

Bringing Messages to Life

By Lyle Bunn

This article was published in the April 9, 2010 Wall Street Journal, East Coast Editions as part of a special supplement on Digital Signage / Digital Place-based Media published by MediaPlanet. Lyle Bunn served as principal writer and editor of this supplement.

“Visual is our new language” claims Paco Underhill, founder and Managing Director of Envirosell, whose books “Why We Buy” and “Call of The Mall” are published in 27 languages.

The power of visual communications applies to staff and student communications through Digital Place-based media as many organizations use the medium for internal purposes. As computer screens bog down with internal email messages and the memos abound, key messages related to priorities, directions, success and culture of the enterprise are presented on digital signage.

In a November 2009 survey conducted by the Digital Signage Association 60% of 1200 respondents said they have no third party advertising on their displays, and 52% said their network was entirely employee-facing.

In facilities where not everyone has email access, or online time is limited, digital signage is a valuable piece of communications infrastructure. Displays at entrances, in waiting and gathering areas allow employees to keep abreast of corporate news and happenings.

When linked with mass notification and alert capabilities, as is increasingly the case in the campus environment, it becomes a fundamental element of life at work and on campus. Many organizations use Digital Signage to inform their visitors of corporate news and directions.

Place-based media is increasingly used to trigger mobile website access, downloads and interaction, to encourage telephoning to a pre-recorded message or to visit a website. Interface with mobile devices through Bluetooth and QR codes is expected to increase.

Increasingly, digital signage is more fully integrated into the form and function of retail, event, transit or gathering environment or a display, in which case it becomes “*architectural media.*”

Architectural media is the integration of place-based dynamic media with physical infrastructure to provide a compelling, high impact experience in which the brand is clearly and powerfully expressed and communications goals can be more fully achieved.

Whether stand-alone or as part of architectural media, digital signage works to inform and influence to achieve staff, student and visitor communications goals.

Lyle Bunn is an independent consultant and educator in North America’s Digital Signage, Digital Place-based and new media industries. www.LyleBunn.com

