



ScreenCloud

Digital Signage Best Practice Guide

Fast track your digital signage strategy with these best practice insights,
learned from more than 8000 customers

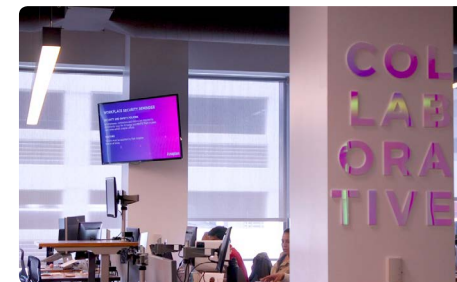


Intro

Digital signage has moved from being the vehicle of large advertisers in public spaces to something that all brands and businesses can employ. Using consumer-grade hardware and cloud-based software, it's easier than ever to take what you want to say and share it with the world.

But the act of getting a message up onto a screen is only the beginning. The most powerful digital signage strategies employ compelling messages. The content is refreshed periodically and different voices are heard.

That's why we've created this cheat code, to help you learn how to manage your digital signage strategy successfully from the get go. Using lessons from over 8,000 customers using digital signage, here's everything you need to know about successfully launching and scaling screens that people want to engage with.





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01 The state of attention



You've heard the stats

The average person was consuming 500 marketing messages in 1970. More recently, you'll see sources citing nearer 5,000. The studies don't seem to be definitive, but if you look at qualitative data, you'll see people citing seeing **500 ads by breakfast time alone**, or anywhere **from 400 to 800**, within an average working day.

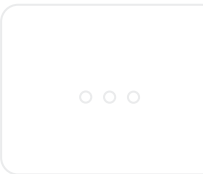
Then you have the online data pools that say we're getting shown **one ad every two minutes** that we spend on Facebook and 200 ads a day on Windows Desktop alone.

We're not only in advertising overload, we're at a general peak of the amount of content coming at us and the amount we can, or even want to, consume.

Even in the workplace, the average person is **interrupted once every eight minutes**.

From Slack, to email, intranets and our phones, notifications are high and attention is low.

Isn't it about time we found another way to cut through the noise?





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*To think creatively, we must be able to
look afresh at what we normally take
for granted.*

George Kneller



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Meet the information radiator

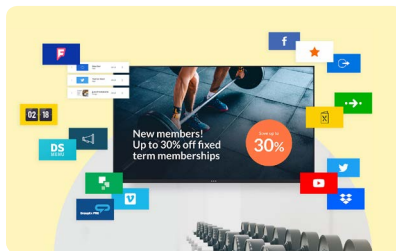
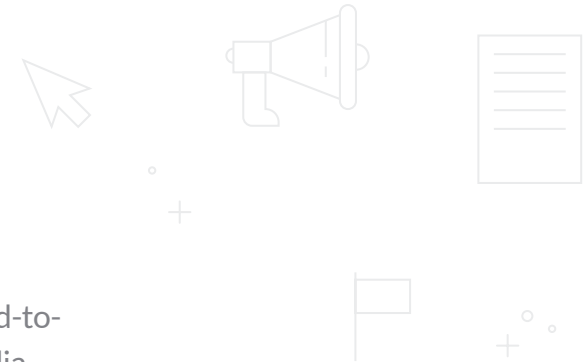
The information radiator doesn't shout

It doesn't ping, show you (highly addictive) red notifications, or force its way into your calendar to make itself seen.

The information radiator assuredly pushes out information for people to look at while they browse, take a break, or make a coffee.

It radiates the carefully curated, updated regularly and absolute messaging that's need-to-know only. An owned source of internal media where only the content you decide gets through.

The information radiator is a digital signage screen that connects employees or customers to the heart of your organization.



In the next section, we'll detail everything you need to create successful information radiators around your store or workplace, that earn attention rather than demand it.

