

The Ultimate Guide To

DIGITAL

SIGNAGE



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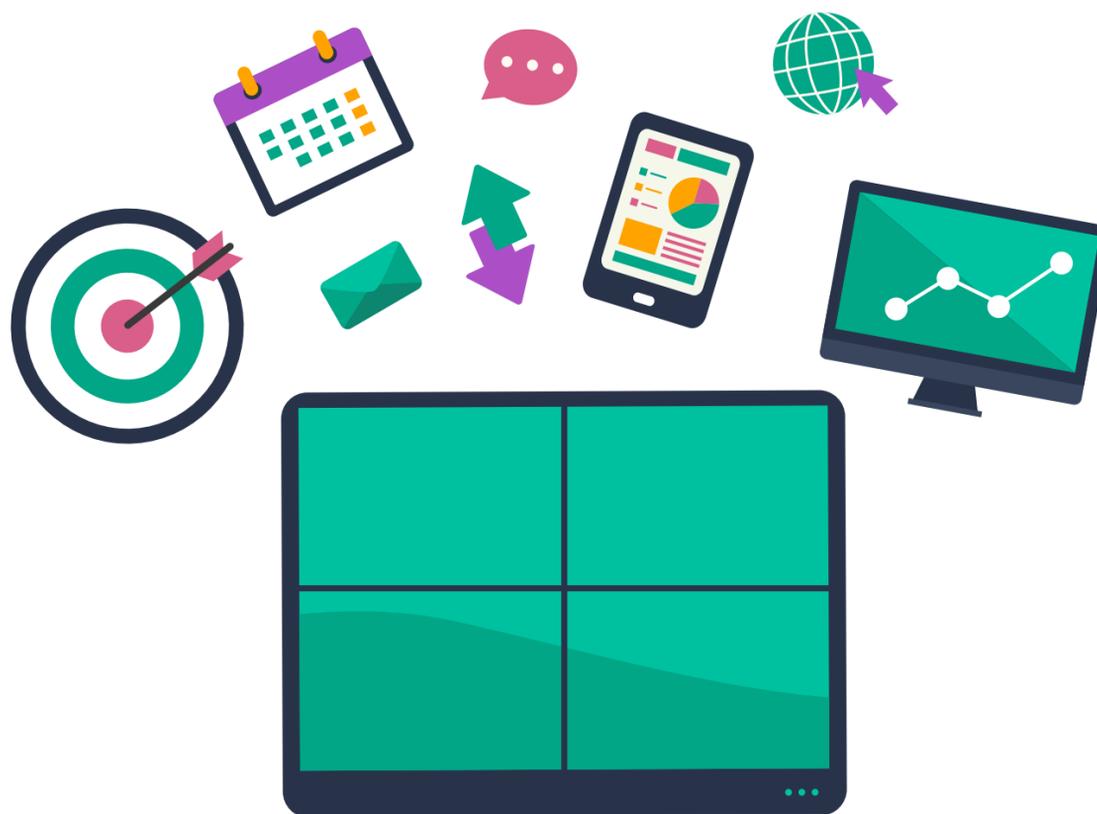
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INTRODUCTION



What is This Guide?

This guide is for anyone who is interested in getting started with digital signage. It covers everything you need to know and do to get setup with your first digital signage project. We'll cover everything from the important questions you should consider and tips for getting the most out of your investment.

What is Digital Signage?

Digital signage is the ability to show any type of media on a digital display. Digital signage is everywhere - the mall, restaurants, hospitals, universities, and lobbies. It's a great tool for marketing a new product, promoting brand awareness, communicating with staff or students, and engaging just about any audience in your space.

INTRODUCTION



Every Digital Signage Project Has Four Components:

1. Software - A content management software (CMS) is what allows you to show content on your Display. Content management software can range in price and abilities. Some CMS's are free, like Rise Vision, while others are paid as monthly or yearly services. Certain CMS's will only allow you to show limited types of content, while others can show a variety of content from text, images, video, webpages and more.

2. Hardware - These are the physical pieces of the project like the Display, media player, wall mounts (if needed).

3. Content - This is what you show on your Display. It can be text, images, video, calendars, and more. We will get into the possibilities for your content further in later chapters.

4. Strategy - This is the plan you will use to help you ensure your project is a success.

INTRODUCTION



Why Should Digital Signage Matter to You?

Digital signage is the most effective tool that you will use to communicate with your audience. No matter your location, or application, digital signage catches people's attention. Let's face it: static signs, posters, and flyers are just not as exciting or effective as a digital sign.

Digital signage can improve your marketing and advertising initiatives through powerful calls to action and engaging visuals. Or if you're looking to improve communication with your visitors, staff, or students, your message will get noticed with digital signage. In fact, digital signage attracts the attention of 63% of people, making digital signage hard to ignore.

And it's cheaper than it's ever been! The overall cost of digital signage has been on a steady decline every year. Historically, a digital signage installation required an upfront investment of a few thousand dollars, but now due to the increased commoditization of parts, a fully functioning digital signage project can be accomplished for only a few hundred dollars.

INTRODUCTION



What is Rise Vision?

Rise Vision is a free, cloud-based, content management software for digital signage.

We've been making software for digital signage since 1992, and over the past decade much of our focus has been about developing web-services for digital signage.

We offer an in-app editor where you can create, update and manage your content easily, all from the web. We also provide flexible scheduling options for your presentations, all at zero cost.

We're used in over 100 countries in a variety of ways. Our users come from small shops, gyms, and restaurants, to universities, hospitals and foundations.

We offer a variety of hardware services such as Media Players, to software products such as Widgets and Templates - all available in our [Store](#). Our custom [Creative](#) services can do the work of building and managing your content for you. Our thriving Community is great place to ask questions, get ideas, and learn from others.

All you need to get up and running with Rise Vision is a Google Account, it's that easy!

CHAPTER 1



Strategy

To get your digital signage project started off on the right foot, it's important to have a plan. In this chapter, we'll explore how to set goals, decide on the right location for your digital signage, and more.

CHAPTER 1



Goal Setting

To get your project started off on the right foot, it is important that you first establish the goal for your digital signage.

What Do You Want to Accomplish?

You need to understand what your digital signage is supposed to be accomplishing before you move on to setting up your project. Your goals will dictate all other factors associated with your project such as the type of Display you use, the Media Player you need, the location of your Displays and the type of content you show.

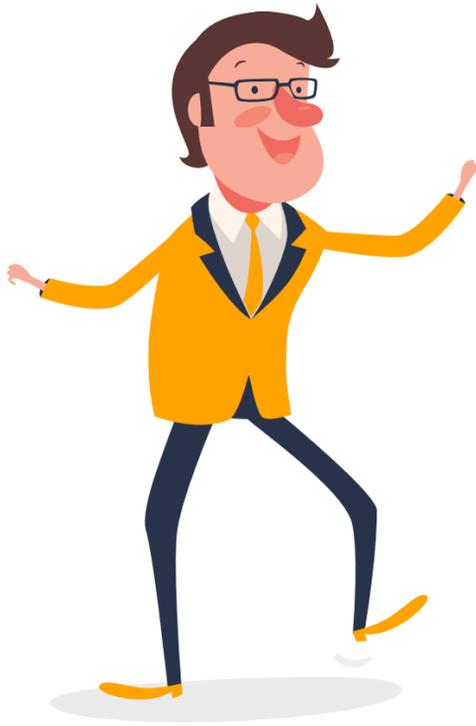
Ask yourself why you need digital signage - what message are you trying to share? Whose attention are you looking to catch? And once you have their attention, what do you want them to do?

