



June 29, 2011

An open letter to CEOs and COOs

**Re: Enterprise use of Dynamic, Place-based Media**

By now you have likely heard of an initiative in your organization being called “Dynamic Signage”, “Location-based Digital Display” or “Enterprise Media”, or you may have seen it operating in your organization or a competitors.

It may have “bubbled up” through your Chief Marketing, Information, Technology, Financial, Staffing or Visitor Experience Officer, or your ad agencies.

It is typically a high-payback initiative when planned and executed properly. Wherever the initiative is being championed, it is likely a bright star in your organization looking to achieve increased revenues and brand equity, cost reductions or deferrals and leverage past investment.

The medium has a significant, proven record of achieving these outcomes based on its guiding principles that “visual is the new language of business,” “visual communications at the point of decision, waiting or gathering gets noticed”.

The enabling technologies have matured and are cost effective, and there are volumes of information on this technology application from your preferred suppliers and from many other sources including many industry associations.

The caution, and *the need for your involvement* are based on the following:

- 1) The implications and benefits reach across organizational boundaries. Brand equity and perceptions by patrons, staff, etc. is generated as location-based dynamic media delivers branding and merchandising messages while simultaneously providing ambiance and “energy” to an environment. Multiple departments will have involvement in the successful project including at least marketing, information technologies, the Information Officer, information technologies, purchasing and human resources. CEO or COO sponsorship positions the dynamic media initiative to maximize the return on investment across business units.
- 2) The most successful planning is vendor-neutral. As the processes for planning and supply of this medium continue to mature, vendors can provide useful input, but the most successful planning is vendor-neutral, objective and based on best

value to your organization. This planning can be achieved, and risk mitigated, through the use of an experienced consultant or system integrator. The key is in maximizing benefits while minimizing time and investment.

- 3) The value of dynamic signage is clear, but “making it happen” can be complex. Involving multiple departments (as is necessary to its success), planning (essential to maximize ROI) and sourcing (to assure economical, scalable operations) have challenged many organizations, in particular when the initiative is managed by already busy staff. The mountains of available information can add to their confusion.

In using the available expertise and to assure maximum benefit, the following is suggested as *your action plan*.

- a) Serve as the project sponsor to give it profile and focus.
- b) Assure a person with communications responsibility is project lead and expect that person to involve other stakeholders.
- c) Host a briefing about the media, including what it is, the benefits and costs that could be expected, and the organizational implications. Its use in similar or competing organizations should be included, along with a proposed, preliminary action plan.
- d) Request a demonstration or “proof of concept” installation at the earliest possible time. In supporting the Project Leader(s), this will encourage departmental collaboration and help clarify expected benefits and outcomes. It will also help define operational processes, including “content” and impact measurement approaches.
- e) Reports on the refinement of planning and resources should be expected on at least a quarterly basis as the use of the media advances. Look for notes on how the dynamic media integrates with other communications approaches such as mobile, Internet, advertising and staff communications.

Dynamic place-based media is providing proven high value. Effective planning is fundamental to its successful use. As the medium provides value across organizational boundaries, the CEO or COO provides necessary project focus. The contributions of a little time have very high payback.

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