



WHITEPAPER

Digital Signage Content & Design Guide

It's no secret that digital signage is eye-catching, engaging, and more flexible than any traditional signage solution could ever be. Dynamic messaging made possible through digital signage means you have options, and options are limited when traditional signage is the only tool in your toolbox. With this in mind, you think it's time to make the investment and add digital signage solutions to your repertoire, aren't you? We would have to agree.

Unfortunately, not all digital signage content is created equal, and rushing to adopt new, game-changing marketing solutions without doing your homework is bad business. Additionally, when a digital layout is sloppy, rushed, or doesn't align with your business goals, it can severely dampen the benefits of your digital signage investment. Luckily, we're here to help steer you in the right direction.

Here's how to navigate the digital signage sandbox and come out the other end ahead of the game.

You Get What You Pay For



The adage is evident across the board in an age of technological advancement and digital marketing ingenuity—you get what you pay for.

Cutting corners to save money often results in buyer's remorse and inadequate solutions to significant challenges. Poor [digital signage design](#) comes in a multitude of forms:

Layouts that lack a consistent visual hierarchy – If the viewer can't understand what they're seeing and why it's displayed the way it is, the message loses immediate impact. Text that is too small or hard to read at a distance – Unreadable text speaks for itself.

Content templates that fail to play off each other to form a cohesive narrative – Coherent brand messaging is a company's bread and butter. Consistency promotes consumer trust, and digital signage that actively muddies the water through disparate content templates hurts more than it helps.

A lack of specificity toward the target market – Marketing and advertising 101 demands savvy brands and businesses define their target market first and foremost. How else will you know who you're trying to reach and how best to reach them? The same is true for successful digital signage solutions.

The list goes on. Usually, these types of underperforming designs appear when brands try to streamline their content creation process by cutting corners. These brands usually end up getting what they pay for.



"If you think good design is expensive, you should look at the cost of bad design."

- Ralf Speth, CEO of Jaguar Land Rover

What Dr. Speth means is that brands that cut crucial corners during their initial content creation phase will fail to produce long-term, significant results. Instead, these companies consistently end up repeating the process, investing valuable resources in strategies they don't quite understand, and burning through far more of their budget than they ever expected.

Fortunately, this outcome is avoidable for brands that take a measured and reasonable approach to their digital signage content creation. Do the research, know what your options are, and invest wisely with the help of experienced digital signage professionals. To help you along, we've developed this [digital signage content](#) & design guide to ensure you can navigate the landscape efficiently on the first attempt.

Developing Your Content Foundation

Content is king, or so everyone with some marketing prowess keeps telling you. The truth is, developing your content is just as important as promoting your product, advertising your services, or making the sale.

Your content is who you are as a brand, a company, and a trustworthy business partner in the sense that strong content is what many consumers see first and remember longest. Without thought-out, influential content on your side, you're running a losing race right out of the gate.



Your content development process should begin with a focus on three invaluable pillars around which you'll build the rest of your content campaigns:

Determining content goals – Accurately identifying your goals is just as important as defining your target audience. Without goals to work towards, you're shooting in the dark with that bright new digital signage.

Building a content strategy – Components of your content strategy are the individual colors that fill in the big picture goals you've sketched for your business and brand.

Assigning a Digital Signage Champion – The ringleader of your digital signage circus, a dedicated Digital Signage Champion is responsible for wrangling together various content components to present a cohesive, successful strategy day after day.

Define Content Goals

What do you want your signage to accomplish? It's a straightforward question that many brands attempt to answer in broad, unfocused ways. Do you want to raise awareness of sales promotions? Do you want to drive business to your brick-and-mortar store? Or do you want to educate viewers while they're waiting? These goals will inform every other stage of your design strategy.



As you begin to look for content, keep these goals in mind. To start, look at what your competitors are doing and see how you can adapt your own material to create similar results.

Play with different formats until you find the one that best suits your needs. Unfortunately, "I want to reach everyone" is a common, admirable goal, but it's impractical at best and detrimental at worst. Define your goals, don't paint them in broad strokes. Whittle down your target audience and your content advertising intentions into as fine a point as you can to ensure maximum impact.

Build a Strategy

Specificity is critical for your content strategy. Strategies provide direction, reduce mistakes, and support data collection for future content production. You're building a roadmap toward success that can be used and reused when you formulate clear strategies.

Examine your goals (as defined above) and think about how you can build a piece-by-piece content layout to address your audience's needs. This means understanding the mindset of your customers as they view your signage, determining what [stage of the buyer's journey](#) they're in, and incorporating messaging that will best motivate them to action.