Who is Your Audience?

Once you've addressed your goals, your next step is defining and understanding your audience. You want to learn their interests, habits and intentions to figure out how you can best target them with your digital signage.

A good strategy for getting to know your audience is writing up a simple User Persona. This is an outline of your typical viewer - their motivations and interests. Once you have an understanding of your viewer, you will be in a good position to address how you can attract their attention.

CHAPTER 1



Who Owns the Project?

Just like any project, your digital signage project needs a manager. This is one person (or a group of people) who own the responsibility of updating and managing your digital signage.

A digital signage project without a management system can easily get pushed to the bottom of a to-do list and forgotten about. The result is content that is stale and outdated which is the opposite of what you want to achieve.

What You Need to Get Started

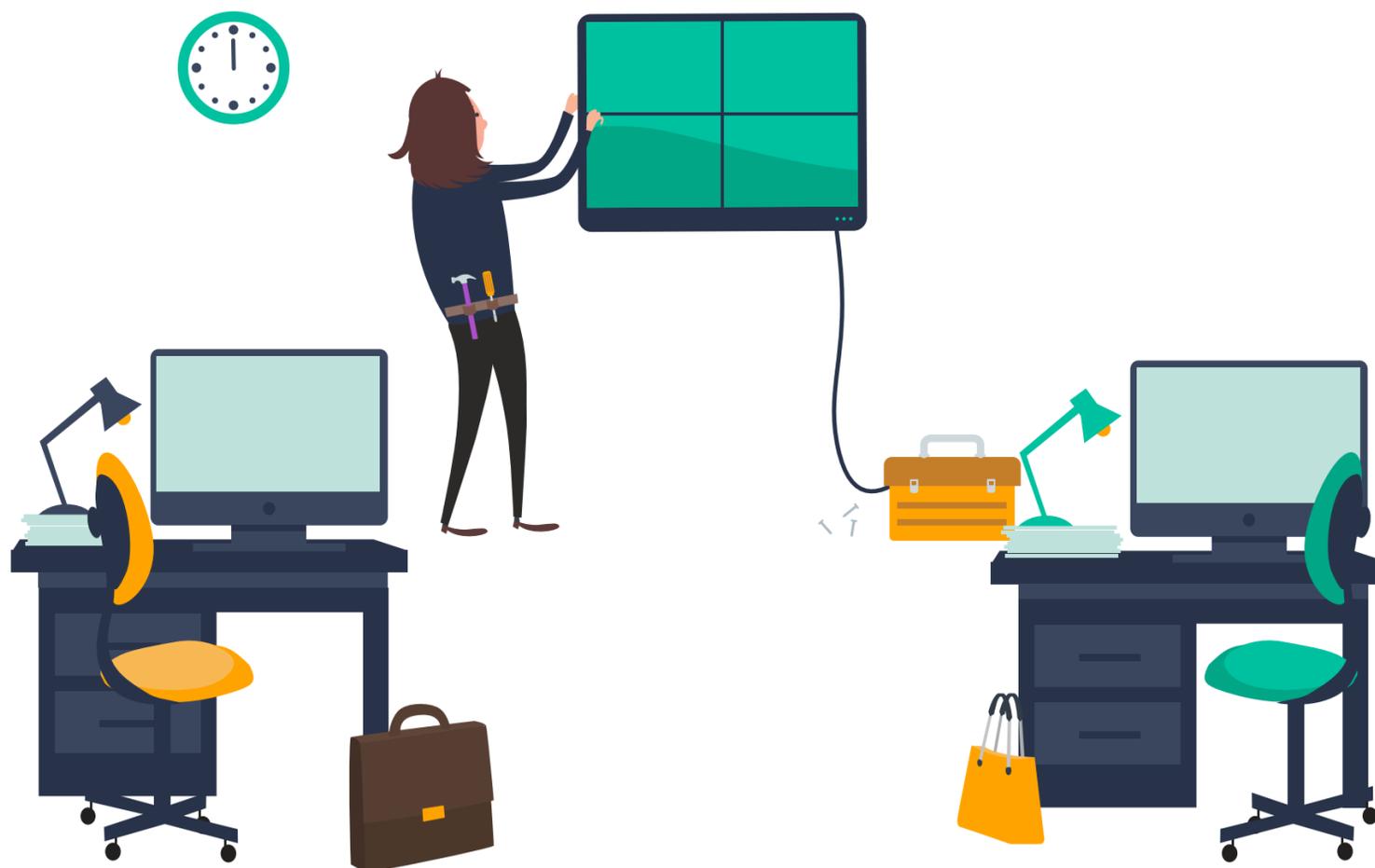
To get your signage project up and running you will need a Media Player, a Display, and a Content Management Software like Rise Vision.

Media Player: the device that will power your Display with the visual content you create. Just like a traditional computer, Media Players allow you to show content when it comes to your digital signage.

Display: The screen that you will be using to show your content. This can be a TV, monitor, etc.

Content Management Software: what you will use to create your content and schedule it to your Displays. Rise Vision is a content management system that is **totally free** to use.

CHAPTER 1



Choosing the Right Location

Just like any project, your digital signage project needs a manager. This is one person who owns the responsibility of updating and managing your digital signage.

A digital signage project without a management system can easily get pushed to the bottom of a to-do list and forgotten about. The result is content that is stale and outdated which is the opposite of what you want to achieve.

When it comes to digital signage, the placement of your Display will directly impact the success of your project. The location of your digital signage should be optimized for your project goals and the audience you are targeting.

Next, we'll cover a few simple tips to help you find the perfect location for your digital signage.

CHAPTER 1



1. Your Content Should Decide Your Location

The first step in deciding a location is to think about your audience and what you want to show them.

- If you're trying to reach students, busy hallways with a lot of foot traffic are a great place.
- If you're sharing updates around the office, a Display placed in the entranceway is almost sure to get noticed by everyone who is coming and going.
- If your Displays are interactive, make sure that they are located in places where people are encouraged to stop and wait. Also ensure that the display is placed at an appropriate height for interaction.
- If you're trying to encourage new customers, position your Displays in a location where they can easily be seen by people walking by. For example, a store window or entranceway.

