

Digital Touch Points

Reaching your audience on all four screens

Randy Palubiak



Introduction

A 'Digital Touch Point' is the reaching of an individual through a digital media device to deliver your message. In the context of digital touch points we refer to four screens. Typically these screens are television, computer, tablet or smart phone. As you move down the list you get more and more personal. At the smart phone level you truly do have an "audience of one." The type of screen you are using will dictate what type of message you can deliver. On television you are going for mass demographics based on time of day and region. On the smart phone you want to be talking to the owner with messages that are unique to that person.

In a previous white paper Digital Signage Enabling & Enhancing Enterprise Communications: The Blending of Communication Channels we talked about how technology is impacting the use of video-based communications and dramatically increasing our access to view information as consumers and in the workplace. We demonstrated how digital signage was being used to compliment enterprise communication strategies.

In this paper we describe how enterprise organizations are delivering content using a combination of digital media to educate, inform and train: both customers and employees! We are blurring the lines between the touch points. We recognize that our messages and our content must be consistent and our brand message clear no matter which touch point is involved.

Typically, your target audiences use more than one media device. This allows you to attract on the bigger screens and truly communicate or directly interact on the small screen. For example – television ad or website banner invites the user to text the word "coupon" to a specific number. The next communication will be on the small screen and will be personalized.

Also, we address how marketing, sales, training and other communications executives are collaborating with their Information Technology (IT) organizations. Working together they develop business strategies for media usage and corporate communication plans that leverage their infrastructure and resources to gain a competitive advantage. A screen on the showroom floor can easily be used to deliver employee communication before the store opens, the digital device used to look up inventory can also be used to take training during off-peak times. This collaboration is resulting in a greater adoption of video solutions because the infrastructure cost is spread across multiple needs and the ROI is realized more quickly.



CUSTOMER INFORMATION

EMPLOYEE TRAINING



Digital Touch Points

Reaching the audience on multiple screens

Over the past few years, we have experienced the convergence of video and data, the blending of media channels, unified communications and collaboration. This convergence has also come to the devices where we receive these media messages.

During this time, the use of video to educate, entertain, inform, and train has reached its highest levels ever. We have become a digital media society. We have progressed from the once popular state of viewing video content, "...when and where it was available," to "...where virtually everyone can be reached everywhere, all of the time, on devices of all types and screens of all sizes."

Increasingly, enterprises are using video to grow revenues, reduce costs and improve productivity by increasing the number of times they touch customers and employees with high-quality and impactful messages.

These digital media channels are what make it possible. It is the new media technology and solutions, which are used to create, deliver, display and manage all of the content people and organizations are creating. Remember:



Your employees are creating video content:

In the public it is called: User-generated-content (UGC).

In the enterprise, it is called: Employee-generated-content (EGC).

The content is distributed over an endless number of digital media channels, including but not limited to:

- YouTube and other on-line video sites;
- Personal, enterprise and social media web-sites;
- Files attached to emails and text messages;
- Hard and removable media.

The content may be viewed:

In real-time (**live**) or at the convenience of the viewer (**on-demand**).

Within the enterprise, content may be displayed on:

- Large screens for group meetings and sessions in break rooms, meeting rooms, training rooms, and conference rooms;
- Kiosk screens for digital signage applications in high traffic areas as employee or customer-facing services
- Desktops for individual viewing and training
- Mobile devices such as laptops, tablets and smart phones for anytime, anywhere viewing

In addition, interaction and feedback are critical components to successfully leveraging digital touch points to meet business goals. Depending on the system design and viewing device, this may include audio interaction, chat and other keyboard style interaction or possibly the use of quick response (QR) codes.

Of course, implementing the media channels and establishing the number and type of desired digital touch points is only as good as the content and the means to measure its effectiveness.

Blurred Lines Brings Clarity and Opportunity

B2B meets B2C - Enterprises reach both internal and external audiences

The lines are blurring between B2B and B2C communication. Internally businesses are using digital media to communicate with and train their employees. Externally they are using digital media as a way to deliver marketing, informational and sales related messages.