Assign a Digital Signage Champion

A commonly overlooked aspect of digital signage integration is assigning an organizational champion. This person is in charge of developing content, managing content layouts, updating signage technology, and pressing management for more digital signage implementation tools. Just as a dedicated social media manager serves to enhance and align messaging, a [Digital Signage Champion](#) keeps their finger on the pulse at all times. They know when and how to adapt and evolve your digital signage solutions when it's needed most.

Don't neglect this critical step—digital signage strategies need ongoing support to maintain their effectiveness.

Content Elements to Include

You've built your content foundation, and now it's time to prop up the walls and start decorating with actual elements that will enhance your digital signage content. There are three primary "categories" of elements to include here:

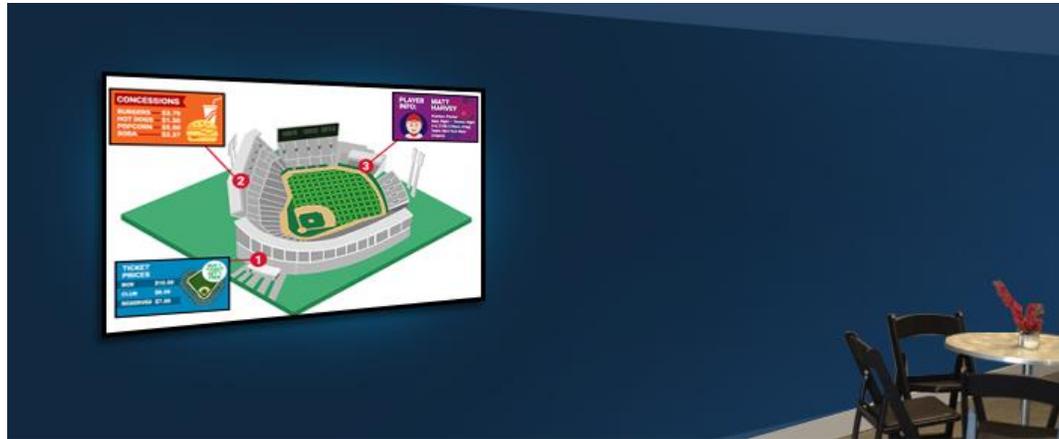
1 Call to Action
Compels consumers to act, buy, or think a certain way.

2 Content design elements
Aspects of design that enhance the message and increase visibility.

3 Text elements
The meat and potatoes of your digital signage, so to speak. Provides vital information.

Call to Action

Your call to action needs to be more than just a link to a website. A compelling call to action can be a gentle nudge or a friendly push meant to make the reader an active participant rather than just a passive viewer. Anyone can see your signage, but you want consumers to be...well...called to action.



This text may be the most critical of any you include in your digital template. Make it short, simple, and easy to digest. Use trigger words that awaken need in your audience (save money, easy, new, proven) and make it clear what you want them to do. Short-yet-successful calls to action almost invoke an involuntary reaction if worded well and presented professionally.

Design Considerations

Design considerations are as varied and colorfully expressive as you can imagine, especially when you're working with a digital signage palette. This can present a challenge as much as it can a solution when new digital sign owners decide it's wise to use every color, texture, and design consideration available to them. While digital signage is a valuable tool to have at your disposal, your signage can quickly become overcrowded, oversaturated, and undecipherable if you get carried away.

Here are a few of the most critical design considerations to include in your templates:



- **Visual hierarchy** – Are the most important elements the easiest to recognize? Are they in the largest font or the most eye-catching location? Why or why not?
- **Motion** – Whether it's a video, a shifting transition, or a simple animation, [motion-based designs](#) are highly engaging. Adding a little action to an otherwise static digital signage display concept can change the way your message is presented and received.
- **Images** – Naturally, if you're designing your signage concept as a slide-style presentation, every slide should include supplementary visuals or images that draw attention to the copy and help create visual appeal. The simple truth is, passersby won't take the time to read a wall of text.
- **Variety** – Don't make every piece of content look the same. Use asymmetrical layouts, varying compositions, and creative designs to give each slide some flair. On the same token, it's alright to re-purpose templates and design elements from one campaign to another in some way, but it's important to realize consumers will quickly latch on to a design format they see over and over again. For example, if you use the same template/design to present important information that is updated daily, consumers will learn to look in specific spots for specific information. They'll come to expect that information to always be in that exact spot every day. This is both good (in the sense that you've created a habit and a routine) and bad (in the sense that the instant you change that template, your message is muddled for consumers who've gotten used to the design).