CHAPTER 1



2. Look for High Traffic Areas

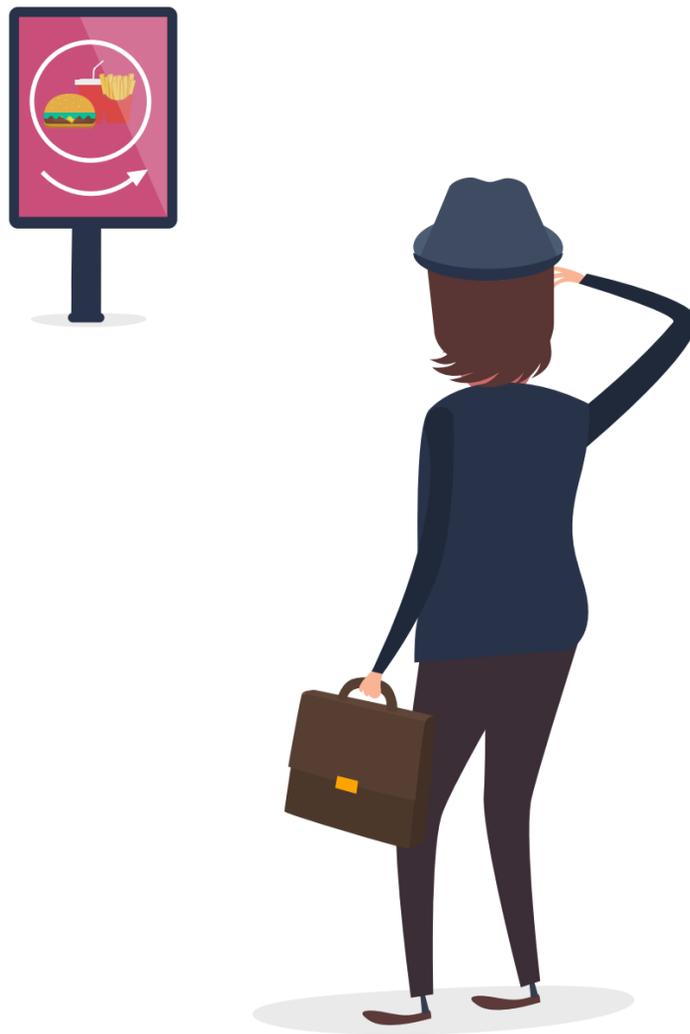
When determining the best location for your digital signage, you should take a few minutes to walk around your space. Get to know your floor plan and pay attention to areas of high traffic.

Ask yourself the following:

- What are people doing? Are they usually in transit or are they waiting for prolonged periods of time?
- Where are people stopping? Are there common areas where people tend to hang around?
- Are there any obstacles in the way? Are there physical impediments such in your space such as pillars, staircases or dividing walls that could obstruct the visibility of a display?

If you discover an area where people tend to spend more time, then maybe this would be the best location for your Display. Collecting this information may seem like tedious work, but, it will go a long way in tailoring the placement of your digital signage.

CHAPTER 1



3. Viewing Height

As a rule of thumb, it is best to position your display at eye-height as this is where it's most likely to be seen and interacted with. While 'eye-height' varies depending on the height of your audience, you can roughly estimate the average height of your audience and use this estimate to mount your Displays accordingly.

The angle of your Displays can also affect audience interest. If you're showing a static presentation (meaning no interactive content) with a longer viewing time, angle your Display downward so that your audience must glance up at it. If you're using interactive digital signage, angle your Display upwards to encourage longer interaction times.

Check out [this article](#) for more tips on working with your space to find the perfect location for your Display.

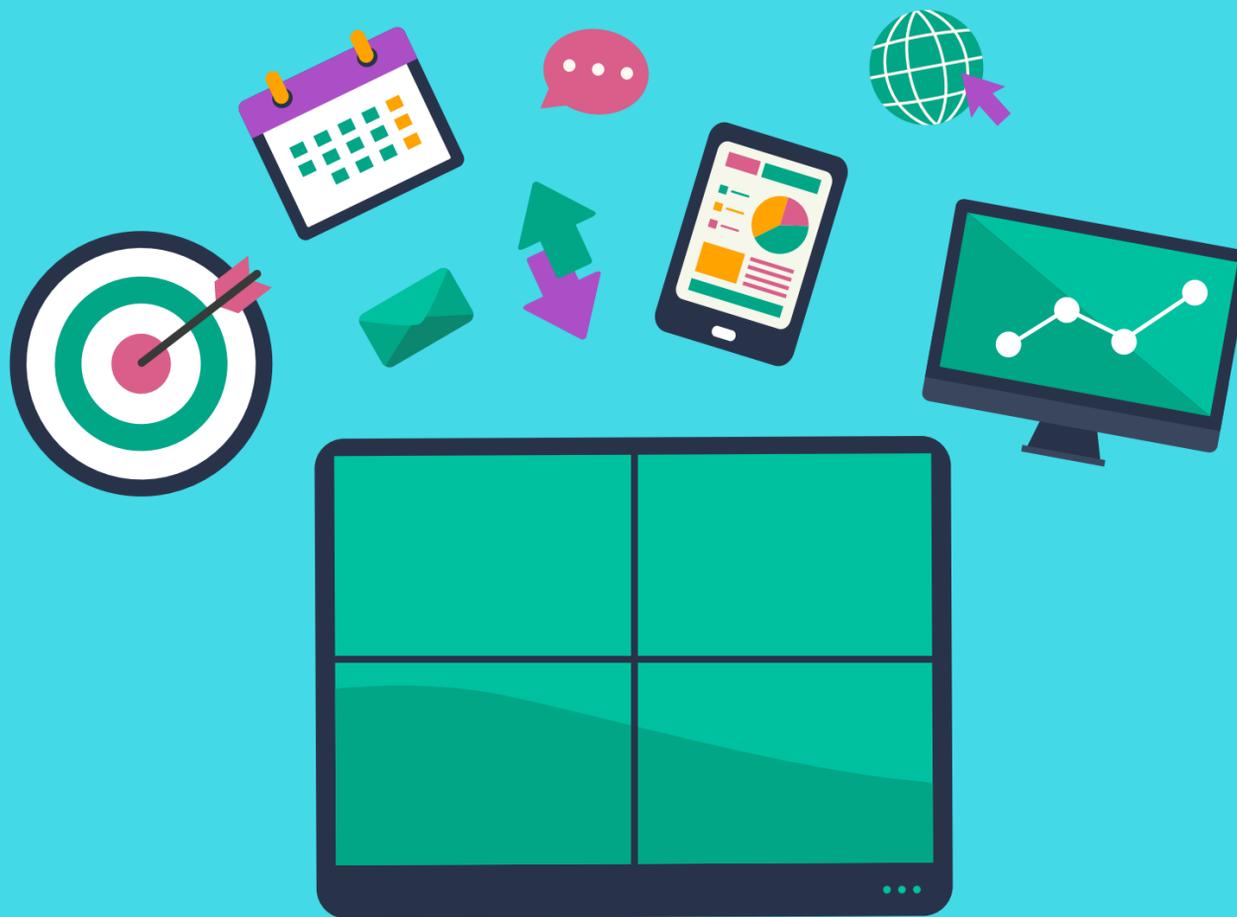
Learn How to Use Rise Vision & Engage Your Audience



A 30-minute introductory presentation to the Rise Vision platform. You'll see how easy it is to get started with digital signage!

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CHAPTER 2



Content

Your digital signage is only as good as the content you show on it. In this section, we'll cover design principles and best practices to help you create content that will get eyes glued to your screens.

CHAPTER 2

The Importance of Designing Effective Content

Digital signage is a dynamic and fast-paced medium and as a result, the message you share with it is only as effective as the content you choose to show. A strong design and a compelling message are important to attracting your audience, but you don't have to be a graphic designer or professional copywriter to create great content!

A few key things to keep in mind when designing content for your digital signage are:

- Brevity
- Thoughtful design placement
- Clear call to action

All of this is very doable if you follow the tips we provide in this chapter. If you do, you'll be in a great position to start building engaging content!

Design Principles

In the design world, design principles determine how an artist uses various elements of art in their work. The most important aspect to effective content design is achieving balance.