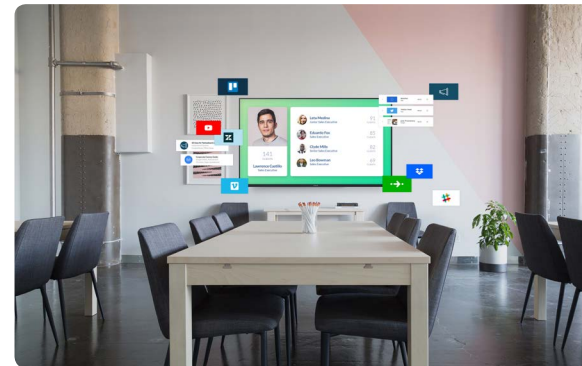


03 Setting up digital signage for success

For digital signage to work, you only really need three things: hardware to display content on, software to connect content to your hardware, and the content you wish to show.

This may seem simple, but the choices out there are endless. Traditional digital signage companies offer expensive and custom hardware, but could you achieve just as good with consumer-grade devices? Different software engines offer different feature sets but which do you really need?

Here's a checklist of best practices to plan for and deploy.





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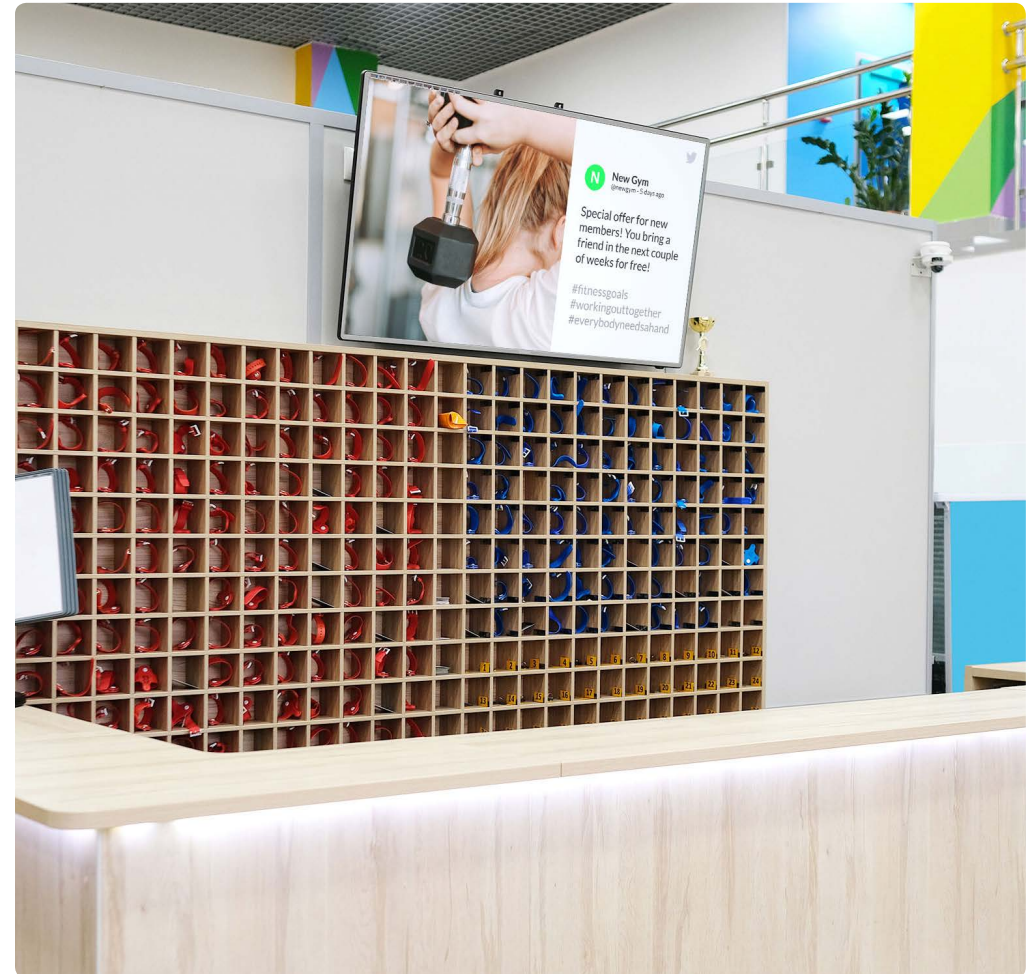


