



How to Sell Direct View LED to Customers

While direct view LED video walls can carry a higher price tag than LCD video walls or projection systems, explaining the return on investment to potential customers can help justify the added cost.

It's not easy to sell a more expensive system to a customer when a seemingly comparable system is available at a cheaper cost. That's the case with direct view LED video walls versus their LCD counterparts.

To the layman, it does seem that there are few differences between LCD video walls and direct view LED video walls outside of the bezels. As the price gap increases those bezels may become easier to deal with. However, integrators know that the differences between direct view LED and LCD video walls are much more staggering than simple seams on the screen.

In order to make a direct view LED video wall sale, it's up to the integrator to explain to the customer why the added investment is worthwhile. From a customer's perspective, that cost needs to be justified in order to approve.

Giving the customer a clear return on investment explanation makes them feel better about the price of a direct view LED system. Perhaps more importantly, though, it gives them the ammunition to make a case to those that need to approve the purchase internally. Whether your customer is the owner of the company that needs to justify the purchase to no one, or a member of the IT department that needs to justify the purchase to multiple stakeholders, selling the system can be much easier if you provide a clear ROI.

Consider these topics when you're pitching a direct view LED system to a customer:

Customization and Aesthetic

Outside of control rooms and larger boardrooms, video walls are most often used as a visual stimulant and distributor of information. Retail spaces, lobbies, digital billboard in cities and on the side of highways – this is where you'll likely run into large-scale video walls. They offer a variant aesthetic and tell those visiting that the space is owned by a high-tech, forward-looking company.

Walk into the lobby of a building in any major city and you expect to see a rectangular video wall. It's becoming commonplace, and doesn't deliver that same message of forward-thinking that it did ten years ago. Instead, it's a standard. If your customer wants to rise above that standard? Move on to the next iteration of the technology.

"You can do a lot of creative layouts, like columns, curves around structures, and you can even have the display wrap around a corner," says Mark Miller, product specialist for Sharp Imaging and Information Company of America. "There's a lot of versatility in that regard."

Direct view LED video walls don't have the bezels that LCD video walls have. They're seamless, and come across as a larger-than-life

single display when looked at with non-technical eyes. Even in a standard, rectangular form there is a clear indication of a step up in technology.

Customers can take that a step further, though. Direct view LED video walls are completely customizable. The systems can be curved and cut into any shape imaginable. They can be made to fit with the architecture and enhance the aesthetic of a space. They help the customer stand out – and why does anyone need a video wall other than to stand out?

Application and Location

Depending on the space that a video wall is going to be placed, direct view LED may be the best available option regardless of price. Direct view LED video walls offer bright images for bright spaces, and don't suffer from glare when awash with direct sunlight.

"With direct view LED, each pixel is an LED bulb, if you will," says Miller. "You're able to get a super bright image in spite of ambient light. What's cool about it is you can scale it to any size without any seams going across the image."

Outdoor applications are the most obvious consideration here. Those screens will be out in the sunlight all day. There isn't much sense in spending all of the money on an LCD video wall just to see faded, washed out images on a bright day.

Moving indoors doesn't automatically solve the problem. Modern architects are increasingly turning to large windows that let in greater amounts of ambient light to communal spaces – which means more ambient light hitting indoor video walls as well. When that's the case, again, there's no sense in spending money on a video wall that's going to be washed out.

"In areas where there's a lot of ambient light, direct view LED is the right solution," says Miller. "With a lot of light coming in the image can be washed out with LCD, even more so with projectors. Direct view LED, even in direct sunlight, the image is still going to pop."

Honesty

For the AV industry, honesty is a key to getting a satisfied customer – which leads to more sales down the line. A happy customer is a

repeat customer as well as a referral for future business. So one of the key things to consider when selling direct view LED is when not to sell direct view LED.

"It may not always be the right fit. There are a lot of situational and environmental factors to consider," says Miller. "If there's constant vibration there's certain considerations because the pixel cards are held on to the screen via magnet, so it could have the possibility of falling off. If there's magnetic dust it can get attached to the screen. Possible exposure to oily smoke like menu boards, the oil can damage the direct view LED so you can't use it in that situation. They require regular cleaning if they're in a dirtier environment."

Don't push a direct view LED screen where it doesn't make sense. There are plenty of applications where it does. If you're honest with your customer about where NOT to put direct view LED screens, then they'll trust you when you tell them where they should put direct view LED video screens.

Quality and Support

The most important return on investment is ensuring that the client is getting a quality product that won't make the integrator look bad. The use of high-quality components paired with Sharp's unrivaled customer and product support ensures integrator and customer satisfaction.

"The LEDs we used are called Multi-Color LEDs," says Miller. "There's a certain failure called the caterpillar effect – they're hardened against that by the way they are designed. They stand up to humidity better than standard LEDs. They're a higher quality LED."

"We also have a full, dedicated team for LED. They handle the installs for people – our team would handle the site survey, go out, and actually install the LED for them. We also are certifying certain resellers to install our LEDs. We offer a class they can attend to learn how to install our specific LED. They go through a training and certification process," says Miller.

Customers that don't understand direct view LED technology won't always understand why the cost is high. If you keep some of these topics in mind you can help them understand. That will lead to a more satisfied customer. Everybody wins!

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