Balance is the distribution of the visual weight of color, texture, shape and space. A balanced design will create stability in your work, which is important to maintaining your viewers' interest. A stable design is pleasing to look at, and makes for much more engaging content.

In this section we will touch on the use of color, space and alignment as it relates to digital signage.

Simplicity

In the design world less is always more. Avoid crowding your content with too many words or Widgets, as too many competing elements in a design can be hard on the eyes. Powerful designs can convey a message with the fewest number of elements at play. A good technique for creating simple designs is to question every design decision you make. Ask yourself if that drop shadow is really necessary, or that text underline, or if you really need that stroke around your text. Good design involves subtraction.

CHAPTER 2

Layout

Finding the perfect layout for your content is never a one-off. You'll need to play around with your design, and move things around depending on where the eye is gravitating.

You'll want to follow certain guidelines when it comes to placing your content correctly for visibility. These are called **Safe Areas**.

Safe Areas

Title Safe Area

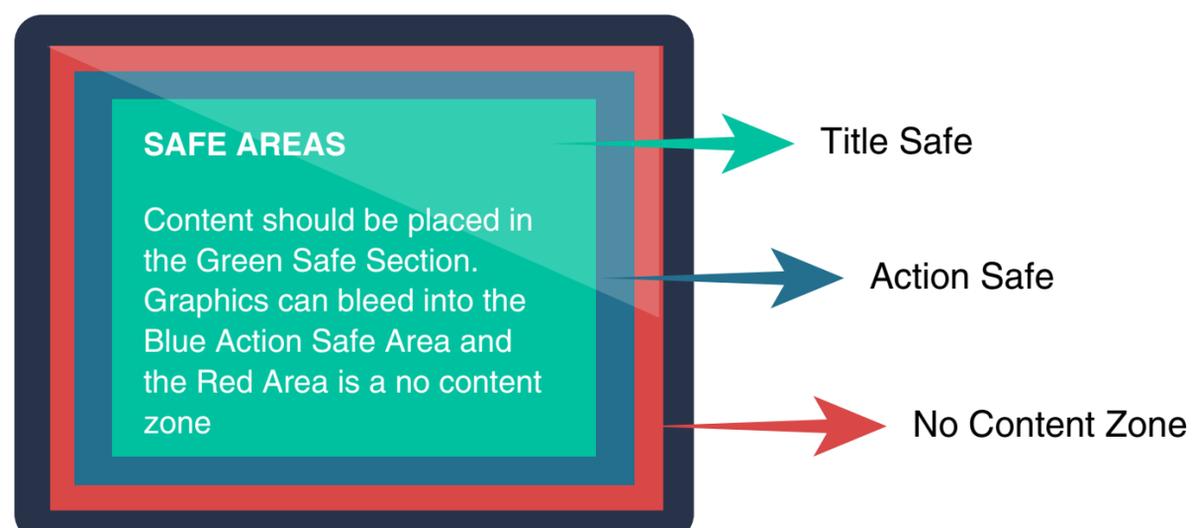
This area is a buffer zone that protects your content from getting cut off on your Display. Placing your text or graphics in this area ensures that they are visible on the Display without distortion.

Action Safe Area

This area extends past the Title Safe area. Moving content such as Images and motion graphics can be placed here.

No Content Zone

Every Display will have an area where content should never be placed. This margin is the area that gets cut-off when your content is shown on your Display. You can allow images or graphics to bleed into this area, but never place your important content here.



CHAPTER 2

Alignment

Justify your content to the left to avoid having to hyphenate words. While this saves the look of jumbled words, it is also more appealing to the eye. The eye reads from left to right and so content that is justified left on a screen feels more natural and easy to read and understand.

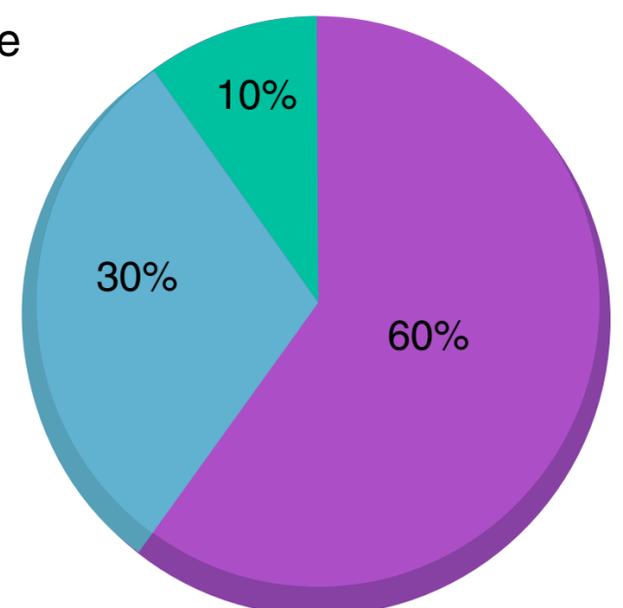
Color

When choosing colors for your content, it's a good practice to use a high contrasting color palette. Contrast between elements in the foreground and background is great for legibility as it allows your viewer to separate visual elements on screen. If you are looking to incorporate more complex color palettes in your designs, use the color wheel to pair your palettes. [This article](#) takes you through all the possible color combinations and their applications in digital signage.

How Many Colors Should I Use?

A lot of designers will design using the 60-30-10 rule which uses only three colors. The dominant color can be used in 60% of the design, the secondary in 30% and the last color should only be used in 10% of the design for accenting purposes.

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The 60-30-10 Rule

- 60% will be the main color for your design.
- 30% should contrast your 60%, and this makes your design "pop".
- 10% should be an accent color to either your 30% or 60% color.

CHAPTER 2



Visual Hierarchy and Size

Visual hierarchy is achieved by manipulating the size and space of the elements in your presentation. Adjusting the positioning and scale will allow you to manipulate where your viewers eye is drawn, when it is drawn there, and for how long.

Digital signage content generally has three pieces to it: the headline or title, body text, and a “call to action”. To have a particular element stand out, its size should be larger than the surrounding elements.

A common example of an effective hierarchy in digital signage would be a large title (about 40pt), smaller text (but no less than 24pt) and a large call to action (about 32pt) that’s separated with space from the other textual elements on the screen.

Digital Signage Best Practices

When designing content for your business or organization, it’s important to ensure that your signage accommodates for accessibility and visual appeal. Making use of the following best practices when it comes to developing and designing your signage project will ensure that you are engaging your viewers in the best possible ways.

CHAPTER 2



1. Make it Legible

Legible copy makes it easy for your viewers to see and understand your message at a glance and from a distance. It's important to keep in mind that your viewers will mostly be taking in your signage from at least 5-10 feet away. So designing for this perspective will be a valuable asset to the overall success of your message.