Starting small

When first deploying digital signage, or introducing it to a new department, location or company, it's best to begin with a test and measure. With a cheap media device ordered online and any TV screen you have lying around, you should be able to set up an initial run of content to get buy-in before increasing in scope and size.

All good digital signage software products offer a free trial that you can sign up to online, without needing to speak to a sales person first.

This is great for starting to play with digital signage. Then? Then you're ready to look into things on a larger scale.





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A North Star metric

What's the one issue you really want to solve by using digital signage? It's very easy, with the aid of integrations and apps, to add lots of micro pieces of content to your digital signage screens in a randomized order.

We've found that having one initial problem that you want to solve, whether it be keeping employees in touch with important metrics, replacing the employee handbook, or raising awareness of customer feedback, is the key to a well-organized digital signage plan.

Continually returning to this North Star metric allows you to achieve it more quickly and also allows for you to have the hardware, software and processes (such as effective feedback loops) in place to get the most from your digital signage.





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Choosing hardware

Don't trip your future self up. While it's great to start out using simple devices, your long-term requirements could require more to create the type of digital signage network that will support you for years to come. This is worth spending time on.

We have an [in-depth guide](#) to different digital signage hardware options but some considerations would be:

- **Resolution** - The ability to support 4K and beyond, or just 1080p content
- **Connectivity** - Whether you'll want to store media content locally, or whether you can rely solely on an online connection
- **Processing power** - If you'll want to support advanced apps or configurations such as screen zoning, which may require more power

- **Warranties** - To protect you if you aren't able to upgrade or replace in the event of a device failure.
- **Remote management** - Whether you have access to device management services. This won't matter with one or even ten devices, but might for 200 for example.
- **Operating system** - Depending on which restrictions are placed on your network, or just the operating system you prefer.





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Software considerations

Most modern companies choose a cloud-based digital signage software where everything is held in the Cloud and managed from a web-based site. In a competitive marketplace, how do you find the digital signage software for you?

Here are some areas to look out for during the research phase:

Great user experience

The best software products are designed to be simple to use even if under the hood, they have a ton of cool features and capabilities. Intuitive software makes team onboarding easier, without you having to run a training session each time.

Pricing that scales

All digital signage software is priced differently and with hidden costs for things like adding users, media files or even increasing bandwidth in your account, it could get pricey. Best to check these out upfront.

Smart tool set

Look for features that will make your role managing digital signage easy. The ability to change content from anywhere, to group screens and make bulk changes, and to schedule (and expire) content in advance will give you breathing space so that you don't have to be beside your screens at all times.

Fast support

You may not need support during setup, but later down the line you'll want fast responses and a helping hand to be guaranteed. Look for those companies who will ally themselves to your business mission.

Product development

Can you see a product roadmap? The latest security protocols? Happy customers on review sites like Capterra? Look for these little flags that the product you're about to invest in is also being invested in from the other side.



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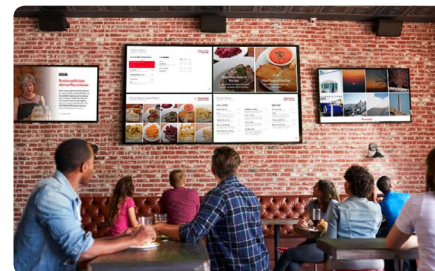
Content strategy

Without great content, your digital signage network is just a bunch of TV screens. Your content strategy should be closely aligned with your North Star metric. Often, less content repeated more frequently is better retained and makes the most difference to those viewing it. Look to add different voices from across your organization. The more varied your content, the more likely it is to surprise and delight.

