

RISK-FREE DIGITAL MESSAGING PART ONE- CONSIDERING THE VARIABLES

There's a difference between marketing a business on Main Street in Waynesboro, Virginia and Broad Street in Richmond. Ask the marketing managers of any regionally-focused retail chain and they will agree that each of their store locations has its own recipe for the right marketing mix. But if conditions are right for digital messaging at a particular location, shouldn't it immediately become part of the organization's communications strategy, just like direct mail, radio and social media?

Having a clear picture of results limits the risks in going digital. Adding a digital sign where it makes good sense results in turning traffic into customers and, over this four-part series, we'll look at how this works. So many times as an advertising salesperson I've heard customers ask, “How much more business will I realize by purchasing an electronic message center as part of my company's marketing mix?” The answer depends on many variables, and being able to understand and control the variables is critical to the actual performance of a new digital sign.

Let's look at three important variables involved in the decision to go digital:

First, does the monthly traffic count justify the investment? A digital sign is a form of advertising media just like newspaper, radio, TV, and social media. You wouldn't make an investment in any media if the reach didn't justify the cost. One reputable traffic assessment tool we use to help clients understand the size and scope of their front-door market is the VDOT 2011 Traffic Data tool, available online. http://www.virginiadot.org/info/resources/Traffic_2011/AAD_T_PrimaryInterstate_2011.pdf

Second, can you effectively create and control motivational content so it reaches and persuades your target market to action? It's easy for a sign company to sell and install the hardware for a digital messaging system, but generating ongoing creative content is harder. Hence, a question worthy of asking prior to purchase is: Can you as a marketer, create ongoing, eye-catching content to get the most from this dynamic form of on-premise advertising, and how can your sign company help?

Third, if you have the drive-by market and the message, are you prepared for the incremental business derived from a new digital sign? Testimonials consistently show a growth in sales by adding digital messaging signs. Where the actual numbers end up depends on variables including traffic count and how well the marketer controls the sign's content and content timing. Here is a good example of proven sales growth from adding digital signage: Ice cream sales are driven by hot weather. Dairy Queen recently implemented exterior digital messaging signs at two of 35 stores in a particular territory. Summer sales at the two locations with digital signage jumped 10-15% higher than the other stores during the same period where weather patterns were similar, and the only marketing difference was the signage. (See <http://www.qsrweb.com/article/195123/Exterior-digital-message-boards-on-the-rise>.)

If your community codes allow digital signage, take a good look at your existing traffic count and whether or not you want to increase your business by at least 10-15% within a short time of implementing a new digital sign. (Stay tuned for “Part 2- An Active vs Passive Form of Advertising.”)

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“Traffic count” is an important variable to consider for digital signage.



Two examples of how electronic messaging can interact with prospects at high-traffic locations to increase business.