As consumers modify their buying habits between on-line and in-store purchasing, advertising, marketing and promotions are conducted via digital media in-home, on-line, in-store and virtually everywhere on display screens of all sizes. Similar, if not the same, digital media is used to educate, inform and train employees. And now, employees are very likely using personal devices for business applications or vice-versa. These and other contributing factors are very good for the enterprise community. Why? It creates opportunity for organizations to leverage these touch points to further the impact of video and digital media. Those in the advertising space might say, "It's all about the touch points," where the objective is to achieve a favorable CPM (cost per thousand views: impressions). Those in enterprise communications must embrace a similar mindset: "Utilize a blend of media solutions and touch points to effectively and efficiently reach the target audiences."

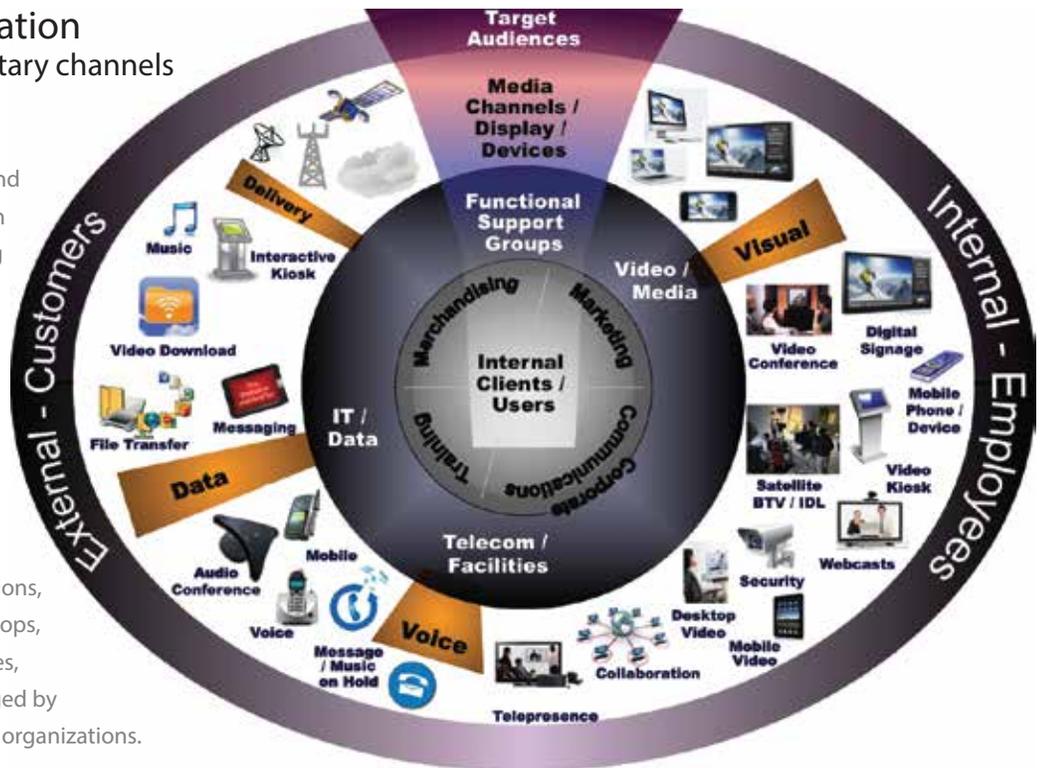
A good example is Lowe's, a home improvement retail giant. Lowe's is implementing a number of technology upgrades including increased bandwidth for its network infrastructure and in-store wireless network. According to Robert Niblock, Lowe's CEO, this is to "...handle video downloads for employee selling tools and customer Wi-Fi usage." In addition, Lowes is providing 42,000 iPhones to store employees so they can better serve customers and "...enable the ability to tender a sale at any place in the store." Niblock adds "These upgrades paved the way for a simple and seamless customer experience with Lowe's." †

Cross-Functional Collaboration

Enterprises leverage complimentary channels

The silos in enterprises are coming down as media managers work with executives and learning departments to communicate with and train employees. Also, they are working closely with marketing, merchandising and sales executives to communicate with and market to targeted consumers.

This is achieved by leveraging a variety of complimentary, yet robust, media channels including the internet, intranet, business television (BTV) and video-conferencing systems, interactive distance learning solutions, digital signage, and of course mobility (laptops, tablets and smartphones). These are devices, infrastructure and systems primarily managed by the information technology (IT) and facility organizations.