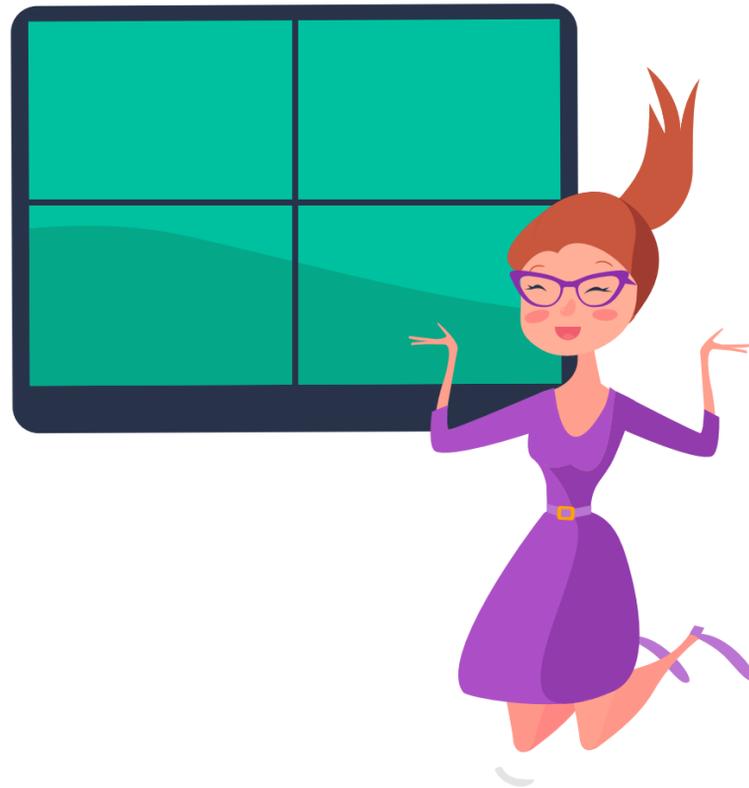
Here are a few rules of thumb when it comes to styling the text on your digital signage.

- Large font sizes are best
- Keep it short and simple
- Use Sans-Serif fonts

2. Design for Accessibility

In 2010, the Department of Justice published the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design. Under this law, all electronic and information technology must be accessible to people with disabilities. Digital signage falls under this category, and there are a few things you need to consider to ensure that your signage is in compliance with these ADA guidelines.

CHAPTER 2



Text

Text should be large enough that it can be easily read from a reasonable distance. To test out the best font size for your design, set up a Display showing various font sizes and try reading it from various distances.

The color of your text should be in high contrast with the background. This will ensure better readability for the visually impaired. Not sure what high contrast means? Check out [our post](#) on using color in digital signage design.

Interactive Guidelines

All functionality must be placed between 36 and 42 inches from the ground. That means that all buttons, key pads, and interactive elements must appear within this dimension on your Display.

Account for accessibility when designing wayfinding content. Accommodate for stairs, accessible entrances, etc.

Displays

Any Display that extends beyond 4" deep is in violation of the ADA. This requirement applies to any object that extends from a wall and into a path of travel. Ensure that your Display is either equal to or less than 4" deep. There are many large-format Displays available that fulfill ADA regulation at 3.5" wide.

CHAPTER 2

3. Design for Your Viewing Pattern

Digital signage tends to be received from one of three viewing patterns: Point of Transit, Point of Wait or Point of Sale. You can improve the overall success of your message by learning the viewing pattern for your Display and designing content that complements it.

Point of Transit

If your sign is located in a high traffic space where people are walking from point A to point

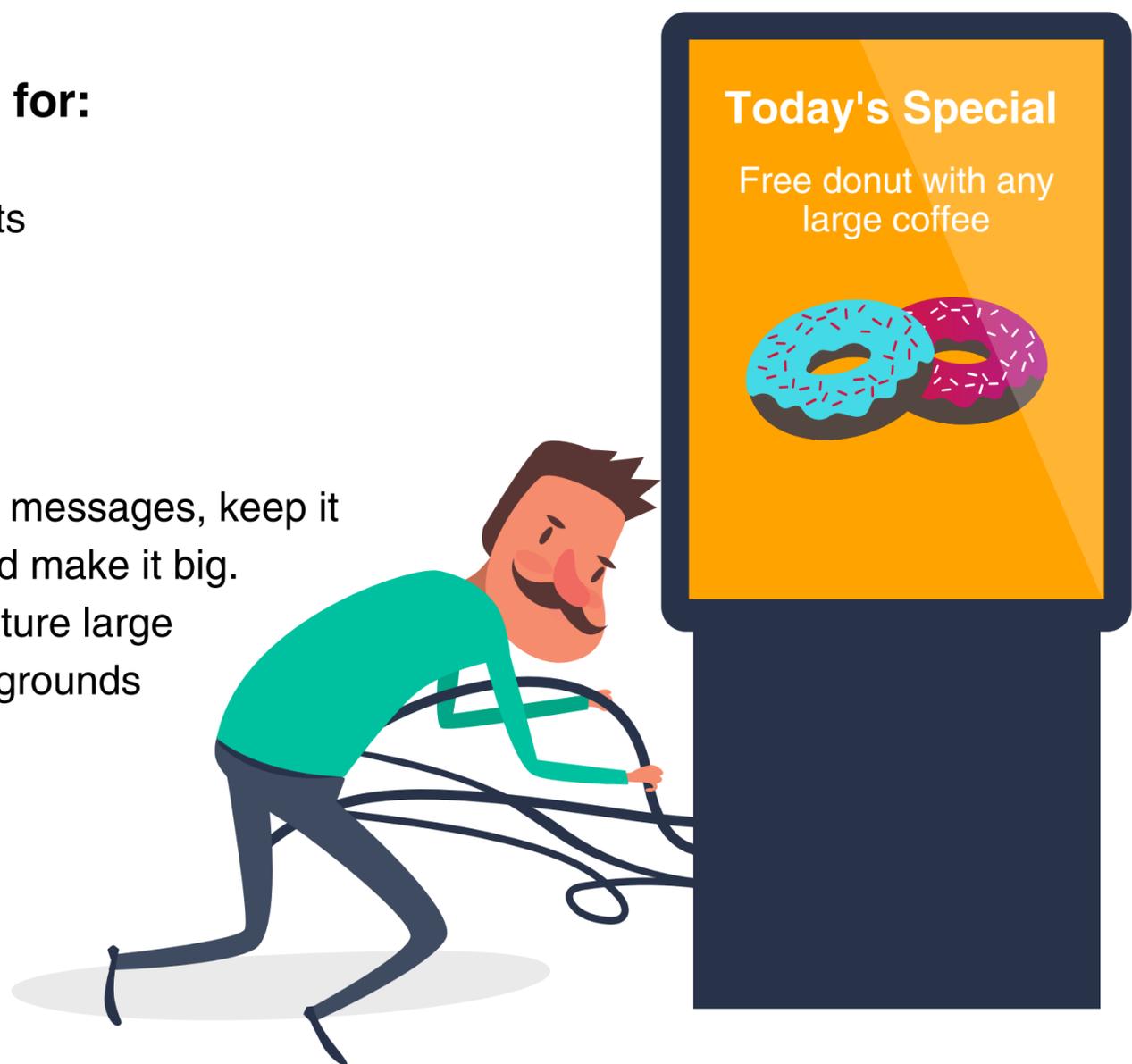
B, your signage will likely be seen at a glance. People in this scenario are usually walking between destinations and their interaction with your Display will be short. In this situation short, concise, messages shown in rotation are the most well received.

This scenario is best for:

- Event announcements
- Daily reminders
- Calls to action

When designing for these messages, keep it short (5 words or less) and make it big.

These designs should feature large fonts against simple backgrounds to avoid detracting from the message.



CHAPTER 2



Point of Wait

Point of wait interaction generally occurs in lobbies, elevators, service desks and any waiting place. As a result, viewing times tend to be longer in duration, allowing for longer messages and heavier content.