On-Screen Text

The [on-screen text](#) is the workhorse of your digital signage—it's the primary element for getting across your business's value proposition. As such, the most important thing to remember is that legibility is key. Make the font as large as possible (within reason) and supplement it with high-impact visuals. For added readability, generously use bulleted lists, formatting, and white space to break up text blocks.



Again, content elements are in no way set in stone when you're working with digital signage, and what works for one brand may be disastrous or misguided for another. Color, text font, contrast, and all the various artistic in-betweens can be mixed, matched, and mashed together to either work well or create an eye sore. The solution is finding a balance and direction to bring together design elements that create attractive, irresistible signage.

Best Practices for Creating Content

Starting from scratch with a brand new digital signage template can be intimidating and exciting. It's a learning experience and a chance to quite literally change the way your present your company and brand messaging to the world. Still not sure where to begin?



When in doubt, use these guidelines to get your digital signage off the ground:



- **Make it visually appealing:** If you want readers to glance at your signage, it needs to be appealing to the eye. Get acquainted with some [compelling elements of design](#), familiarize yourself with the color wheel, and learn how to use contrast and emphasis to your advantage.
- **Avoid mistakes:** Don't let common mistakes trip you up. The biggest offenders we see are slides that are too cluttered, text that is too small, garish colors that do nothing to reinforce brand identity, and slides that transition too quickly to be read by the average viewer. That's not to mention simply spelling and arranging words and sentences correctly on the screen. There's no quicker way to discredit yourself as an industry expert and tell customers you don't care much about your image than to misspell words on digital signage that people see every day.
- **Give it the "squint test":** Ask a coworker to squint their eyes at each piece of content and see if they can make out the messaging. The idea is that if it can't be read with half-closed eyes, it'll be too small to be read at a distance. This may not be a problem for restaurant menu signage, where viewers will be standing close by, but for outdoor signage, it's an absolute must. Bonus points if your coworker can understand the messaging when cross-eyed.

Still feeling a little overwhelmed and unsure of how to start? Don't worry. We get that the digital signage content creation process can be confusing, especially when you're just starting out. While we believe that the best and most effective digital signage strategies come from businesses that build personalized layouts that suit their business models, there's nothing wrong with looking to other organizations for inspiration. Check out these providers for some great ideas that you can put to work in your signage strategy:

- [Screenfeed](#) – From social apps to news to health, Screenfeed is a great all-purpose content shop with content examples from numerous industries.
- [SignageCreator](#) – Perfect for retail organizations, restaurateurs, and professional buildings, SignageCreator offers plenty of corporate templates and signage examples.
- [Accuweather](#) – The premier outlet for weather applications and digital forecasting templates, Accuweather is a great place to find professional templates that would look at home on any national weather channel.
- [WovenMedia](#) – WovenMedia is a comprehensive shop for all signage purposes—entertainment, education, news, and more.

Bringing Your Digital Content Strategy to Life Takes Work

The above guide will set you well on your way to bringing your digital content strategy to life, but it's you and your Digital Signage Champion who will keep that heart beating. Great signage, digital or not, requires a careful eye for design and a constant finger on the pulse. Trends come and go, consumers can be fickle, and [design elements](#) that reach potential customers today may be outdated tomorrow.



That may be a bit exaggerated, but know that times change, and with digital signage in your corner, you can quickly and easily change with the

times if you have to. Altering a design element or introducing a new, exciting brand message used to cost brands thousands of dollars and require a completely new sign to be fabricated from scratch.

Today, digital signage solutions can be pre-programmed, pre-designed, and are editable in an instant. Keep these design principles in mind every time you develop a new piece of content, and your brand will be safe from sloppy designs and ill-suited templates that plague so many organizations that cut corners with their digital strategies.

Digital signage continues to evolve, and it's asymmetrically thinking innovators, architects, and designers that find successful new ways to use the technology. Look to successful designers for inspiration if you're feeling stuck, refine and enhance your message using design and text elements, and when all else fails or you feel overwhelmed, don't hesitate to [ask for help from seasoned professionals](#) who know what they're doing.

To learn about Mvix Digital Signage solutions:



mvixdigitalsignage.com



866.310.4923

About Mvix

At Mvix, our love for technology drives who we are and what we do.

We have been a leader in turnkey digital signage for over a decade, offering innovative visual communication solutions for educational facilities, food service, corporate offices, healthcare facilities, houses of worship, manufacturing facilities. Our focus is on cost-effective, feature-rich, cloud-hosted solutions that, coupled with our passionate and professional team, will make your digital signage a success.



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