

# **Creative Screen Spotting**

## **Effective Mounting Solutions for Retail Digital Signage**

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### **The Market**

Retail Digital Signage (RDS) is here to stay with US market growth alone expected to go from \$60M to a whopping \$2B over the next 5-7 years. Savvy retailers are including these exciting, modern systems in their advertising strategies, construction budgets and promotional plans for the future. A revolution in retailing is about to occur and this time “the revolution *will* be televised”.

The RDS supply chain -- hardware, software, video displays and display mounting devices, network management and content creation -- is becoming more defined every day. While choosing the right supply chain partners for an RDS application is essential, an effective RDS system is not possible without the *correct placement of those displays* or “**Screen Spotting.**”

### **The Message**

While there are many aspects of RDS systems that represent both opportunity and challenge, this piece focuses specifically on Screen Spotting and the integral role that audiovisual mounting solutions play in the overall success of RDS systems. Proper Screen Spotting is an absolutely critical step that allows for a smoother RDS roll-out scenario and creates the effective network that every retailer must have to stay competitive.

### **The Opportunity**

Companies that own and operate shopping centers such as Simon Properties of Indianapolis, IN, count annual visits to their centers in the billions while retailing giants such as Wal-Mart can claim weekly visits by shoppers in the millions. Yes, these are two leaders in the retail market, but by no means are they the only retailers that can successfully use RDS systems. Anywhere large numbers of people visit, shop, mingle, travel or otherwise gather is an excellent place for communicating messages of many kinds: sales, information, education or entertainment. The list is endless.

### **The Challenges**

Owners and managers of RDS systems have a lot of things to consider when designing and creating their networks. The number-one defining criterion for any RDS system is effectiveness. **Effectiveness is a function of system design.** Was the network intended for sales lift, brand enhancement, reduction of perceived wait time, information delivery, entertainment or some combination of these? Is the content effective? Is it fresh and do the system managers update it frequently?

Most importantly, *are the video displays placed to optimize the message?* This is **critical** as all the well-intentioned design work, beautiful displays and high-powered content money can buy is rendered useless if placed in a poor location.

Most new RDS designs incorporate screens of 40" or larger, to maximize the return on investment and messaging impact. Some large retail stores use several dozen screens and, in the case of Sainsbury's in London, as many as 290 plasma and LCD displays are positioned throughout the store. RDS video display screens must be placed at **eye level** to be most effective. Recently, system managers on a large project in Sweden decided to **lower** existing screens several feet to simply increase effectiveness of content. This alone almost proves the maxim, "Location, Location, Location."

### **Location Location Location**

"Content is King" is the rallying cry at every RDS seminar and trade show. While it is true that great content is highly important to any successful RDS system, the Achilles

heel is their functionality, dependability, and serviceability – all of which are largely reliant upon location. Public spaces rarely, if ever, have consistent ceiling structures or wall construction, and often feature very dissimilar architecture, even within same-brand locations. The idea of hanging a 200-pound glass and steel structure over an aisle of highly prized customers, clients, prospects or employees can be problematic without the proper attention during the design and pilot testing phase. As these are almost always public spaces, the safety, security and durability of the mounting device must be carefully considered.

### **Screen Spotting**

Properly installed and managed RDS systems are both elegantly simple and maddeningly complex. Successful Screen Spotting places the content where it can be easily, safely and securely viewed *as well as* serviced, replaced and updated without difficulty. Screen Spotting is an art form and the proper execution of this critical system component will differentiate successful, robust systems from intermittent and difficult to manage systems. A system may require dozens of screens in easy-to-reach and simple-to-install locations. More likely than not, however, there will be wild variations in ceiling heights, attachment points, power availability, etc. As the network increases in size, so do the number of variations to be expected. As diverse content sponsors and department merchandisers get involved in the project, the system will be required to accomplish even more. Screen Spotting is easy when you are placing “X” marks on a plan-o-gram, but the true art is in the execution.