Our philosophy at ScreenCloud is that everyone should be able to create “screen-ready” digital signage content that looks great, regardless of individual design ability. For that reason, look to procure content from sources such as:

- **Apps** which take content from where it already lives (like Slack, Twitter, or in your databases) to create screen-ready beautiful content.

- **Digital signage templates**, like those in Google Slides, which require minimal design updates each time the content is changed.
- Content you already own, like images or videos, to save creating from scratch. Most videos are created in 16:9 already – perfect digital signage dimensions.
- **Digital signage design guidelines** for your agency or in-house team to help them design screen-ready content with enough white space.



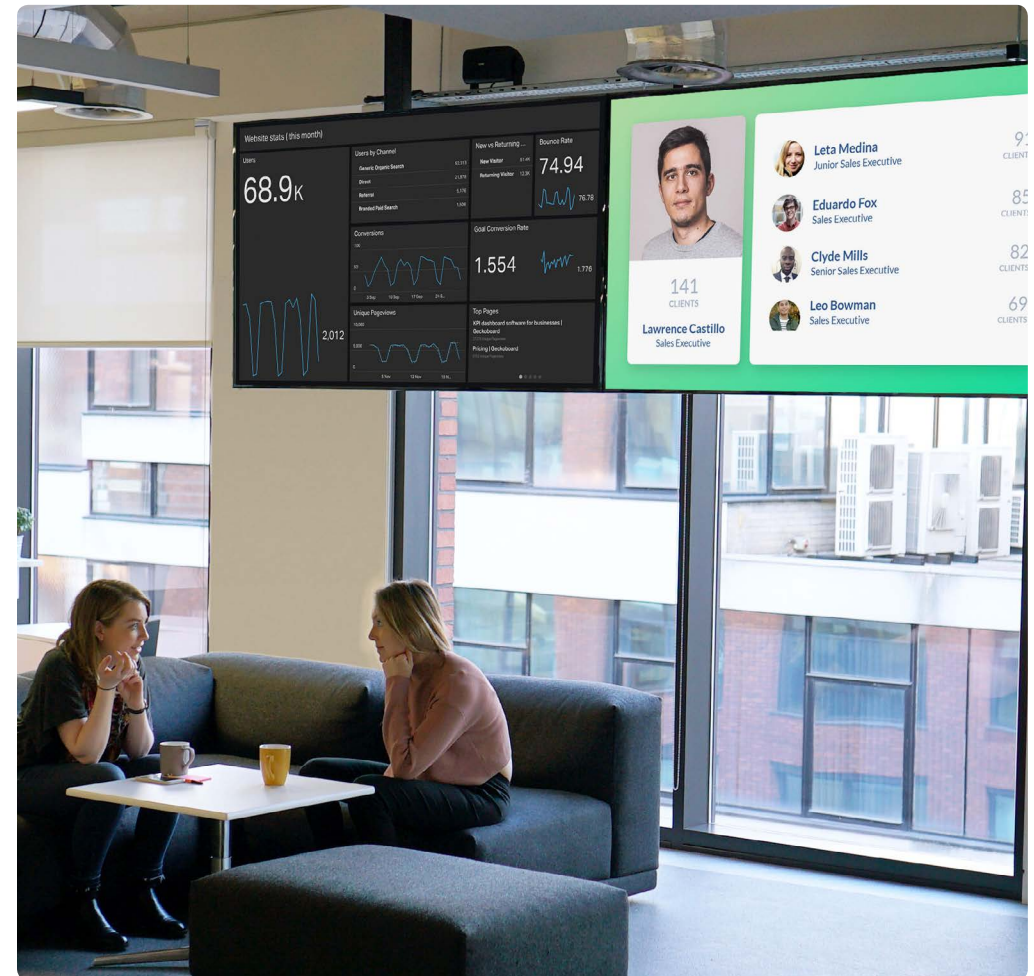


Audience optimization



As well as creating great content, you also need to determine when to show it. Different content can be scheduled for different times, helping you to make the most of your real estate and capture attention in the natural ebb and flow of your work day, or sales season. If you work in a convenience store, you may want to showcase breakfast items in the morning periods and dinner items in the evening. This seems so simple, yet many businesses miss out on content optimization that makes the content more relevant to their audience.

