The annual listing of 20 companies that are at the forefront of providing Retail Solution and transforming businesses
Aurora Digital Signage

Reinventing Customer Experience in the New Norm

The COVID-19 pandemic is rewriting all the existing rules of the retail industry. Up until the onset of the pandemic, fierce brand identification drove consumer buying patterns. And a big part of the in-store shopping experience was dependent on hands-on trials. But here we are, in the middle of a global catastrophe—with a shaken brand loyalty, newfound eagerness for contactless shopping, "Zoom-ready" fashion trends, and a totally turned over retail sector. The crisis has not only altered the retailers' financial outlook for the year but their future direction as well. Under such radical shifts in the sector, one asset that has rather proven to be indispensable for retail during and beyond the pandemic is—digital signage. The function of digital signage in the retail industry today is indeed expanding well beyond its traditional role. For instance, in the rapidly evolving customer landscape, with preferences like contactless retail increasingly coming to the fore, digital signage is offering a unique channel for retail businesses to engage with their customers. As the customers are growingly concerned about being in shared environments, digital signage is proving to be a vital tool inside retail stores in navigating in-store customer traffic by displaying store layout information while reducing employee-customer interactions. Furthermore, digital signage is aiding retailers today to disseminate critical health and safety content in real-time, regarding COVID-19 symptoms, PPE requirements, precautionary measures, and so on. On the whole, digital signage is substantially improving the employee and customer experience, a.k.a. retail experience.

"The role that digital signage is playing in today's retail environment is versatile, to say the least," says Brent Robinson, CEO of Aurora Digital Signage. "It is donning a pivotal role in reinstating consumer confidence in retail environments by providing real-time customer service."

In fact, Brent's firm Aurora Digital Signage is one of the frontrunners in bringing about this transition first-hand for their extensive clientele across various industries, including retail, banking, healthcare, and manufacturing. Aurora's patented .NET content management platform is transforming the way businesses are communicating with their customers and employees. In particular, they are enhancing the timely communications of retail businesses by creating tailor-made solutions, leaning on their boutique service model and leveraging the expertise of their in-house development team.

In that regard, it is the intuitiveness of the platform that has steered Aurora ahead of its competition in the digital signage space. "We have based our platform on the patent that we had received for smartphone interaction with digital signage a few years ago," says Susan Robinson, the COO of Aurora. She further emphasizes that it is their dedicated customer base that has enabled them to remain at the forefront in the domain for more than a decade. "The expertise of Aurora in bringing about this transition first-hand for their clients has been and will continue to be our impetus to reinvent the wheel, in our clients' diverse needs," exudes Brent.

Aurora is hardware agnostic as long as the computers have a Microsoft Pro operating system with a 64-bit CPU and 4GB RAM. Interestingly, the software uses extremely low bandwidth, thereby allowing connectivity via WiFi, LAN, or even cellular, which is particularly helpful in the locations that do not have the sufficient frequency range for digital signages. At the same time, Aurora has also given predominant consideration to the security of the platform by providing 32 random keycode encryptions at three different levels—user, network, and panel—to avoid any infiltration. That's not all! Aurora can also provide these robust functionalities via API. And, if a client needs a customized API, the development team at Aurora has the expertise to modify it according to the client's requirements. For instance, the clients can connect their inventory systems to the point of sales (POS) databases via Aurora's API to show the real-time status of their products in the inventory. This facet is especially advantageous for fast food restaurants, grocery chains, and medical dispensaries that have to update their menu boards periodically.

Notably, the platform comes with an emergency alert feature as well. If there is a shortage of a product or if an urgent safety message has to be broadcasted, this feature can override the scheduled content to convey that particular message. Alongside this, retail stores no longer have to worry about copyright infringements if they want to play apt music in their retail stores, as business licensed music is obtainable through Aurora's software. They can change music stations directly through the software at any location according to their convenience. Aurora also provides reseller and white label opportunities. It is particularly beneficial for entrepreneurs and companies that want to have their own digital signage platform. Above all, banking on its customer-centric approach, Aurora tries to tie all these robust functionalities under one roof for its clients by providing exceptional turnkey services. "We are a boutique business that allows for customization to meet our clients' diverse needs," exalts Brent.

Such expertise has made Aurora's digital signage solutions valuable across various sectors, owing to its power to cater to a client's diverse needs. Particularly for the retail sector looking for granular marketing strategies, Aurora is providing much-needed flexibility. To cite an example, Aurora has many clients in the retail banking sector, which are using the platform's flexibility to focus on various aspects of customer needs. The banks can be highly selective on what and when they want to advertise. And quite naturally, this is enhancing the relationship and communication between the bank employees and customers, and opening new revenue possibilities via more personalized marketing programs. A case in point is the Bank of the West that has more than 250 branches across 9 U.S. states. They are extensively leveraging digital signage content to educate their customers on what they are offering, while also improving the aesthetics of their promotional marketing campaigns.

“Our product is developed from the ground up keeping in mind the enterprise-level customers who need to instantly update or adjust their content across all the locations or in a particular location at a particular time,” adds Brent.

In a sector where superior customer experience is the pulse, Aurora's digital signage solutions is indeed proving to be a major competitive differentiator for retail businesses. However, Brent emphasizes that it is their dedicated customer base that has enabled them to remain at the forefront in the domain for more than a decade. “And while on the technology front, we are all set to launch a new platform in 2021, which aims at reinventing the wheel, in our hearts, we truly believe it is the relationship that we have built with our customers, which has been and will continue to be our impetus for growth,” concludes Brent.