Internal clients (executives, marketing, sales and learning managers), media managers (story tellers and producers of compelling content), and IT organizations are also aggregating resources and efforts to develop media business strategies to clearly define business objectives, identify the right blend of media channels and solution-set, allocate funding responsibilities, and establish the appropriate workflow. It is this unified (blended) effort that is new and gaining traction in pro-active enterprise organizations.

† April 2012 Information Week, Chris Murphy: From Lowe's to Coke, 8 CEOs Talk Tech Strategy

Another good example is Cabela's Inc., a specialty retailer of hunting, fishing, camping, and related outdoor merchandise. Cabela's has evolved into the world's largest mail order, retail, and Internet outdoor outfitter. Although the company has long been known to use video on its website, producing programs for outdoor television, and content for Social Media, it recently began incorporating video and rich media into its customer and employee communications.

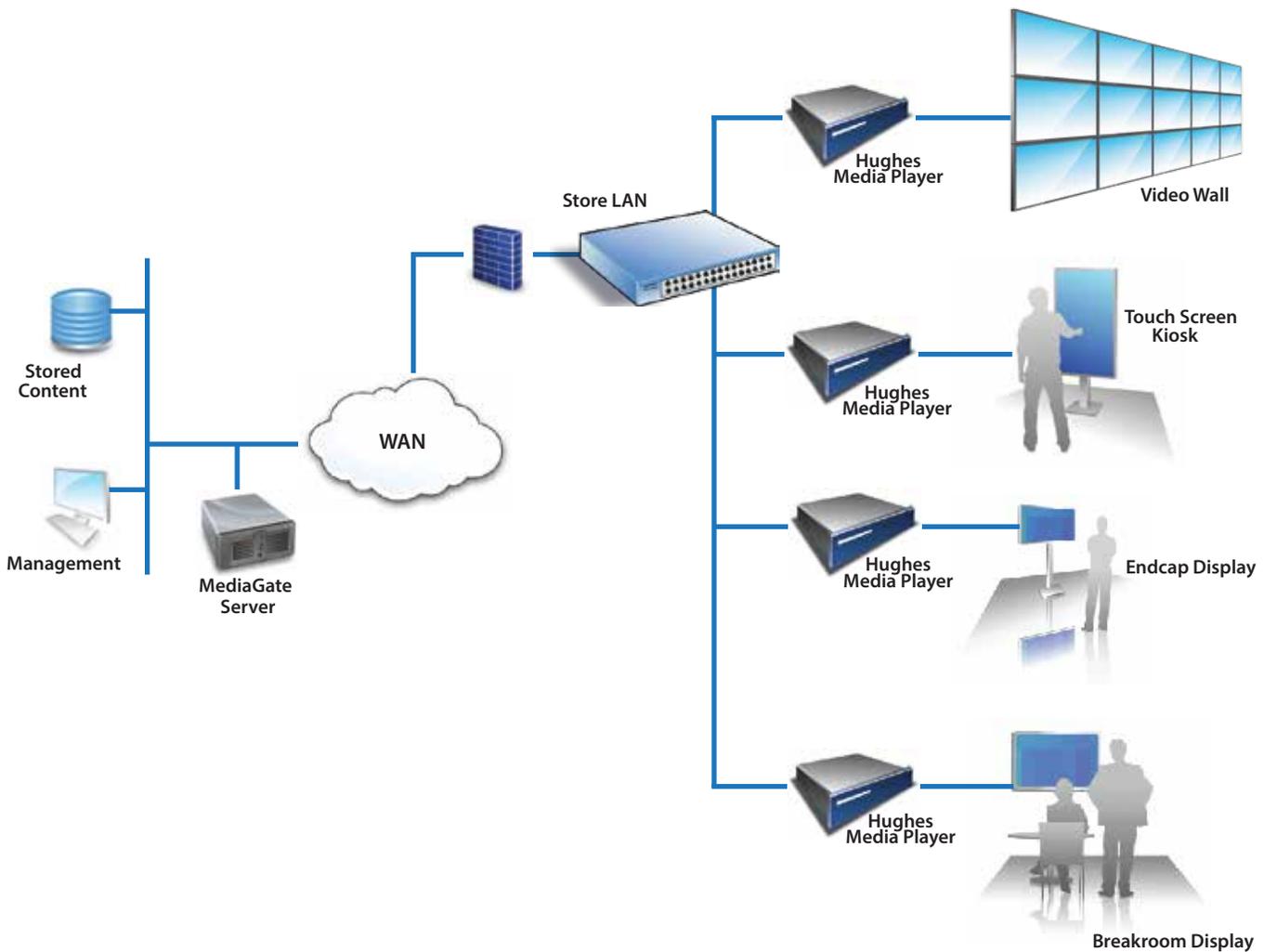
Digital signage, including video walls and endcap display screens are installed in-store on show-room floors. The endcap screens primarily display product information and the video walls feature outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing and camping.

