

MOHAWK SPECTRUM INDOOR/OUTDOOR LOW SKEW SOLVES SPECIALIZED DIGITAL SIGNAGE NEEDS FOR TANGER OUTLETS

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Tanger President and CEO Steven B. Tanger recently stated, "In good times, people love a bargain. In bad times, they need one." Despite the current recession, Tanger Outlets continues to earn impressive revenues and attract thousands of customers to its 31 outlet shopping centers nationwide. Tanger's success can be attributed to its expertise in developing and managing some of the country's most popular outlet shopping attractions.

Tanger's portfolio, which includes such brand name and designer outlet stores such as Polo Ralph Lauren, Banana Republic, Coach, Nike, Abercrombie & Fitch and Tommy Hilfiger, to name a few, is strategically located in 22 states from New England to California and Michigan to Florida. It was, however, the Tanger Outlet Center in Riverhead NY on Long Island, where the use of digital signage became a reality as a new form of cost-effective marketing.

Tanger Tests Digital Signage

More than four years ago, Tanger was investigating new ways to advertise and communicate with shoppers that were already at the center. Digital signage, with its eye-catching electronically displayed messages, was emerging as a beneficial solution. Since the digital signage industry was still in an infancy stage, there was a lack of common protocol, and components including LCD screens and software had to be purchased from different sources. Technical support was needed to install and maintain the equipment.

Working closely with Joe Nehmen, Tanger's Senior Vice President of Operations, the Tanger Outlet Center in Riverhead looked for answers to its digital signage needs. A pilot program in the center's high traffic food court, which involved numerous hours of researching, purchasing components, hiring tech support, and utilizing third party non-competitive advertisements and customer service information, was a big success.

Based on the positive test in Riverhead, Mr. Nehmen realized he wanted to roll out a program using this emerging technology. "We were impressed with the effectiveness of the digital screen technology and felt it would provide us with an exciting, cost effective means of advertising and marketing to our customers in the center's common areas."



The roll-out process slowly migrated to a few Tanger Outlet Centers. The digital signage was first utilized in food courts, hanging above canopies in pedestrian walkways and also in free standing displays (shown left) in the shopping centers.

New Installation Challenge

When Tanger began constructing its new Myrtle Beach, SC outlet location, Mr. Nehmen was planning to utilize the new digital technology but was determined to save installation costs related to the project's cabling needs. In addition to distance issues, "I was looking for a low skew cable that could be run from

one individual store location vertically across the roof and drop into another store location," remarked Nehmen. That is when he contacted Mohawk to ask if this was possible. Since his request would require an Indoor/Outdoor type cable to protect against the elements, traditional low skew cable could not be used for this purpose. Mohawk had the answer.

Mohawk Provides Design Solution

Mr. Nehmen worked to overcome this issue with Joe Barry, RCDD, Mohawk's Manager of Fiber and Specialty products and Director of Belden's Fiber Optic Business Unit. Mr. Nehmen explained his cabling needs for this unique low skew installation and Joe Barry was able to design a variation of the low skew cable similar to Mohawk's VersaLAN Indoor/Outdoor Category 5e and 6 cables.

Like the standard Spectrum Low Skew cable for digital signage, Spectrum Indoor/Outdoor cable offers a proven alternative to RGB (Red, Green, Blue) video applications. It begins with the Spectrum four pair UTP design under one jacket and is enhanced with a water blocked design and finished with a water resistant jacket. The benefit of this design is it can be installed in flood prone indoor locations, outdoor duct locations, and with the Tanger location, indoor to outdoor to indoor installation. There is no additional cost when installing connectivity since it can be terminated with standard Category 5e connectors.

In addition to installation flexibility, the cable has a built in "skew", which is the difference in signal delay between any pair within the same cable. Spectrum Indoor/Outdoor cable has a propagation delay skew of 2.2ns/100 meters which indicates that all parts of a transmitted image along the separate pairs of cables occur within 2.2 nanoseconds of each other. This ensures the clearest image on a receiving monitor because lower skew means video transmission can be carried over a longer length of cable before an image is distorted.



Since Spectrum Indoor/Outdoor can transmit strong and consistent signals up to 2000 feet, it also solved distance issues with the Myrtle Beach location. The cable allows high speed scrolling messages in a digital signage network of an internet access, a media player (computers that play content using software), a distribution network to the displays, and a network management component.

Mohawk was able to save Tanger Outlets time and money to expand its use of the digital signage. With careful planning, Mr. Nehmen plans to move forward with Digital Signage in other locations as a tool to market Tanger programs, market retail merchandise, and provide an advertising medium for area businesses.

"Mohawk assisted Tanger with not only the specialized cabling needs we needed; it also provided useful grounding information and the ability to Daisy Chain our digital signage network," said Nehmen.

To learn more about Tanger Outlet Centers visit www.tangeroutlet.com. To learn more about Mohawk and its product line, call Mohawk at 800-422-9961 or visit www.mohawk-cable.com.