### **The Solution: Audio/Visual Mounts**

Audio/visual mounting devices allow for optimal Screen Spotting to occur, which is why they can be found in many of the world’s largest retail environments throughout the world. As RDS technology and content evolves, so are the mounts used to enable these systems. Today audio/visual mounts are available in a wide variety of styles such as flat, tilt, pivot and articulating for major versatility. They can be used in almost any location like the wall, ceiling or floor and can be mounted to a wide range of surfaces including wood, concrete, metal and brick just to name a few.

When assembling the next RDS supply chain, look for a mounting device manufacturer that offers the following:

- **Good relationships with screen suppliers.** Some mount manufacturers have longstanding relationships with display providers to ensure their mounts are always compatible – functionally and aesthetically -- with the newest generation of digital display devices.
- **Custom capabilities.** Most RDS applications require the use of custom-designed mounting systems to ensure perfect Screen Spotting for a particular environment. These custom solutions must meet the engineering, seismic and program requirements of the project and the region. The mount manufacturer must have the capability to create original prototypes in short time frames, meet ongoing design challenges with robust solutions, and ship large orders to meet critical lead time requirements.
- **Proven safety and reliability.** Leading manufacturers go to great lengths to ensure each product meets and surpasses strict safety guidelines for public use. Many are ISO certified to guarantee quality assurance through documentation and standardized work procedures. Their products are also UL® listed to hold, without failure, 400 percent of maximum weight capacity. A handful of manufacturers have built-in safety features, such as cable management, which bundles cables through channels within the mount to keep them from being trip/snag hazards. Other safety mechanisms, such as latches, locking screws and spring clips are available to reduce accidental movement of the screen.
- **Security features.** Since theft and vandalism attempts of expensive display equipment are expected in public environments, choose a mount manufacturer that offers integrated wall-to-screen security and theft-resistant screws that prevent equipment removal.

## **Conclusion**

In today's competitive RDS environment, best value is more important than best price. No matter the size of your network, only one failure in a public space needs to occur to wipe out any savings from using inferior, unproven supply chain partners. Well thought out RDS systems include all aspects of creation, deployment and maintenance.

Keep in mind the importance of Screen Spotting when designing your systems and the essential role that mounting systems play in this success. When your system is proven before it rolls-out, your likelihood for success is increased dramatically. Remember "Location, Location, Location."

*For more than 40 years, Peerless has designed and manufactured the world's most comprehensive line of high performance audiovisual mounting solutions. Today, Peerless designs and manufactures mounts for current and emerging visual display technologies, including LCD and plasma flat panel displays, projectors, CRT televisions, and for other electronic equipment used in both the commercial and consumer markets. Built on decades of experience and proven expertise, Peerless offers its customer the best overall value by providing the right combination of high performance mounting solutions, affordable pricing and complete services and support. Peerless Industries is ISO 9001 certified and is an approved Underwriters Laboratories testing site. For more information, call (800) 865-2112 or go to [www.peerlessmounts.com](http://www.peerlessmounts.com).*

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As Director of Business Development for Peerless Industries, Dale Smith oversees national Digital Signage installations and programs for large-scale retail outlets. He is also responsible for establishing and managing strategic relationships throughout the Western United States.

Smith has more than 25 years of sales and management experience in the audiovisual and case goods distribution industry, having successfully held positions at the manufacturer, distributor and retailer levels. A qualified expert on Digital Signage, he has led merchandising, display and logistical efforts for major variety and home center chains such as K-Mart, Target, Rite Aid (PayLess) and more.

Additionally, Smith served as general manager for a high-end retailer of audiovisual products, where he was responsible for merchandising, advertising, inventory and key account sales. He was also sales manager for a national distributor of video accessory products and in charge of supplier relationships, program development and display solutions for retailers.

Smith is an active member of various audiovisual industry organizations, including CEDIA, CEA, ICIA, NSCA and VESA. He has earned numerous national sales achievement awards for excellence throughout his career.