

Affordable Digital Signage Helps One Hobby Store Reach Customers

When Hobbyhouse wanted to show its dynamic products to customers, it turned to the inexpensive digital signage solution from MediaSignage.

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The players

Hobbyhouse Inc., located in Reseda, Calif., is the largest hobby store in the San Fernando Valley. The store also has an online site at www.ehobbyhouse.com. The store and site sell remote-controlled cars, boats and helicopters.

MediaSignage Inc., headquartered in Los Angeles, Calif., offers free digital signage and narrowcasting that is powered by Flash 9 for both the Web administration and digital signage player.

The problem

Hobbyhouse offers dynamic products, but the customers cannot see them in action. They can see a picture of the helicopter on the box, but they cannot see the helicopter flying through the air.

“You have a customer coming into the store and the first thing they ask is ‘How



Customers at Hobbyhouse wanted to know how the products in the

does this fly?’” said Sean Levy, CEO of MediaSignage.

The solution

David Shalom, chief executive officer of Hobbyhouse, knew that the best solution to this problem was a digital signage network.

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“Digital signage is a must-have in order to provide customers with all the information they need when deciding which remote-controlled product to purchase.”

— David Shalom, CEO, Hobbyhouse

they need when deciding which remote-controlled product to purchase,” Shalom said. “They can also provide us with the ability to easily switch campaigns, thus displaying to the customer the correct digital signage presentation during checkout, which is very valuable for us.”

A digital signage network would allow customers to see the helicopters flying through the air or the boats gliding across the water. However, hobby stores do not have the same resources as retail giants like Target or Wal-Mart, and a digital signage network can be expensive for such a store.

Ehobbyhouse needed a high-quality network that was affordable.

Fortunately, Ehobbyhouse was able to find a solution that met their needs from MediaSignage.

“Hobby shops operate on an average profit margin of 20 percent,” Shalom said. “We do not have huge capital and so if it wasn’t for the extreme low-cost solution from MediaSignage, I don’t think we would be able to afford such a solution.”

The store ordered three digital signage screens, placing the individual screens in different sections of the store — one in the car section, one in the boat section and one in the helicopter section. The three different monitors cost \$16 a month combined. Levy says the standard pricing for a similar setup would be approximately \$200-250. But just because cost was an issue did not mean that Shalom wanted to skimp on quality.

“When we were searching for a digital signage solution, we did not want to compromise on features; we needed something that is feature rich and supports HD,” Shalom said.

Ehobbyhouse was able to open an account online with MediaSignage and fill out an application. Demonstrations of the product were done online and Ehobbyhouse did not even have to wait to receive a demo in the mail. The hardware is non-proprietary and could be run on an ordinary PC.

The presentation can be run both on the screens at the store and online at the Ehobbyhouse Web site via an Adobe Flash player online and Adobe Air at the store. Any time the signage is changed in one spot, it is automatically updated at both the store and on the Web site.

The screens feature a database allowing customers to flip through the store’s entire product catalog, get pricing and product information and see whether or not the items are in stock, as well as watch the visual demonstration of the product in action.

Ehobbyhouse has experienced a sales increase of more than 20 percent since it installed digital signage.

The employees also can interact with the screens to better assist the customers. If a customer asks questions about a specific product, then an employee can use an external program to activate a marketing program on the digital signage that is applicable to the customer’s question. The signage gives the customer a demonstration of the product and helps the store to secure the sale.

The result

It has been approximately one year since Ehobbyhouse installed its three digital signage screens and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive at every level.

“Customers are amazed by the performance of the remote-control products they are viewing on the signage screens and usually end up ordering what we run on the presentation,” Shalom said. “The beauty of this is that it affects the customers at a subconscious level, as they will usually not talk to us about the digital signage presentation directly but end up purchasing products which appear on the digital signage screens.”

As a result, it greatly aids the staff in making sales. No matter how enthusiastic or knowledgeable a staff member may be about the products, customers will more often trust their own eyes than the words of a salesperson. By allowing customers to see for themselves, E hobbyhouse has experienced a sales increase of more than 20 percent since it installed digital signage.

About the sponsor: MediaSignage provides enhanced digital signage services, powered by Flash Player 9. Its systems are available without requiring any software or hardware installation. The system is cross platform and can be run on all standard PCs and monitors.