

Selecting the Right Digital Display Technology for a House of Worship

Many houses of worship are beginning to incorporate cutting-edge technologies into their services, and a tech toolbox that includes visual technologies such as LCDs and projectors can create significant value for a facility.

One major way digital technologies can be used is for messaging. A house of worship can place 40- to 55-inch LCD displays in entryways or hallways to inform attendees of events, readings or important announcements. These displays are also useful as way-finding signage in larger facilities that may have several services happening concurrently. Using digital technology for these purposes can help eliminate the cost of printing new bulletins or announcements, and allow information to be easily updated when needed.

Another way houses of worship are using digital technology is as an additional resource during their services. Laser projectors, displays or a combination of the two can help ensure that all attendees will be able to follow along with the service, even in the largest spaces. A single projector or display can be placed at certain intervals or positions in the sanctuary, ensuring even attendees in the back or in overflow areas can take part in the service.

Projectors also can be used not just to show live video of a speaker or text, but also to project colors or images that help set a mood for the service and add ambient aesthetic appeal.



LCD displays and projectors can additionally be used as teaching tools in houses of worship that offer educational opportunities for children. Both of these display technologies can be integrated with touch capabilities, which captivate children and make learning more interactive and interesting.

Before a house of worship selects a digital display technology, however, there are a number of factors to take into account.

What to Consider

Structure and placement: It will be necessary for many houses of worship to work within existing building conditions; for many historic buildings or facilities are on a budget and it is not an option to remodel the interior. No matter what environment you are working in, it is important to ensure that digital displays or projectors can be safely mounted and that the structure of the building can support the desired size and weight without needing additional construction.

A facility installing a projector must also take into account the “throw” (distance from the projector to the projection surface) to ensure content will be viewable. Sometimes issues with projector placement can be solved using a short throw or long throw lens to increase or decrease image size.

Aesthetics: In addition to physical structure, aesthetics should be considered – how





a display or projector will look once installed within the environment and whether it will be pleasing to the eye.

For historic buildings, a high-tech digital display may not match the overall aesthetic, so a projector could be more discreet, depending on where it is installed. Other houses of worship are modern in design and so a digital display would not look out of place.

Budget: A house of worship that wants to get the largest image possible for the most modest price should look to projectors, but if content will be viewed from closer distance – such as in a classroom – then LCD (due to higher resolution) or a projector are good options.

While direct-view LED is ideal for outdoor use because of its readability in any lighting condition and from a distance, this type of display is not as budget friendly. A house of worship requiring a display only for indoor use can achieve the same purposes for a lower price with either a projector or an LCD display.

Ambient lighting: There is a type of digital display for any lighting condition, from the dimmest spaces to the brightest outdoor environments, but ambient light must be taken into account.

Brighter worship spaces may need brighter displays to ensure visibility in the environment. For this reason, commercial LCDs generally have four levels of brightness to accommodate a variety of lighting levels. For example, an outdoor display that competes with direct sunlight will require much different brightness properties than a display in a hallway that contains controlled lighting. Some higher end flat-panel displays also have anti-glare properties, called haze, built into the surface treatments of the panels. This gives them more of a matte finish and scatters light better than traditional coatings that allow for easier readability even in bright environments.

A projector may not be suitable if there will be a lot of light directly hitting the screen during viewing times, because it will wash out the image but it may be possible to overcome this obstacle with a higher brightness model.

Ease of operation: Many older houses of worship were not built with the idea that digital technologies someday would be used during worship services. Unless a facility is a newer building, it may not have the network infrastructure that would allow staff to externally control screens. Instead, look for a display with “plug-and-play” functionality, which allows users to simply load content to a USB drive that plugs into the display, making it easy to change out content as needed.

The ROI for a House of Worship

Digital display technologies in a house of worship will not yield the same kind of monetary return on investment that a retail store would get from digital advertising signage – but it can have a more significant, intangible effect: Attendees will see the investment the facility has made to enhance their enjoyment of and participation in services, helping them feel more comfortable and welcome.

A house of worship's purpose is to bring people together to share a positive message about faith, and if a facility is able to more effectively serve its members using technology, it will translate to higher attendance and more positive word-of-mouth – keeping current members coming back and encouraging new ones to join.



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