

Digital Signage, DSF Blog

Placing The Consumer At The Center Of The Technology Stage



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A DSF Blog exclusive.



The Digital Pant Wall for Lululemon uses motion sensors to trigger a content change when pant styles sell out.

Commercial AV systems integrators find themselves in a position of not only having to wade through dozens of hardware, software and content management choices, but then having to determine how to architect, engineer and integrate multiple complex systems, often during the pre-construction phase of design.

That's no small feat.

The practical, physical and technical requirements force evaluating technology choices in light

of budgets, competitive bids, ease of integration, or limitations of the existing space or data components. As a consequence, Tech Teams tend to overlook (at best), or are blind to, how technology may need to behave to reach its ultimate ambition: changing behavior.

So, while price-point, CMS software capabilities, screen type and mobile compatibility are all legitimate considerations, commercial systems integrators separate themselves from their competition by not only offering technology agnostic solutions, but also reinforcing *how* and *why* these choices should be made in the first place.

The notion of creating intelligent, responsive and aware digital ecosystems designed for the *human experience*, not for the sake of technology itself, is a fundamental premise of building a consumer-based experience strategy that's grounded in the *Person*, NOT the Product.



An interactive/virtual sales associate helps women shop by skin condition; and then find their selection at shelf.

The technology experience, when designed for the consumer, can bring the brand journey to life in a way that will unleash the full potential of digital investment and increase the probability of positive return on objective and investment.

Widen the lens to consider Pre-Tail, Retail and Post-Tail perspective, so that the commercial AV integrator can offer a truly omni-channel solution. This will ensure that the client has an ambitious enough plan for growth, and for integrators to secure their role as a long-term *marketing technology* partner.

How do we do this?

Begin by defining the *who*. Who is the ultimate Consumer/Shopper/User group for whom you are designing; and what do you currently know about how they consume technology during the path to purchase that might provide insights on how to steer your client's choices.

Then move to the *what*. What is the behavior you are seeking from customers at each point along their Shopper Journey, but also dissecting what they are doing or not doing—and why—and at what point you may be losing their interest or loyalty [read, sale].

The following are the most common experiences expressed in the voice of the consumer, so your client can understand the value of keeping the end user central to the technology planning process:

“Inspire me before I walk in.”

Since the beginning of time, merchants have utilized their store windows to seduce, attract, engage and re-engage their targets.

Consider the content (i.e., messaging strategy) that will best attract and beguile the target audience, and then choose the technology type that will bring the experience to life in fresh and original ways. Elevate ordinary digital signage to a *theatrical event* by staging and styling with dimension and props, so it is the storytelling that grabs their attention, not simply the screens.

There is a raft of digital signage solutions from tiny pitch LED to large format, 4K LCD screens that work perfectly for this situation. Remember the importance of choosing dimension and screen pixel count for optimal viewing distance, and high bright screens with a high enough NIT to combat direct sunlight.

“Make it [contextually] relevant for me.”

Geolocate me when I'm in the neighborhood, so I know to come in, or while I'm shopping, so I

know what to pay attention to. This can best be achieved through a combination of intelligent technologies that, when simply and aptly applied, add another layer of relevance.

We like the iBeacons integrated with Retailer Apps for this purpose. When used in context, the beacons can trigger points along the journey that can target offers based on past purchase behavior.

From the moment a shopper walks through the door, digital can be utilized to transform the journey where it matters most in the decision-making process. For example, attaching motion sensors to digital merchandising and physical inventory can display content in a way that feels both personal and relieves the clutter typical of conventional signage.

Content that educates to inspire *choice* instead of just educating to learn is a smart strategic filter that will keep the digital noise to a minimum and presents just enough information to help guide choice.

Choose content management software (CMS) that delivers relevance through advanced scheduling functionality that can deliver day-part focus, leverage traffic patterns, align to occasion triggers and help present the right message, to the right shopper, at the right time.

“What else do you have today?”

Endless aisle concepts can offer consumers an infinite assortment of product, by bringing online offering in-store. Doing so allows retailers to bring a flagship experience to smaller store formats, and can effectively work to build the purchase basket in the process. According to a recent study published in the August *Harvard Business Review*, in-store purchasing baskets are generally larger than that of online-only.

Repurposing a retailer’s e-com or m-com allows you to curate content, narrow focus to specific categories, highlight new news and provide sales associates with a valuable digital tool to help convert the sale. Retaining functionality, such as click-to-ship helps deliver an added layer of convenience that makes for a true omni-channel experience.

Wrapping a shopping application around elements of an existing e-com/web application built for HTML allows the experience to go from “webby” to “shoppy” in a way that is device-neutral. Seek out screen hardware with built-in media players and navigational bar that can convert websites to in-store mode for an added layer of convenience, and is easy on the budget.

“Not now, but maybe next visit.”

Provide easy ways for consumers using interactive experiences to take their in-store finds with them. By making it easy for them to “push” their finds with them—by emailing, NFC or Bluetooth technology—shoppers can easily walk away with whatever they are interested in, and access it on their mobile device and/or email for later. Providing this functionality allows for smart integration of the mobile to the in-store experience, and increases the chance of the consumer returning more quickly—or purchasing from online, later.

“What do my peers have to say?”

Bring social media in-store in a way that adds meaning and relevance to the total experience. Social aggregation tools such as the [Postano](#) platform can scrape from the social layer and present user-generated commentary at the point of digital display—in a way that is filtered and monitored.

Taking this one step further, the [Olapic](#) platform contains an algorithm that helps connects purchase behavior, advocacy and recommendation to what retailers or brands are offering, to increase the likelihood of satisfaction and choice.

Leveraging social media specific to the store and shopping experiences helps carve out the role of social, and reduces duplication, and helps tap the value of social sentiment as a trusted ally at the point of engagement.

Let’s wrap it up and take it to go.

This planning methodology is not always native or intuitive to a commercial systems

integrator, but putting the customer first will not only future-proof technology, but allow you, as the integrator, to unleash your potential as a true retail expert. And that's what retailers consider of value in a partner.



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