According to Jeremy Wonch, Television Production Lead, "The video walls enhance our customers' shopping experience...and overall, we see a lift in sales for products featured on the displays."

In addition, Cabela's culture strongly values employee (associate outfitter) development and positive morale. The company recently installed large display screens in the store breakrooms to provide information which is targeted for associate outfitters.

According to Marlon Giese, Retail Communications Manager, "The network is designed to improve employee engagement by featuring topics of interest and info-tainment, including recognition of associate outfitters, company benefits and previews of new programs." Giese adds, "A main objective is to provide content that is entertaining and helpful but not required or invasive of employee time and space. Feedback is overwhelmingly positive."

The Cabela's IT organization plays a significant role in expanding the company's digital touch points by facilitating the delivery of the video and media content over its infrastructure.



Industry Vendors Enable Digital Touch Points

Enhancements and expanded services improve the enterprise experience

Enterprises need to provide communications and drive business results, with contributions from virtually every department. With these new Digital Touch Point trends comes the need for new expertise and knowledge to help enterprises realize the potential of the four screens. Industry vendors and service providers can play an important role. Vendors and service providers develop and provide the new media technology and solutions which enable enterprises the opportunity to exploit systems and resources to reach both internal and external audiences.

As with Cabela's and Lowes, many enterprises are working with these providers to help them deploy the networks for the delivery of their video and other rich media content. The larger, more established providers have listened to their enterprise customers and acquired a thorough understanding of their visual communication requirements. They have developed the necessary and appropriate solutions and/or strategic partnerships (with other providers) to enhance their capabilities and services so that the enterprise can focus on its core business and not the nuts and bolts of delivering on the Digital Touch Point promise. And, they have the resources to implement and manage any or all portions of the digital media value chain, including: content development; content management; network infrastructure and management; display screens; distance learning solutions; tracking, measurement and analytics; and ongoing help desk and support services.

Further, enterprises benefit from the experience and scale their providers have gained by working with other customers. Collectively, customers influence the development of new media and software enhancements, which in turn helps providers improve their offerings and value to their customers. In a previous paper *Managed Video as a Service (MVaaS) For Enterprise Communications*, we addressed how enterprises are purchasing networks and communications from vendors as managed services. In addition to the many benefits of MVaaS, such as managed costs and protection from equipment obsolescence, this allows enterprises the opportunity to easily add new capabilities and extended services to existing infrastructure, without impacting the operation and system performance.

Summary

Enterprise organizations are seeing great value in increasing the number and quality of Digital Touch Points they use to educate, inform, and train both customers and employees. They are using all types and forms of digital media to deliver content, to the point where media channels and viewing devices are ubiquitous. As a result, the communication lines are blurring between business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) markets.

Give your company a competitive advantage by developing a media business strategy to reach all targeted audiences virtually everywhere, all of the time, using any or all of the four screens. Then implement the communications plan to blend new media solutions with existing infrastructure and leverage internal resources across functional groups and business units.

Enhance your chances for success by relying on trusted vendors for the guidance, solutions and support to cost-effectively achieve the desired Digital Touch Points.

About Enliten

Enliten helps corporations, government agencies and associations address the business issues and workflow challenges associated with the implementation of a wide range of media throughout their organization. Enliten's experience and first hand knowledge of the challenges and opportunities for using media in the enterprise is a key component of this white paper. Randy Palubiak is a founder and principal analyst with the Enliten Management Group.