This scenario is best for:

- Informative content such as directories, donor walls, calendars, and news.
- Engaging content (trivia, video, spotlight stories, etc.) that may help to decrease perceived wait times.

This viewing pattern is also ideal for interactive displays as your viewer is interacting with your Display for a longer period of time. Using an interactive display, you can show wayfinding maps, searchable directories, scrollable pages, or donor walls with search functionality.

CHAPTER 2

4. Less is More

Your signage should never feel like a burden to read. Stick to limited text, and try re-writing your message until it's as short and concise as it can possibly be.

5. It's All in the Visuals

Your visuals are an extremely powerful component of your design. They should always add to your message, never detracting through complicated and unrelated images.

Avoid clutter- don't fill your Display with everything you can think of just because you can.

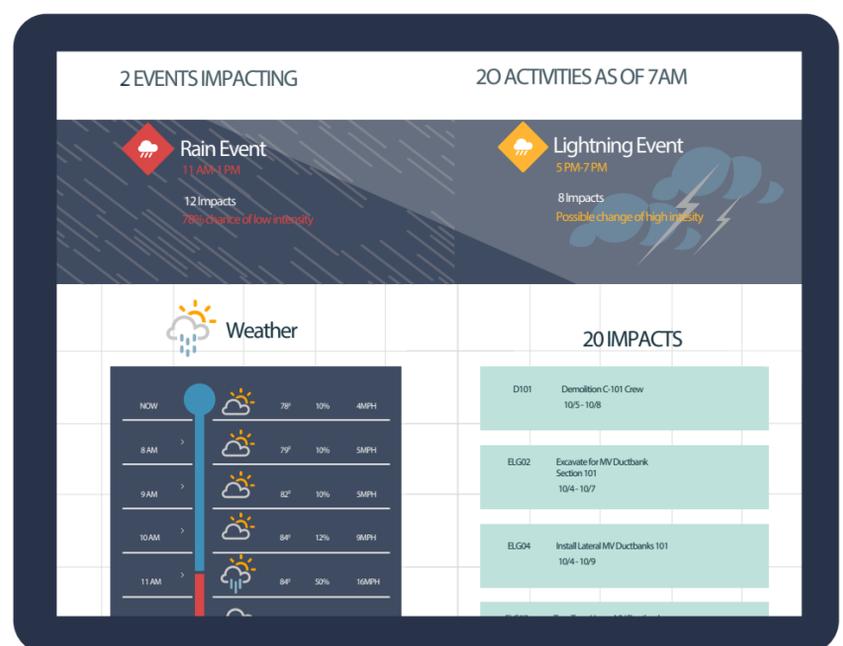
6. Perfect Your Call to Action

If you're using your Display to encourage your viewers to take a specific action, ensure that your message is strong, clear, and concise. Give specifics (dates, times, and locations) and be precise.

What Can I Show?

One of the main attractions of digital signage is the fact that you can show just about anything! With Rise Vision, you can use any of our Widgets to show a variety of content on your displays. Our widgets are similar to apps that you would download for your phone but they are designed and built to run on digital signage. Some of our basic widgets include Images, Text and Video widgets, while our Core Content Widgets allow you to stream things like YouTube, Google Calendars, and a Google Spreadsheet.

We have a variety of Widgets available in [our Store](#).



CHAPTER 2



Point of Sale

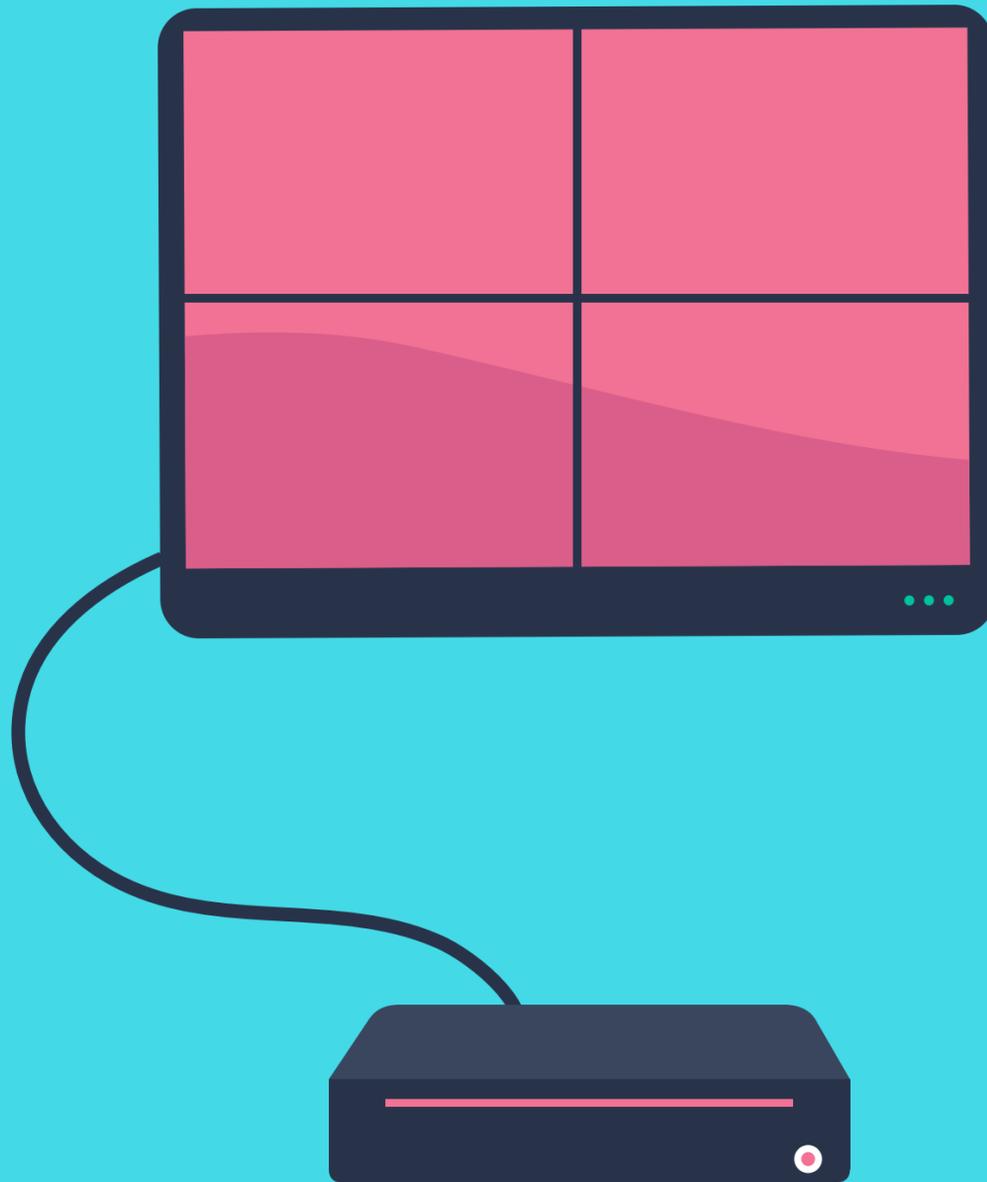
Signage that's located at the point of sale is generally being viewed for longer periods of time, and should help people make a buying decision.

