

## Tactile Media Solutions: Do They Work In-Store?

**Mood Media discusses how interactive content can add real benefits to retail experiences and shares some client cases to showcase its use in today's below the line marketing mix.**

**I**nteractive digital media, such as in-store touchscreens, floor screens, interactive windows and gesture-enabled interaction facilitates consumer engagement and helps to create an emotional connection between the brand and its product. Interestingly, interactive solutions are also being adopted to assist the sales process and to work as a tool to drive footfall in-store.

But where is interactive media sitting within the marketing mix? Mood Media's experience says in-store and comments, "Interactive digital signage has been a part of most of our telecommunications customer networks for some time, utilising a technology most of us are familiar with."

Retailers are almost expected to include in-store digital media today because most consumers now live with digital media via the Internet and handheld devices at home and at work. They like it! They interact with it, they search for information on it and they play games with it! It is such a primary part of modern consumers' life that they would think it odd if digital media disappeared from their day to day experience at the precise moment that they walk into a retail store.

Digital signage enables brands to communicate a message to consumers where they can influence them, at the point of purchase. The message is delivered to the consumers while they are in the store, with merchandise in arm's reach and a till within sight. Compared to traditional above the line media such as radio or TV, in-store digital signage has the ability to influence buying behaviour in real time.

The next step therefore is to make your digital signage solution work in tangent with your in-store marketing strategies and to engage and influence the consumer to react positively. Mood Media argues that good retail is about good experiences and

uses media such as audio, visual and fragrances to engage consumers on multiple levels. A store which has the right music, the right animation and the right smell can lead to a great shopping experience where you feel unhurried, relaxed, and hopefully one where you are surrounded by things that interest you.

Retailers know that if you have this type of experience, you will come back more often than you might actually need to. Now, with interactive digital media becoming more commonplace within the retail environment, retailers and brands can deliver compelling, timely and targeted messages to an audience that has become increasingly hard to reach and difficult to engage.

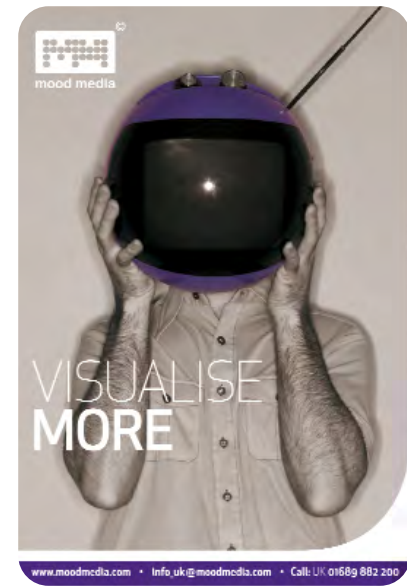
Consumer engagement is more critical than ever. Giving retailers a tool to communicate with a captive audience is retail nirvana to brands who wish to influence sales! Tibor Kovari, Mood Media's UK Managing Director tells us about some of the benefits of interactive content across Mood Media's client base. "One of the best emerging technologies available today for in-store digital signage," he says, "is a touchscreen window in which content is accessible for interactivity by passers-by. Being able to influence behaviour outside the store environment is new and exciting to us." Such a solution can be seen in the Deichmann flagship shoe store in Essen where Mood Media installed a series of interactive solutions to help drive footfall in to the store.

Mood Media's creative director, Jamie Davies comments, "Interactivity can be either immersive or non-immersive. In other words, motion may simply activate on-screen special effects, or a consumer can actually interact with the content, manipulating the background, the information and images." Deichmann utilises this technology as a powerful tool to attract passers-by and engage them in their interactive product portfolio.

Interactive technology within the retail setting also provides the consumer with the opportunity to become educated on the available products without feeling the perceived pressure from a salesperson. Mood Media sees this type of application most often amongst its telecommunications client base, namely Proximus Belgacom, SFR in France and Orange in Romania. "Retailers with large product lines and short promotional periods need a sales assist tool which enables them to get product information to the consumer in a dynamic and compelling way", says Mood Media Group CEO, Jonathan Patrick.

Proximus Belgacom has 350 concept stores, known as Discovery Stores which each have two distinctive digital signage applications. The first is the interactive sales assist notice board, an area where consumers can learn about the product lines and interact with them. The second is a visual network where Proximus can communicate promotions across dynamic screen display areas. Bert Leoen, Channel Development & Operations Manager at Proximus says, "We wanted a powerful communication tool so we could speak to our customers in an engaging manner. Mood Media works with us to develop compelling marketing solutions through visual animation technologies. Interaction in this retail mix avoids consumers waiting for assistance for long periods of time."





Carl Hart, digital product manager at Mood Media UK states the key difficulty with looping animations is no matter how right we get it; it is very difficult to know if consumers have seen it. "The real benefit of interactive content," he says, "is retailers have what we call a captive audience; an audience who is primed to receive information about that retailer's products and services."

A recent application Mood Media installed was an interactive notice board at Nottingham's Nuffield Health centre. Nuffield wanted to promote its classes and communicate important health information to its members. Posting pieces of paper to the club notice board was not proving efficient. "Through interactive content, we can tell when members engage with club messages and we can ensure more information is communicated than ever before," says Tibor Kovari.

Jamie Davies continues, "With digital content, we need to remember we only get 1.5-3s of full attention for glance media. Therefore it is critical to grab the attention and communicate this is an interactive platform, otherwise the marketing tool loses its appeal."

Mood Media has a series of graphics designers who ensure the eye is drawn to content in-store. HMV is one such example where it is imperative Mood Media creates an animation solution that tells the consumer there is information to interact with. HMV's Stores of the Future mix passive, interactive and window digital signage solutions and each solution has its own objective and requires specific animation to communicate it effectively. The interactive areas promote the games, books and DVDs that HMV wishes to promote; the passive areas highlight core services and the window displays entice consumers into the store, with compelling offers such as HMV's recent move into ticket sales, which can be viewed at the Westfield store.

Returning to its ability to influence sales, interactive assisted selling applications have proven their retail value time and time again. This marriage of digital signage with triggered activities puts a remarkable amount of control in the hands of

the consumer whilst creating a memorable experience. Better still, the application can even result in lowered labour costs for the retailers!

SFR, the French telecommunications retailer and one of Mood Media's larger visual clients, benefits from interactive sales assist applications. With a sales promotional cycle of every six weeks, SFR requires a robust digital solution. Interactive customer-centric information stations mean that SFR now has the ability to enhance the total shopping experience: it can quickly react to market changes and pricing models, and provide its customers with the best and latest mobile products and services in the industry.

Another interesting application for interactive content that Mood Media has employed in its offering is its interactive kids' zones. The Co-operative Group recently had its annual roadshow where it promotes its core attributes to the community. It also has its own branded mobile store. Within the mobile store are interactive screens where kids can play with a touchscreen and learn about environmental issues in a fun way. Deichmann also has touchscreen games for kids to interact with. The benefit being parents can enjoy the buying experience in the confidence that their children are being entertained.

Regardless of concept, interactive technology has real benefits and is an evolution within digital signage that can promote at the point of purchase, help the sales process and provide real entertainment. Digital displays, whether interactive or not should work as an extension of a company's sales force, promoting merchandise in a visually appealing way that suggests a purchase instead of pressuring the customer.

Jamie Davies leaves us with a compelling reminder, that to get the most out of our digital concept, we need to ensure our content is memorable. "Getting the content right and ensuring it works in conjunction with its surroundings and the brands objectives," he concludes, "are critical to the success of any digital signage project!"

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