

Display Solutions Elevate the Theater Experience

By Rich McPherson



To meet the expectations of today's moviegoers, exhibitors are adopting a wide range of digital display solutions to create unforgettable experiences for their customers. From the first touchpoint outside the theater, through the lobby, concession and entertainment areas, and into the auditorium itself, digital display solutions are elevating the entire theater experience.

Direct view LED displays installed outside a theater are an effective way to grab the attention of passers-by. These cutting-edge displays provide bright, high-contrast and crystal clear images. With many pixel spacing options available, the optimum display resolution can be achieved regardless of viewing distance. They're perfect for presenting movie trailers and other video content to attract new customers and build excitement for moviegoers entering the theater.

Creating an exciting experience as customers enter the theater should ultimately result in greater customer satisfaction and increased sales. Whether a customer purchases their ticket via a theater representative or using the latest technology (kiosk with an incorporated touch-enabled desktop monitor for self-ticketing) it should be set a high precedence for the complete movie going experience.

In lobbies, large format displays can provide customers real-time information about movie times and show trailers and other video content to promote current and upcoming movies. They're a cost-effective alternative to print posters, and by entertaining customers they help reduce perceived wait times. With the addition of touch-enabled overlays, digital screens can engage customers with interactive movie posters and other types of entertainment content.

Some exhibitors are also using projectors in their lobbies to display videos and other content onto empty walls, screens or even floors. This content can create an exciting or soothing mood in waiting areas.

Digital displays have also found a home in concession areas. Digital menu boards provide clearer information and vibrant images to entice moviegoers to buy concession offerings. They also allow instant updates to reflect changes in menu items, different time-of-day selections and promotions. For smaller-scale signage in concession areas, desktop displays are a perfect solution. Not only do digital signs boost revenue by persuading customers to add a snack, beverage or meal to their ticket purchase, they enrich the customer's experience during their stay.

Beyond the concession stand, large format displays and projectors can display images and content in bar and dining areas. For example, parents can watch a sporting event in the theater's bar while their kids are enjoying the latest Pixar feature in an auditorium.

Exhibitors have another customer engagement opportunity as moviegoers make their way to auditoriums. By transforming empty walls into an experience, digital signage and projectors in corridors can create an appropriate ambiance as customers enter and leave an auditorium. For example, they can display dynamic content for an action film or a sedate presentation for a somber drama.

Inside auditoriums, projectors have always been the keystone of the theater experience. To create the type of viewing experience that modern moviegoers expect, a theater should have an up-to-date cinema projector that offers high brightness, crisp imaging and a superior color gamut.

New generation laser cinema projectors have mostly replaced traditional lamp-based projectors: More than 95 percent of cinema screens worldwide now use laser projectors. Several factors have contributed to the widespread adoption of laser technology. Laser projectors increase viewer engagement by providing vibrant images and incredible brightness levels that last longer than lamp-based projectors. Some of these projectors support 3D, live streaming, 4K and other cutting-edge imaging technologies. Exhibitors using up-to-date laser projectors also achieve lower total cost of ownership, along with greater operational and organizational efficiencies.

dvLED displays have recently emerged as an option for auditoriums. Instead of projecting an image onto a screen surface, multiple modules combine to create a single, customized large video wall. Each module uses an array of light-emitting diodes as pixels for a video display. Because the LED diodes actively emit light very efficiently, the brightness and resolution levels achievable by dvLED are very high. dvLED cinema displays offer extremely long life,

but also high costs, so exhibitors should carefully consider whether a cinema projector or dvLED display is the best fit for their businesses.

Exhibitors face an ongoing challenge: How to compete successfully for longstanding cinema-goers and attract new audiences to their theaters. Captivating display solutions – installed inside and outside the venue – deliver the perfect visual experience throughout all stages of the customer journey.

About the Author

Rich McPherson is a Senior Product Manager at Sharp NEC Display Solutions of America, overseeing the company's installation and digital cinema projectors. He has over 25 years of experience in the projection industry, and his roles have included customer service, engineering and product management.