This type of signage is great for showing:

- A menu, or special
- Store/service hours
- An in-store promotion
- Discounts or sales
- Promoting your high margin items
- Cross-selling

Design is very important to this viewing pattern. If the sign is being used to increase brand awareness, the brand's colors and styles should be featured prominently. If the sign is being used to advertise new offerings, strong design will lead to better receptiveness of the intended message.

CHAPTER 3



Media Players

Every digital signage project needs a media player to show your content. In this chapter we'll cover everything you need to know about media players to help you pick the one that best suits your needs.

CHAPTER 3



The Basics

What is a media player?

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, a digital signage media player is the computer that shows your digital content.

How big is a media player?

Digital signage players are smaller than a normal computer, but their exact sizes will vary. For example, a Windows Intel Compute stick can fit in the palm of your hand, while an Intel NUC is about the size of a book.

What is the setup process?

Media players are easy to set up. You'll need to plug it into a power source, connect it to your Display, and optionally connect it to the internet. They can sit on flat surfaces, or they can be mounted to a Display using mounting equipment or adhesives.

Where do I store my content?

This depends on your Content Management System. Your content can be stored either on the internet, or “locally” on the Media Player itself. Rise Vision caches your Images and Video locally on your Media Player, so that if something happens to your internet, you will still be able to show your content.

CHAPTER 3



The Basics

What kind of content can I show using my media player?

This depends on your CMS. Using Rise Vision, you can show images, videos, text, weather, websites and all other media types provided by our Widget library.

When do I need a digital signage player?

You should purchase a Media Player if you're a business showing digital content for prolonged periods of time. You don't need a Media Player if you're using digital signage for a one-time event. In that case, you would be fine using your laptop and connecting that to a Display.

How do I connect my media player to my Display?

You can connect your media player to a Display using an HDMI cable or any other cable that your Media Player and Display support.

Do you sell preconfigured Media Players?

We have preconfigured Media Players available in [our Store](#) specifically for use with Rise Vision. All you need to do is turn them on and enter your Claim ID or Display ID.

CHAPTER 3



Intensity of Content

In the digital signage world, we use the terms “static” and “dynamic” to describe the different ranges of content. Static content mostly refers to content that demands less processing power like static text, images, and short videos. Dynamic describes jazzier content like intense HTML, animations, and high resolution video, that all require more processing power to display.

If you know for certain that you only want to show static content, then you’re better off purchasing a lower cost Media Player with less processing power.

[Read all about our comparison test of three low-priced media players.](#)

If you know that you’ll be showing dynamic content, you should purchase a Media Player with more processing power. A player with more processing power will be able to show your content without overheating, stopping, or freezing.

If you’re just getting started with digital signage and you’re using your first project as a test run, consider purchasing a cheap Media Player in the beginning. This way, you can test it out and see if it’s the right solution for you before investing in a Media Player with more power.

CHAPTER 3



Price

In recent years, the cost of a digital signage player has substantially decreased. A few years ago, the decision to purchase a player was no light-hearted matter as a media player back then was a \$2000 investment. These days, Media Players can range from a cheap player for \$20, to a top of the line player for \$1000. As a result, the decision to invest in a digital signage project has become a much simpler and more affordable one. Now you can pick up a low-cost player, try it out, see if it has an ROI and then make a decision about whether you want to stick with it. This way digital signage can become more of an experiment with no serious repercussions if it doesn't work out.

Follow this guide and it will all work out!

CHAPTER 3

Choosing the Right Media Player

When it comes to picking a Media Player there is no right or wrong answer. It's really all up to you! That being said, we have a few questions we like to ask that can help set you in the right direction.

The first step to choosing a Media Player is choosing the right operating systems (OS). There are four main operating systems in the digital signage market; Windows, Linux, Chrome and Android. The factors to consider when choosing the right OS tend to be price, reliability, and simplicity.

Windows



- Most common OS for digital signage
- Players require a licence
- Stable and familiar OS
- Has remote management tools

Linux



- Very stable
- Don't usually require a licence
- Expensive
- Command Line interface - can be complicated for non IT personnel

Android



- New OS for digital signage
- Not supported by Rise Vision
- Not very reliable
- Free, open sourced
- No remote management tools

Chrome



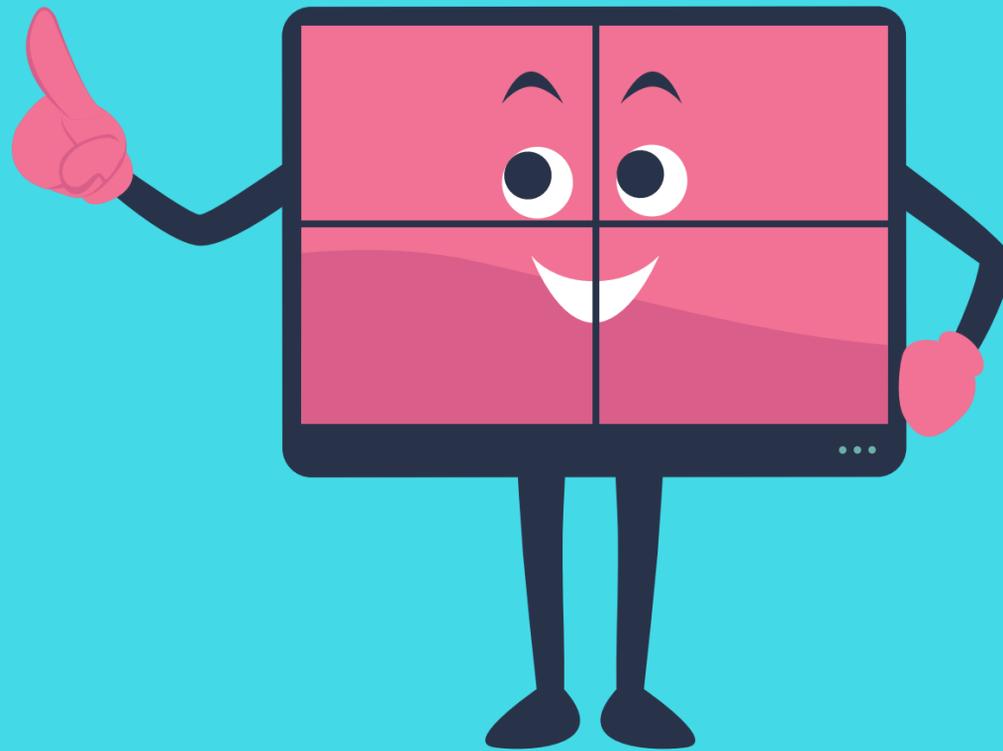
- Very new OS in the digital signage market
- Not supported by Rise Vision
- Not very reliable
- Free

Digital Signage Made Easy



[Learn more about Rise Vision](#)

