

Case Study: Delaware North Sportservice – U.S. Cellular Field

Samsung Smart Signage with Ping HD Drives Concession Sales, Reduces Wait Times



Overview

Customer Need

Delaware North Sportservice provides food concessions to fans at U.S. Cellular Field, home of the Chicago White Sox baseball team. Delaware North operates 20,000 square feet of food service areas that feed up to 40,000 hungry fans per game. The company needed to replace old light box menu boards with cost-effective digital displays to improve promotion of food items and drive visitor traffic to the Chicago Sports Depot retail store.

Samsung Solution

Delaware North selected Ping HD, a digital signage solutions provider in Denver, Colorado, and Samsung digital displays with the Smart Signage Platform (SSP). Ping HD worked with Delaware North to install more than 100 Samsung DB Series Smart Signage displays. They also created custom content that promotes stadium food and drinks and merchandise at its Chicago Sports Depot store.

Results

Since installing the digital menu boards, Delaware North has increased sales from coordinated promotions, decreased wait times and improved overall customer satisfaction. The company works with Ping HD to develop and schedule animated content to promote specific products and brands. With screens that are dynamic and easier to read, customers can make decisions faster and move through lines more quickly. The cross promotions have also increased foot traffic to the Chicago Sports Depot.

SAMSUNG



Delaware North
Sportservice

While Chicago White Sox fans enjoy a baseball game at the 40,000 seat U.S. Cellular Field, they crave tasty food and drinks. Delaware North, a leading concession stand operator, provides food services on the 100 and 500 levels of the field through more than 20,000 square feet of serving areas.

The concessions include traditional fan favorites like hot dogs, hamburgers, pizzas and helmet nachos at stationary concession stands. In addition, portable stands sell specialty items such as Cuban sandwiches and 35th Street tacos.

In addition, Delaware North operates the Bullpen Sports Bar and the Chicago Sports Depot. The Bullpen Sports Bar is a two-tiered, open-air section located in right field that offers an insider's look into the visiting team's bullpen. The Sports Depot is a two-story retail store that sells clothing and souvenirs from all Chicago professional sports teams.

The Customer Need: Cost-effective, Digital Menu Boards

On an average game day, more than 20,000 Chicago White Sox fans flock to U.S. Cellular Field. For many, the food is every bit as important as the game itself. Since the stadium first opened more than 20 years ago, Delaware North Sportservice had been using the original light box menu boards with static signage.

The light box menu boards were hard to read and difficult to update. Customer lines moved slowly as customers tried to focus on items and pricing.

If a menu item ran out, staff had to communicate the bad news amid the noisy crowd and wait for the fan to make an alternate choice. The cost and time necessary to maintain the old menu boards were also an issue.

"It was time to make a change," said Joey Nigro, Delaware North Sportservice general manager at U.S. Cellular Field. "Parts and light bulbs were hard to find. Even when fully lit, the menu boards were hard to read. They were busy and didn't have a lot of room for graphics or promotions."

Nigro began looking at digital menu displays as a way to make menus more readable and attractive to customers. Nigro needed the new displays to include videos to promote specials and items at other stands. Delaware North also needed a way to advertise and drive traffic to the adjacent Chicago Sports Depot, where customers could buy team apparel and souvenirs.

"In addition to reducing costs, we really wanted to use the digital menu boards to showcase what we had around the park," he said. "We conducted a return on investment analysis on the cost to maintain our existing menu boards compared to the cost of new digital displays. When looking at the numbers over a six-year period, the costs were about the same. Same cost but better experience."

Nigro and his team began looking for solutions that were affordable, easy to read and simple to manage. They also needed a partner that could help develop advertisements to upsell and cross-promote food items and souvenirs.

The Samsung Solution: Ping HD and Smart Signage Displays

After evaluating bids from several vendors, Delaware North selected the Samsung Smart Signage displays and Ping HD, a digital signage solutions provider in Denver, Colorado, and its EngagePHD software. More than 100 Samsung DB Series 40-inch and 48-inch displays were installed to replace the aging light box menu boards.

The Samsung DB Series features the Smart Signage Platform (SSP), an embedded media player that eliminates the need for external devices.

Graphics performance is accelerated through Samsung's advanced system-on-chip (SOC) technology with a quad-core processor. The platform is supported by an ecosystem of software developers and channel partners like Ping HD.

Kevin Goldsmith, Ping HD's chief technology officer, worked with Nigro and his team to develop the program, which includes a collection of graphics – motion and still images – to promote food items at the concession stands and the apparel at Chicago Sports Depot. The solution features a products database that enables the digital menu boards to be quickly adjusted to reflect changes in pricing and availability.

Each concession stand includes two to three Samsung DB Series displays that list products and prices in addition to advertisements for items at other specialty carts.

If customers are standing in line for a hot dog or peanuts, they might see an advertisement for helmet nachos or bacon on a stick at another stand, and move to it instead. Additional advertisements are run to promote the Chicago Sports Depot.

All content is scheduled in advance of each game. Ping HD or Delaware North can make any changes from any desktop and notebook or Android-based tablet and smartphone.

"Moving to a digital menu board program was a major game changer for Delaware North," Goldsmith said. "The Samsung SSP platform enabled us to build a solution that is cost-effective and easy to deploy based on their requirements. We built our content management system around the SSP platform to include an integrated product database. Now, if they run out of an item or need to make a price change, we can make the adjustment in a matter of seconds."

Quick Profile:

Samsung DB Series
Smart Signage Displays



Screen Sizes: 32, 40, 48 and 55-inch with small signage varieties also available

Processor: Enhanced Smart Signage Platform with quad core CPU

Resolution: 1920 X 1080

Brightness: 350 nits

Features: Built-in tuner and speakers

Viewing Angle: 178:178

Connectivity/Controls: Analog D-SUB, DVI-D, HDMI, USB, RS232C through stereo jack RJ45

Warranty: 3 years on-site (parts/labor/backlight)

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– Kevin Goldsmith,
Chief Technology Officer,
Ping HD



The Results: Nine Innings of Coordinated Promotions

Since installing the Samsung digital displays, Delaware North has reported increased sales of 1.5 percent from coordinated promotions, decreased the time customers stand in line and improved overall customer satisfaction.

Nigro and his team worked with Ping HD to develop animated advertisements that promote specific products and brands, such as Beggars Pizza. The videos entice sales by showing pizzas being made.

With screens that are easier to read, customers can make decisions faster and move through their lines more quickly. Cross advertising of foods at other stands prevents customers from missing out on their favorite foods or being disappointed with their selections. Nigro has noticed an increase in foot traffic to the Chicago Sports Depot, which he attributes in

part to the extra advertising at the concession stands.

“The flexibility to seamlessly change and manage menu boards on the fly is tremendous from a general manager’s perspective,” Nigro said. “And having the SSP media players built into the displays has been a huge cost savings. The functionality has been phenomenal and the displays look great, making this the approach we want to maintain moving forward.”

Ping HD has deployed similar concession display programs at other stadiums, citing the support from Samsung and ease of use of its Smart Signage displays.

“The support from Samsung has really been incredible, which is great when you combine that support with such a powerful product platform,” Goldsmith

said. “The graphics performance is much more powerful than what we’ve seen on other platforms. Samsung digital displays are our new default standard for all digital signage projects.”

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– Joey Nigro,
General Manager,
Delaware North Sportservice



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