

Four Steps to a Successful Retail Digital Signage Deployment

The digital signage solutions market has seen significant growth in providers over the past 10 years. Making an educated decision on which of the many available solutions suits your business needs can be a difficult one. Bass Pro Shops has utilized in-store digital signage for a decade. Having worked with a number of digital solution solutions over this duration, we set out to find out what motivated Bass Pro Shops to pursue digital signage in their marketing initiatives, and to make the transition to the 11Giraffes digital signage platform.

The Digital Signage Journey:

The Bass Pro Shops digital signage journey started when they were approached by an outside provider offering a turnkey advertising network solution. Over time, Bass Pro Shops acquired the system hardware and transitioned the management of their digital signage in-house. Since then, the company has used digital signage for aspirational messaging, promotion of special events and product pricing, and customer announcements. Placing displays in strategic locations, digital signage is used to convey the message of “I want to be there” or “I want to experience that”, as a means of generating interest in other Bass Pro Shops departments.

The Challenges:

Whilst Bass Pro Shops saw the value in previously deployed digital signage solutions, these began to consume significant internal resources. Additionally, they were experiencing stability issues with Windows-based operating systems and server maintenance, and wanted to explore the option of alternate software-as-a-service platforms incorporating hosted solutions. Switching to the 11Giraffes platform has resulted in a substantial improvement in overall system stability. Over a period of 24 months, Bass Pro Shops has not experienced any failure in media player hardware or software.

Selecting a New Software Platform:

11Giraffes prides itself on the simplicity of its platform. In addition to system reliability, it was the straightforwardness and ease-of-use of the platform that appealed to Bass Pro Shops.

Steve Hargis, Director of Film & Video at Bass Pro Shops, said “the 11Giraffes solution worked as advertised right out the box. It was the easiest digital signage solution, and the most stable, that we had ever used.” While there were several great features of the 11Giraffes’ solution, one is that we reduced the need for heavy IT department assistance. Because of the on-line SaaS solution of 11Giraffes, there was no server required in-house. It just made the whole process easier. Plus this allowed for a fixed monthly budget without the unexpected maintenance costs of owning your own hosting server.

Following a flawless pilot, the 11Giraffes solution was installed in all Bass Pro Shops locations (166 media players). The entire network was deployed in less than 30 days, from planning to completion, with 100% of the devices working upon handover. Hargis felt that careful pre-planning of implementation, working with a good dealer, and the stability and ease of setup of the 11Giraffes platform was what made this aggressive timeline achievable.

11Giraffes took the time to understand Bass Pro Shops' needs and requirements. Through training and exposure to the product, initial concerns surrounding transitioning of the network were dismissed. Sensing a strong partnership between the companies, feature requests were discussed in depth. Understanding the logic behind these requests, and value to its existing and future clients, 11Giraffes worked to incorporate these enhancements over the next several months.

Bass Pro Shops' world-class production team, using state of the art video capture and editing tools, provided the expertise necessary so that all of their digital signage content could be created in-house. Bass Pro Shops has a dedicated employee working approximately fifteen hours a week, who works closely with the creative staff from the video production team, to keep the content fresh and maintain updated playlists. But having an in-house content creation team is not necessary with the 11Giraffes solution. The platform has a robust fully integrated content creation engine, complete with numerous templates for quick and easy design of fresh, interactive media. Additionally, the 11Giraffes platform includes the capability to import video and images in most common formats without the need for file conversion.

Advice for Sourcing Solutions:

Bass Pro Shops has ten years of experience in the Digital Signage space. Stemming from this experience, Hargis was asked what advice he would offer to retailers looking to add digital signage to their marketing initiatives.

"Firstly, get demos of the various solutions. Many of these can easily be accessed on-line, but what I really prefer is a live online overview. Then you can see the software working and ask questions in real time. To make this demo effective one should have a good idea of the specific things they wish to accomplish, and even send that list ahead of time so the signage vendor can explain how their system works." Hargis also recommends asking the same from multiple vendors and compare what you see, "There are other good digital signage systems. But when you see the power of the platform, while staying very simple to use, I suspect you'll give serious consideration to the 11Giraffes solution, too."



“Secondly, find a dealer that represents the software solution you are looking at. A good reseller will help you architect a complete solution based on your specific needs; advise your planning of the new system including recommendations on labor and content; as well as provide system training. 11Giraffes will point you to a recommended dealer in your area or market vertical.

“Thirdly, set up a pilot, and scale from there. Running a pilot allows you to test and learn the system, before scaling. This allows you to test your own internal capabilities as well. However, I can also say that the 11Giraffes system has been so scalable that I wouldn’t hesitate to rollout a large-scale system of hundreds or even thousands of devices. If one works (and it does) they all will.

“Finally, make sure you get sufficient training to fully leverage the capabilities of the system against your in-store media strategy. Training is really quite straight forward”, Hargis says. “If you can use the basics of PowerPoint and upload a photo to Facebook, you are more than qualified to use the 11Giraffes platform. They have built an elegant solution that simply works.”

11Giraffes is diligent about keeping up to date with the trends in the digital signage space as digital signage becomes more integral to retail marketing initiatives. As the importance of interactive content is realized, 11Giraffes works constantly to update and release new versions of their platform. The 11Giraffes solution not only provides digital signage, but also offers a complete and robust platform for in-store media. It is inclusive of in-store and on-hold music, as well as audio messaging and third-party system integration.

For more information, visit www.11giraffes.com.

