Retailing goes digital

Abhimanyu Gupta, **MD, Actis Technologies explains the importance of digital signage that has become a need of every retailer. Sandhya Patil reports**

How do you build customer loyalty?

Customer loyalty is the hardest thing to achieve for any one in any field. We constantly strive to keep pace with our customers' demands – and try to bridge the gap between customer expectations and what we deliver.

This is done in various ways; a few of them are as under:

- Offering value and correctly identifying and meeting the clients needs
- Maintaining fair pricing policies
- Maintaining deadlines
- Educating the customer about the latest in technology and guiding him about the best fitting solution for his need (high customisation)
- Having partnerships with the world's leading brands—thus more quality products to be offered to our end users
- Providing great after sales services (in form of AMCs, and so on).

A large portion of our business is generated from repeat customers. These customers hold testimony to the fact that we have successfully established a sound name and reputation amongst them. We thus have a solid client base and Actis continues to be a preferred partner in the audiovisual solutions space.

What are the challenging aspects of this business?

In the audiovisual arena the competition is fierce, price erosion is constant and the products/ technology gets upgraded often – are all very challenging aspects of this business.

In-store merchandising plays a critical role. Elucidate.

We have often heard of the phrase "the shopping experience". This is something connected to the in-store merchandising. It is ever so essential that the in-store display, messaging, tagging systems, layout, directing customers, and so on is done in a proper fashion to enhance the shopping experience or increase sales.

A Digital Signage solution helps you to augment this "shopper's experience" and create an ambience conducive to sales. It plays a part in complementing in-house merchandising by giving the store a high tech look and feel.

Focus on sales can be fine-tuned by the day or by the hour, depending on the stores inventory levels, buyer preferences and many more.

Tell us about Digital Signage Software. How does it work? Could you please explain this with an illustration?

Digital signage software solutions are extensively used the world over in retail. It will enable you to display, distribute and control digital media on networked digital displays from a central location with much ease.

How it works:

- Simply import any existing digital data developed with your usual graphic tools to create high-impact, attention-getting digital signage content. Mostly no new tools/ software need to be developed/ learnt for making the content.
- A Digital Signage solution will offer you a number of helpful ways to manage a large amount of data/ content and develop sophisticated content play schedules that bring out the best result. The user-friendly interface will let you manage hundreds of content pieces and complex schedules with a simple drag and drop method.
- Once you schedule your content to play on your network of digital displays, the software pushes the content to the player and your content starts playing. It monitors the system for you 24x7 and alerts you if there's a problem with the hardware, software, or network.

Digital Signage in a corporate office

open an account

⬦ There are different ways to deliver the content to the remote displays.

What problems do the retailers face? And how does Digital Signage help them to overcome these problems? How does it add importance to any retail environment?

A Digital Signage solution has a plethora of significant advantages for a retailer. Mentioned below are a few advantages, which address specific business problems of a retailer:

⬦ Use of attractive digital graphics that compel buyers to enter your store

⬦ Help buyers to get around in a large store, to their areas of interest

⬦ Helps in branding and uplifting the image of the store

⬦ Helps to place advertisements, promotions and in store events

⬦ Give product information, which helps a buyer's decision-making

⬦ In-house trainings and imparting information to your in-store employees.

Digital Signage software delivers more than just aesthetics. It delivers measurable financial results. For example, integration with your backend applications enables this software to promote high stock volume items by automatically lowering the price or promoting special deals with a trigger.

Usually a Digital Signage System is highly flexible since it supports a variety of display technologies, sizes and resolutions regardless of the brand/manufacturer. Also the ease of operation is a big advantage owing to a great user interface and rich functionality.

How is the response of the retailers adopting a digital signage in India?

Broadly speaking, digital signage in India is in its nascent stage. This may be due to the fact that not many retailers are aware of the available solutions and the advantages of digital signage.

Yet, in urban India digital signage is gaining momentum due to the quick results of the same. Many retailers have adopted digital signage for capturing attention of the buyers/ customers, for educating the buyer, announcing the launch of new products and schemes, for branding, and also to create a great shopping ambience, which looks technology rich.

In rural India, which is also witnessing a transition and copying their urban counterparts – digital signage may well become the next big thing in a retail environment.

What opportunities do you foresee in this business?

With the boom in the Indian economy across all sectors and verticals, it is no surprise that audio-video solutions are being embraced like never before.

This economic surge has brought about a great change in the mindsets of people. People are a lot more receptive to such solutions and are usually convinced when considering the compelling 'Return on Investment' and the many tangible and intangible benefits.

Actis is putting in a lot of efforts to educate retailers/ buyers on the advantages of digital signage. The possibilities are endless.

Tell us about your clients in India and internationally.

Although we have recently started working with digital signage solutions, we have already installed several solutions for the enterprise and retail sectors.

There will be a lot more activity in this field in the coming months.

What is your company's projected growth for the coming five years?

We are looking at a CAGR of minimum 25 per cent. ▣