



PROGRAMMING YOUR STORE

How to Make the Most of In-Store Digital Technologies

COMQI WHITE PAPER



When was the last time you found milk at the front of a supermarket, or a store's opening hours sign fixed on a back wall?

Never, right? That's because retailers put a lot of thinking and experience into where they position products and traditional communications. It's all about informing shoppers, stimulating foot traffic through the store, and driving more sales.

Smart retailers are now putting the same good thinking into how they use in-store digital technologies. They're looking at shopper journey, and the choreography of their retail environments, to optimize where the screens are, what they say and how they're used.

In effect, they're using platforms like ComQi EnGage to program their stores in much the same way as TV network executives program their broadcast schedule.

The Basics



Retailers are putting screens in high-visibility locations – even in shop windows facing outside to the sidewalk or mall concourses – to drive promotions or brand or product awareness.

They're taking advantage of management platforms like EnGage that have the smarts to match messaging priorities and timing to the attributes of individual stores – tying what shows on screens to things like location, demographics or even product availability. Why promote jeans when they're not in stock, right?

They're using everything from single screens on support columns and on end-caps, to groupings of displays tiled in horizontal rows for menus and for interesting wide-format content. They're also putting in large video walls, in rectangle and mosaics, as architectural features that are part of their retail experience.

Event-Driven Programming

Think of events as activities and actions around a store, day to day. A sophisticated platform like EnGage makes it possible to serve content based on many variables, from touching a screen or taping a phone to changing the state of a store systems. Here are some ways that retailers are using EnGage:

VIDEO SWITCHING

When a fashion show in New York starts, or a new smart device gets launched in Las Vegas, some or all store screens can be scheduled to switch over to live video feeds from that event, and then switch back to regular programming on a schedule, or by using local controls like a web browser.

WHOLE STORE TAKEOVER

Digital displays around stores are easily programmed to run specific content by location within the store and time of day. But using ComQi EnGage, retailers can also drive things like sales promotions, brand launches and special greetings using Whole Store Takeover programming. Imagine the visual impact of every screen in a store “magically” switching to one or a series of related messages!

PROXIMITY-BASED PLAYBACK

Simple sensors can start an interactive experience even without shoppers touching anything. Motion sensors at a screen can trigger new content on a screen – encouraging action – when shoppers come in range. It’s a tactic that creates surprise and stimulates curiosity. EnGage is even used to tie sensors to a camera that records and replays the motion of people checking out how they look, from different angles, in an outfit they’ve just tried on.



TOUCH INTERACTIONS



Tablets and smartphones have made touch interaction so common consumers now expect it on just about any screen that’s within easy reach. Sophisticated retailers are using touch screens to their fullest by running content that attracts people to the displays, and encourages them to spend some time. ComQi EnGage allows retailers to bring versions of the feature-rich interactive experiences they have for e-commerce and for smart devices to shop touchscreens, using web technologies like HTML5. Instead of silo’d creative, EnGage allows retailers to bring their omni-channel marketing to the retail sales floor.

TABLETS AND MOBILE DEVICES



Retailers have been using tablets and mobile devices as assisted-selling tools and small-footprint Point of Sale systems, and are now also starting to place these smaller displays on merchandising tables and at the shelf-edge. EnGage supports the creation of native and web-driven mobile/tablet experiences, and provides retailers with a management system for content and reliable, ongoing operations. For instance, sales associates can use Video on Demand to capture shoppers using their mobile or tablet to control and trigger digital screen content on demand.

BLUETOOTH SMART BEACONS

Small radio transmitters that can be fixed throughout retail environments – or even built into displays and tablets – are helping retailers drive contextual messaging to smart phones. The low cost beacons send a signal that activates smartphone apps used by the retailer and loaded by shoppers – doing everything from encouraging those shoppers to check out new store items to providing them with targeted promotions or other incentives.

PRODUCT TRIGGERS

Sensors, readers and scanners are tied to media playback devices to provide deeper content to shoppers on demand. In a handbag store, for example, lifting an item off the featured display shelf might activate a light sensor underneath, which in turn instantly triggers content about that bag on an adjacent screen. A similar experience can be driven by RFID tags or by scanning the bag's price tag barcode.

Store Operations

● Now Serving

Tie into your store's customer booking system and boost the experience for shoppers waiting to be served. Use screens to show the wait list and remove what can be a source of frustration. Just knowing where the shopper stands in a wait list is all that shopper needs.

● Change Languages

Big cities are now melting pots of culture and languages. If you have content in multiple languages, and know the shoppers on the floor right now will respond better to a Spanish message, use a simple command and switch over to Hispanic programming.

● Emergency Messaging

Store and facility systems can be steadily monitored, and if an alarm or other "event" is activated, specific content automatically takes over designated screens – effectively directing shoppers and staff.

● Screen Failover

ComQi EnGage is designed to ensure no store screens go black by monitoring display status and signaling another screen to display the content if somehow they're turned off.

● Staff Training

In-store displays can be used for back of the house staff training scheduled for after store hours. Employees can use Video on Demand to specify which training module will display in order to refresh their skills.

Shopper Intelligence

VIDEO ANALYTICS

Low-cost cameras tied to displays use facial pattern detection to log the numbers and general demographic profile – including gender and broad age ranges – of shoppers who look at those displays. This technology can also log how long people look at displays on average – even down to individual messages – which can help retailers determine the optimal duration for spots, and get a sense of which spots work best.

HEAT-MAPPING

When smartphone apps are activated by beacons placed around stores, the management system anonymously logs how many phones go active and where those phones travel around the store. The result can be fascinating visual heat maps that reveal how shoppers as a whole move around a retail environment – where they tend to go and where they dwell.

Summing It Up

The most effective in-store digital networks respect and play to shopper dynamics, use the technologies and tactics that make sense for that consumer moment, and invest the time and resources to ensure content is timely and relevant.

It really is all about programming the store to enhance the shopper experience and drive performance metrics for the retailer.