

The World of Digital Signage

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Well, the Digital Signage Expo has come and gone for yet another year and other than being by all accounts the premier show in the world of digital signage, there are some lessons for us all to learn and pay attention to as they affect each and every one of us in the “biz”. I will begin with a short show critique. As one would expect, the DSE creators are justifiably proud of the increased attendance, the numbers of attendees taking classes, and the responses from the show, but there is another point to be made relating to the show itself.

In short, size matters. Without naming names, some trade shows in the industry have become extravaganzas. The magnificence of the event overshadows the reason for the event itself, and more often than not, stands in the way of getting out of the show what the exhibitors, and more importantly the attendees, want and need from the experience. Over the last few years and especially in 2011, the DSE appears to be, as my British friends might say “spot on”, with a mix of impactful exhibits and a plethora of educational opportunities. It is big enough to be meaningful and small enough where each attendee can spend quality time at each booth and actually carry on a conversation with exhibitors, who may in some way end up impacting their business lives. As good old Goldilocks might have said, when talking about the porridge, “not too hot, not too cold, just right”. In this writer’s opinion the DSE was “just right”.

Supporting the point above, the nature of the show created an environment where the world could converge in one place and the attendees were entertained, impressed, educated, and exposed to global networking opportunities with like-minded individuals and companies. So for the skeptics out there that take exception at the concept of a global impact, just consider the sheer numbers. In a conversation with Angelo Varrone of Exponation, who puts on the DSE every year, he said, “19% of DSE’s 2011 attendance came from international locations, up 1% vs. 2010. This year, attendees from 60 countries visited the show. Remember the “Where Are You From” board that was in the show entrance area? It was loaded with stick pins showing those locations. We have photos of the board to prove it!”

Okay, so perhaps you are still not convinced of the globalization of the industry. How about a separate point of reference? The Digital Signage Experts group conducted three industry certification programs the day before and the day after the DSE itself. Attendance was outstanding and the Digital Signage Certified Expert seminar had over 90 people attend, standing room only. The number is impressive but the make-up of the crowd is what is so telling about the pervasive nature of digital signage and its impact globally. In no particular order of importance, there were DSEG certification attendees from Canada, France, India, Brazil, Japan, Indonesia, New Zealand, Trinidad and Tobago, UK, Australia, Jamaica, Nigeria, Russia, Singapore and of course the good old USA. That boils down to 16 countries represented by multiple people in a single class!

As further evidence of globalization, at the Digital Signage Federation there are now international members and the numbers are growing rapidly. The point is that we have a growing global constituency in the world of digital signage. This translates (literally) to opportunities for those of us in the USA and around the world. We speak a common language and that is digital signage. We share common values and that is the quality of digital signage, and we enjoy a common goal of growing the market to the point that digital signage is a household word, no matter the area around the globe. As final proof for me, anyway, is that my digital signage articles are now published in the EU, Asia, Canada, and most recently, in the Middle East and Africa. Now that is what I am talking about. Long live the world of digital signage!