

Getting the most out of Digital Menu Boards

Creating Measurable Value

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Digital Menu Boards are popping up in restaurants of all kinds, from your local burger joint to the big national chains. Are these new menus a novel replacement for traditional printed boards, or are they an important advancement in creating real value for businesses? The answer depends on how you use them. If you truly understand the value of this new medium, you will reap significant rewards. This white paper has been created to help guide you through the process with practical tools and methodology.

One piece of advice we give is to expect significant results from your digital menu boards. This new medium can provide you with results beyond anything you have ever seen. The key is to follow a plan for creating real, measurable value.

Over the years we have developed a set of proven tools and methods to garner the greatest results. The following concepts and examples will help guide you through the process.

Be methodical

It may seem obvious that to be successful you need a plan. You would be surprised to find out how many digital menu board projects are deployed and operated without a plan in place. This is a critical mistake and most likely will result in less than optimal results. The diagram below illustrates a simple plan for building and operating digital menu boards.

The following outline should provide you with the basis for a well-structured plan:

Opportunity Analysis: The first step in the process is to be clear about your opportunity. Define in very specific terms, the key metrics that impact your success or failure. These metrics should be the basis for everything else you do. For each metric, it is important to define how you would like to achieve. Again, be very clear about the result you desire.

Wireframes and Requirements: Once you have clearly identified the opportunity, it is critical to have a solid design plan. Wireframes are basic sketches that define concepts for how each section of your menu is intended to work. SmarterSign has created a tool called the Prominence Pyramid™ to help connect opportunity with design requirements. This tool is described in greater detail later in this paper. Keep in mind during this process that wireframes should be created for each day part that offers unique opportunity in your business.

Initial Design: Once the wireframes are built, your design team or agency should be able to quickly create a first pass design. Remember that digital menu boards allow you to make changes quickly; don't get stuck in endless review of design before going live. We recommend getting the design to a place where it is "close" and get the content launched as quickly as possible. Once you have launched your menu boards, you should move quickly into measurement and iteration.



Iterate early and often

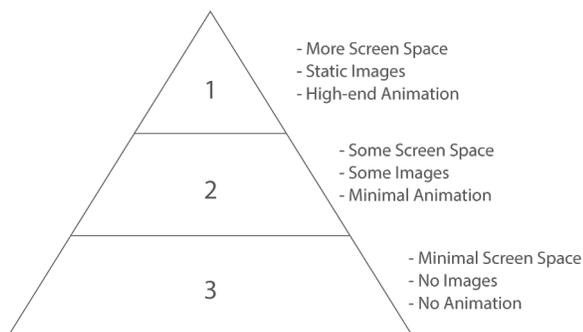
One of the important things to recognize about digital menu boards is that they are dynamic and can be changed rapidly. Typical changes to your digital menu boards shouldn't take more than a couple of minutes to complete and launch. With this capability at your fingertips, it is critical to iterate often and continually improve your results.

In the days of traditional menu boards, changes were made in monthly, quarterly or sometimes longer intervals. Digital Menu Boards give you the power to impact your business in real time. Many times you will find that a specific business situation can trigger the opportunity to iterate your digital menu boards.

Recently, a fast casual client of ours called me to thank us for providing dynamic control through our application. The client had experienced a shortage of the materials for the current LTO ("Limited Time Offer"). They noticed that they had materials for the previous month's LTO. With just a few clicks of a mouse, our client was able to change all of their menu boards to represent the previous month LTO. With this change, the business was able to continue to sell high-margin items, while simultaneously getting the most out of current inventory.

The Prominence Pyramid™

To assist clients in the effective operation of digital menu boards, SmarterSign has developed a series of tools. One of the most valuable tools is the Prominence Pyramid™. This tool helps businesses clearly define how much attention each menu item should receive, and a structure for expressing this.



The Prominence Pyramid is a simple way to divide content and design requirements based on the impact on your business.

Category 1 items should be the items that create the most value for your business. These may include combos, up-sells or limited time offers. These items should have the most prominence on your displays, and should have special attention in the areas of imagery and animation.

Category 2 items should have mid-level prominence, but should never take attention away from Category 1 items. These may be important products that are core to your menu, and help increase average check size.

Category 3 items are the elements that need to be presented but don't add any incremental value to your business. These are usually items that are obviously needed such as dressings or bread options, but don't add incremental value.

One piece of advice we give our clients is to use animations in a focused manner. You don't want to overwhelm your customers. You want to help guide them toward products you want them to purchase.

What will your return be?

By effectively managing your digital menu board initiative, you should expect significant returns. We have seen real world returns that any company would be overjoyed to experience. Below are examples of the value some SmarterSign clients have created by using these tools:

- A **Fast Casual** client has experienced a 6% to 10% increase in average check size from use of their digital menu boards. With these increases, the cost of implementation was recovered in less than two months.
- A **QSR** has experienced over a 100% increase in sales of specific targeted products.
- A **QSR** client experienced over a 50% increase in sales in specific product categories, over other locations without digital menu boards.

These examples are real world expressions of how well planned execution can lead to impressive results.

About SmarterSign

SmarterSign, Inc. is a premier provider of digital signage software solutions. SmarterSign has helped companies all over the world quickly take advantage of the opportunities of digital signage. SmarterSign's award winning SmarterSign Manager digital signage software enables business operators to take control of their communications with tools that are easy to learn, easy to deploy and easy to use. The company's digital signage menu board clients include Schlotzsky's Deli, Bubba Gump Shrimp, Bruegger's Bagels, Einstein Brothers, Junior's Cheesecake, Army Airforce Exchange Service ("AAFES") and many more in a wide range of food service industries. The company's headquarters are in the heart of midtown Manhattan.