staff to complete this task. Dealers with the capability of managing impactful content will be nicely positioned to step in front of the competition to fulfill this distinct and specialized need. Much like vendors supporting dealers with managed print services (MPS) about a decade ago; content creation and management provides dealers with consistent annuity streams and healthier profit margins.






"Digital signage will be a \$5.2 billion business by 2016."

Rather than selling ink, toner and the paper itself, dealers may receive much higher premiums by providing customers with regular content to optimize their digital signage installations. The opportunity is certainly abundant for dealers offering this niche service.

Those mulling around any public area – malls, airports and entertainment venues for example – can see the need for quality content is certainly abundant. This is particularly the case for venues posting an assortment of messages and ads depending on the hour of the day. In digital signage vernacular, this is called dayparting.

Toshiba is one vendor in this market capable of outfitting its dealers with digital signage solutions to help end users attain their business objectives. What is unique about Toshiba's approach is the capability to provide its dealers and end customers with a complete, end-to-end solution. From hardware and solutions design to content creation, implementation and management, Toshiba's team works together with each customer to ensure complete satisfaction every step of the way. 



Joseph Contreras' background includes leading product management and marketing to develop product and branding strategies, strategic partnerships and marketing programs for document imaging and digital signage products and services. For company information visit www.toshiba.com

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