You can also differentiate content by using colors or different design templates. This lets the audience know, at a glance, what type of content they're seeing.





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Team onboarding

When you have one screen, organizing your content repository and getting buy-in from your team is easy. When you have a hundred screens across four locations and multiple time zones, a formal digital signage strategy that can be viewed by all is essential.

This might live in your intranet, or as a document (at ScreenCloud we save ours to Confluence).

The document should detail:

Contribution guidelines

This sets out how someone can contribute to your digital signage content and might include details such as:

- A description of what your network is used for
- The type of content that can be shared
- Who is in charge of managing content
- How and where to submit content

Naming conventions

Providing guidance to anyone uploading content, adding new folders or creating playlists so that your content repository is easy to navigate and understand.

Style guides

It's useful to create a brand guideline document that supports your digital signage strategy. This ensures that all content is created on-brand, and that it adheres to restrictions that come with using screens, for example minimum font sizes and colors that work well from a distance.

Individualized billing

In many digital signage systems (like ScreenCloud) you can allocate screens to groups or departments allowing you to control who gets billed for what. When operating at scale, it's important to set expectations early on so that budgets and invoicing processes can be considered.



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Automation & integrations

Want to hear a secret? The most successful digital signage networks are 75% automated. This means that no individual team, or person, has to remember to constantly update content.

Instead, content is taken from where it already lives and is updated automatically, as new information becomes available. In an “always on” culture, viewers expect to see the very latest information.

Examples of automated integrations include:

Social media apps

Social media apps take content that your marketing team has already spent time creating on channels like Twitter and Instagram and share it in a digital signage-ready format.

Dashboards

Dashboards visualize data in a way that makes sense to someone at a glance. At ScreenCloud, we share dashboards that show all of our key metrics, so that they’re seen daily. Other companies share sales figures, team performance, and customer support details.

Contributor folders

A good way to ensure content is submitted regularly is to automate upload using tools such as Google Slides, Dropbox or something from your organization’s tool stack. By providing access to a Google Slides deck, or Dropbox folder, you can allow individuals to contribute content that automatically gets added to the screen.



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Measuring return

As well as knowing your aims for your digital screens, let's take a couple of minutes to think about how you will track success. For some, having digital screens up and sharing content is enough. Many studies show the positive effects of digital signage on brand perception, customer buying behavior, and social proof. But how else could you track your efforts? You might measure return by sharing a unique offer code or web page link that users can only get to by seeing it on your signage screens, or by using facial recognition and motion tracking software to determine views and dwell time (check with security first though).

Another method is by using Return on Objectives (ROO), a framework that lets you learn from qualitative data such as:

- Interviewing employees about their experience of viewing the screens
- Tracking employee awareness before and after screens were implemented
- Measuring sales of an item before and after a promotion
- Surveying customers to measure brand awareness



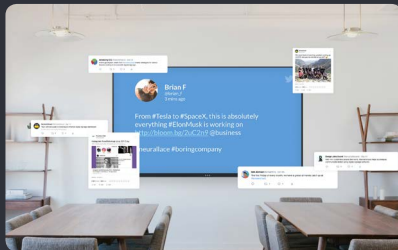


04 Get started

Best practices in hand, it's time to launch the digital signage strategy that will make management of it easy.

Create beautiful, relevant and timely screen content that makes employees, or customers, look up. Engage voices from within the organization and create processes that make managing your digital signage strategy feel, well, easy.

We look forward to seeing how you get on.



To try our digital signage content management system ScreenCloud, get a 14-day free trial at screencloud.com/freetrial