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Integrating Queue Management
and Digital Signage

**How Q-Flow® digital signage and queue information combine
to produce effective in-store advertising.**

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Integrating Queue Management and Digital Signage

Up until a few years ago, Queue Management Systems have been almost synonymous with electronic LED displays, usually simple numeric ones. Even today, many queuing solutions use LED technology to display ticket numbers and guide customers to the point of service. Lately though, more and more organizations are choosing to incorporate multimedia displays into their queuing systems.

There are several reasons for this new trend:

- Prices of large, clearly readable screens (Plasma or LCD technologies) are continuously dropping, whereas the price of LED technology is steady.

- Multimedia screens are highly flexible and fit many uses, thanks to high resolution, colorfulness, and inherent capacity to show video & DVD contents, TV, Web, different text fonts, and so on.

- Multimedia screens utilize a number of standard communication protocols for connecting to the computer system or video source, allowing a freedom in choosing equipment. LED displays, on the other hand, use many different proprietary protocols, limiting the choice of equipment by its software compatibility.

- Many organizations use flat screen displays as digital signage solutions in their branch offices, and wish to make use of these screens rather than purchase separate LED displays for their queue management system.

Various Queue Management Systems today support the option to call customers forward, and provide directions using PC monitors. However, the potential that lies in the combination of multimedia displays and queuing systems is much greater than just calling customers. This article explores the possibilities, and demonstrates how Q-Flow® helps realize them.

Combining Contents

As a business, we might have different types of content that we would like to present to customers, at the points of sale and service:

- Ambient Video – landscapes and nature, appropriate music clips and so on, to make the waiting experience more pleasant.

- Advertising – conveying either general messages relating to the brand and business (which may sometime resemble the ambient videos..) or specific product promotions.

- General information – news or other relevant information, which may keep waiting customers interested.

- Local information – like presenting available services, detailing the store's new business hours, explaining how to fill forms and so on.

- Queue Management information – calling customers forward, directions to the point of service, current waiting time and so on.

With multimedia displays, we can freely design our screen layout, so that we may combine these content types in many different ways. One of the organization's main goals in designing this layout should be to bring together contents that are important to the business (what we want the customers to see) with those important to the customer. For instance, very often we would see TV screens presenting ads, while a "news update strip" is placed at the bottom of the picture. This combination draws the customers' attention to the screen, exposing them to the advertising.

In places where a queuing system is employed, integrating it into the digital signage system would be even more effective than using the news strip. Different people show different levels of interest in the news, but all waiting customers need to follow the progress of the queue they are waiting on.

Integrating these content types requires suitable software; for this purpose, we may use a dedicated Content Management System, or take advantage of content management tools embedded in the queuing system, if such tools exist. Q-Flow system has a built-in application (Q-Flow Digital Signage Module) which enables simple integration of queue status information, advertising and visual contents (in Web format, like Adobe Flash), and text updates.sc

Matching Content to Audience

As advertisers, we will always attempt to match the marketing content we are presenting to the target audience. The movie "Minority Report" portrays a futuristic world where publicity boards identify people on the street or in stores, and address them in a personalized manner. The movie may be science fiction, but this form of personal addressing is largely based on current trends in the advertising world. Today the technologies that enable this form of personal communication are not yet widespread, and it is likely that many customers would be deterred by this overly forward type of approach. However, Q-nomy's integrated Queuing and Digital Signage solution allows us to implement a more subtle approach for personalized advertising.

The target audience at the points of service is composed of people who are scattered in waiting areas, and are following the queue progress. Q-Flow maintains a live database, which contains all the significant characteristics of this audience: how many customers are there, who they are, what services they await, and any additional information that can be extracted from the enterprise information systems using the customer ID. This leads to a simple conclusion: if we can identify the viewers of a particular screen (anyone whose queue information is on that screen), we can present the marketing content that matches those viewers - on this screen.

Now, clever advertising should generally be tactful, and the use of our knowledge of the audience must be prudent. We may possess enough data to welcome a customer with big colorful displays saying "Welcome to the branch, Jimmy Johnson, we have a special loan to cover all your gambling debts", but that could hardly be considered wise marketing (not to mention that Q-Flow presents a more suitable platform for such a personal message – that is, Personal Advertising with Tickets and Brochures). But, by recognizing that our audience currently contains a number of customers in need of a loan, we may choose to show an impersonal advertisement describing our Easy Loan service.

Q-Flow Digital Signage module comes complete with all the fundamental tools for managing audience-matched advertising. Content can be arranged to suit our customers profiles, the services they currently require and of course specific waiting areas. This takes part of the random element out of the marketing people's work: rather than ask them to shoot their arrows at all directions, we can mark specific targets for them. In other words, marketing can now build a campaign that includes business logic, stating to which customers and on what conditions a certain ad or message will be shown.

Branch Campaign Management

As mentioned previously, advanced queuing solutions may include more than one channel for getting the marketing messages across. Q-Flow Digital Signage is linked to the following components.

- Q-Flow Reception Point module allows personal information to be presented to the customer on the self-service kiosk screen, or on printed tickets and brochures. The printed media would be the preferred channel for personal messages, as customers carry the tickets while they wait, and have more time to read them.

- Q-Flow Info Page module is the System's front end for Digital Signage. It is usually bundled with the Q-Flow Device Manager, which takes care of local functionality (like displaying contents when communication with the central server goes down).

- Q-Flow Service Console presents information that assists agents interacting with customers. It can indicate the marketing messages that the customer has been exposed to, or present additional promotions for the agent to convey to the customer.

By integrating all these components, Q-Flow enables marketing directors to create "total in-branch campaigns" that envelop customers throughout their stay in the branch: starting with the personalized message at the entrance, through the more general contents in the waiting area, and ending with the agent who may, at the end of the process, close a deal.

For more information please visit Customer Flow Management

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