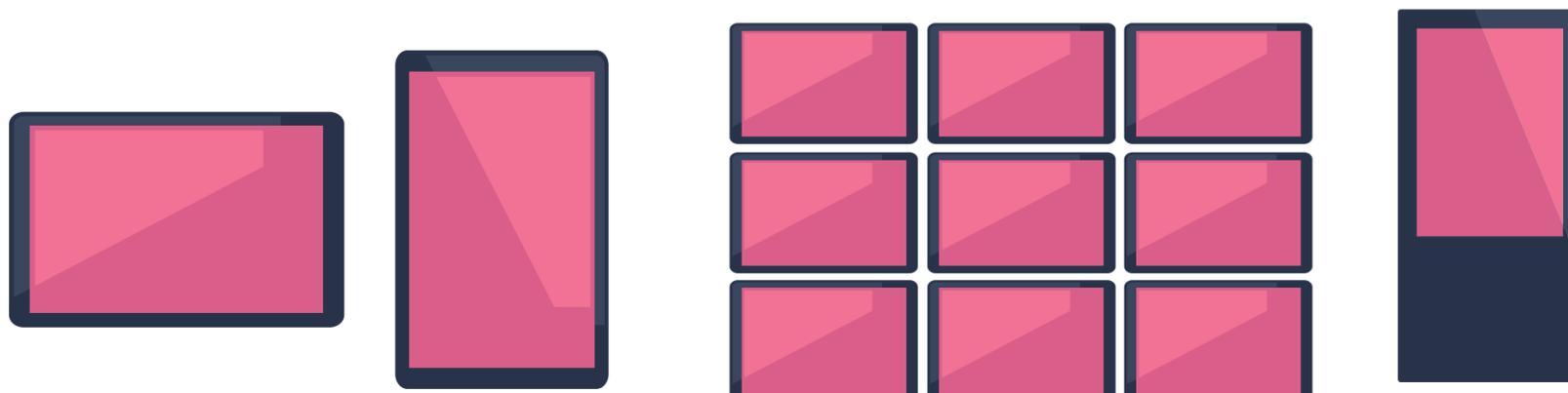
CHAPTER 4



Displays

There are hundreds of different types of digital signage displays available, and here we'll dive into the different kinds while contrasting pros and cons to help you decide what's best for your needs.

CHAPTER 4



Types of Displays

There are hundreds of different types of digital signage displays available, from standard TV's to outdoor displays. But if you're just getting started with digital signage, the only differences you need to be concerned with are TV displays versus commercial displays and interactive displays compared with static displays.

TV vs. Commercial

TV displays are just your standard TV purchased from your local Best Buy or Walmart. They are often smaller and less expensive than commercial grade displays and are usually not interactive. These displays should not be used for more than 8 hours a day.

Commercial LCD displays are specifically designed for digital signage. They are built for long hours of use and they include additional hardware like heat dissipation plates, electronics and cooling fans that allows them to operate in commercial environments for long periods of time with economical power usage. These Displays are built for businesses that run for 16 to 24 hours a day.

CHAPTER 4

Interactive vs. Passive

Interactive digital signage allows your audience to touch and control the screen in front of them. This type of display has really picked up in popularity in recent years as they are said to increase audience engagement. Passive displays allow for static visuals, meaning that the audience cannot interact with the content on the display. Instead, the display will simply show the content with no added dynamics.

Choosing the Display That Is Right For Your Setup

The way we see it, you have two choices to make when it comes to picking a display - do you want to use a simple TV or a commercial display, and do you want to go interactive or static?

Let's weigh the pros and cons:

TV displays are less expensive than their commercial alternatives so if you really aren't sure if digital signage is something you want to stick with, this could be a good option for you. Additionally, if you're only using your display for a few hours a day, for example during the 6 or 7 hour school day, then a TV display might work for you. However, keep in mind that if you chose to purchase a TV you will not have the option for interactivity.

CHAPTER 4

Now the choice between an interactive or static display...

Interactive displays tend to be more expensive, but they do come with their own set of benefits including:

- Increased interaction times
- Great for audience engagement and retention
- Allow for more dynamic content

Static displays are on the cheaper end but will allow for basic functionality. They will show passive content with no interactive elements and are cheaper than interactive displays.

Many would argue that an interactive display is the better choice these days as it's great for engagement and audience retention, however, if you're simply looking to get started and only want to show a few static presentations in your store or organization, a passive display will work just fine for you! After all, you can always upgrade your display to an interactive one later on.



CHAPTER 4

Learn How to Use Rise Vision & Engage Your Audience



A 30-minute introductory presentation to the Rise Vision platform. You'll see how easy it is to get started with digital signage!

[Go to Webinar](#)

CONCLUSION

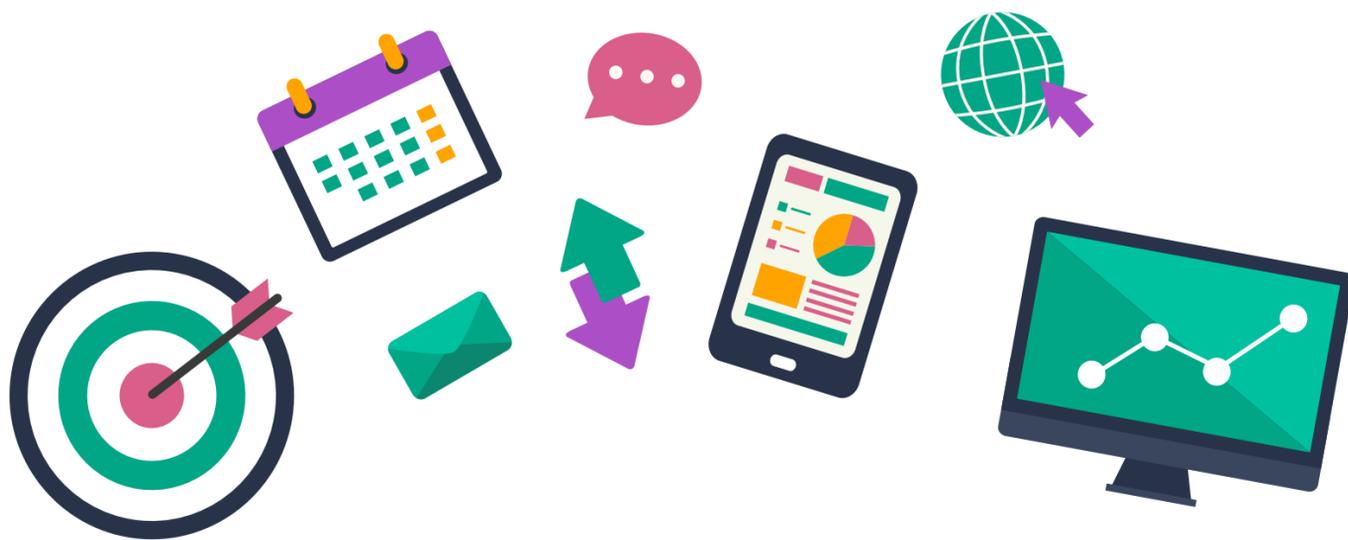


If you've made it this far, then that probably means that you're interested in digital signage!

If you take anything from this e-book, we hope you remember to treat your first digital signage project as a no-risk experiment. If you're happy with the results, you can always take things to the next level. We also hope you take some time to set a plan to make sure you're set up and have everything in place to maximize your success.

Here's to a new way of communicating with your audience!

- *The Rise Vision Team*



Additional Resources

Don't get intimidated by the world of digital signage. Consider doing a 30-day experiment to see how you like it and tweak your plan from there. You have nothing to lose!

If you're looking to learn more, check out these articles:

[The Ultimate Digital Signage Launch Checklist](#)

[Digital Signage Best Practices](#)

[10 Reasons Your Digital Signage Sucks and How to Fix It](#)

[Free Resources to Design Great Digital Signage Content](#)

[5 Questions to Ask Before Starting a Digital Signage Project](#)

Learn How to Use Rise Vision & Engage Your Audience



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