# Screen messaging mistakes that frustrate customers

## Why screen messaging matters

Digital signage is everywhere. From menu boards in quick-service restaurants to lobby displays in corporate offices, screens have become a standard way to share information. But a screen is only as effective as the content it shows. When that content is poorly planned, customers notice - and not in a good way. They may feel confused, ignored, or even annoyed. For businesses that rely on digital signage to communicate, avoiding common messaging mistakes is essential. The goal is to keep audience attention on what matters, not to drive it away.

## The biggest mistakes and how to avoid them

Below are several points to check when reviewing your managed signage content. Each one addresses a common problem that frustrates viewers.

### 1. Too much information at once

One of the most frequent errors is cramming a screen full of text, images, and offers. When everything is competing for attention, nothing stands out. A customer standing in front of a menu board may only have a few seconds to decide. If the screen shows every item, every promotion, and three different calls to action at the same time, the viewer will likely walk away without ordering anything new. The fix is to simplify. Show only the most important information at any given moment. Use a content calendar to rotate messages so each one gets its turn in the spotlight.

### 2. Ignoring the physical environment

A screen placed in a bright retail location may be hard to read if the content uses light colours or small fonts. Similarly, a lobby display that is far from where people stand needs larger text and bolder visuals. The mistake is designing content on a computer monitor and assuming it will look the same on the actual screen in the actual space. Always test the content on the display in its real setting. Check for glare, viewing distance, and ambient light. Adjust contrast and font size accordingly.

### 3. Stale or outdated content

Nothing frustrates a customer more than seeing yesterday's promotion on a screen today. It signals that the business is not paying attention. Managed signage content must be kept fresh.

A content calendar helps schedule updates, but someone still needs to execute them. If a promotion ends, remove it immediately. If a wayfinding sign changes because a store layout has changed, update the screen the same day. Stale content erodes trust and makes the business look disorganised.

### 4. No clear hierarchy of information

Viewers scan screens quickly. They look for the most relevant piece of information first. If the headline is the same size as the fine print, or if a secondary offer is placed where the eye naturally lands first, the message gets lost. Design each screen with a clear visual hierarchy. The most important item - whether it is a price, a call to action, or a menu category - should be the largest and most prominent. Secondary information should support it, not compete with it.

### 5. Forgetting the audience

Different locations serve different audiences. A screen in a hospital waiting room needs calm, reassuring content. A screen in a fast-casual restaurant needs quick, appetising visuals. A screen in a retail store might need to highlight a limited-time offer. The mistake is using the same content for every screen regardless of where it is. Segment your audience and tailor the message. What works in one place may feel out of place in another.

## Practical steps to improve your screen content

Once you know the common mistakes, the next step is to build a process that prevents them. Start with a content calendar that plans what appears on each screen, and when. This helps avoid clutter because you schedule one message at a time. It also prevents stale content because you set a date for each message to end.

Next, create templates for each type of screen. A template for a menu board should leave room for a featured item. A template for a lobby display should include a clear headline and a call to action. Templates keep your content consistent and reduce the chance of errors.

Then, assign someone to check the screens regularly. This person should walk past each display at least once a day, ideally when the location is busy, to see how the content actually looks to customers. They should note any glare, any text that is hard to read, and any message that feels off. This feedback loop is invaluable for refining your managed signage content over time.

Finally, consider the pace of the content. A screen that cycles through slides too quickly will frustrate viewers who cannot read everything in time. A screen that moves too slowly will bore viewers who have already seen the same thing twice. Find a balance. Test with real people and

adjust the duration until it feels right. For a menu board, 5 to 8 seconds per slide is common. For a lobby display with more text, 10 to 15 seconds may work better.

## How managed signage content fits into a broader strategy

Digital signage is one part of a larger communication system. It works best when it aligns with other channels, such as email, social media, and in-store signage. The message on the screen should reinforce what customers see elsewhere. For example, if a promotion is running online, the screen in the retail location should mention it too. This creates a cohesive experience that builds recognition and trust.

For agencies and businesses that resell digital signage, the quality of the content directly affects client satisfaction. A client who sees their screens looking professional and effective will stay happy and likely renew. One who sees cluttered, outdated, or confusing content will question the value of the service. That is why investing time in content strategy pays off. Resources like d-addicts.com provide practical guidance on how agencies can build recurring revenue by offering managed signage content as a service. The focus is on helping clients avoid these exact mistakes so the screens become a true asset.

## Small changes, big impact

Fixing screen messaging mistakes does not require a complete redesign. Often, small adjustments make a noticeable difference. Reducing the number of items on a slide, increasing the font size, or updating a call to action can change how customers perceive the business. The key is to treat the screen as a living medium that needs regular care, not a set-it-and-forget-it tool.

When content is managed well, customers feel informed and respected. They find what they need quickly. They respond to promotions because the message is clear and timely. And they leave with a better impression of the business. That kind of outcome is worth the effort. Whether you are running a single screen in a small shop or managing a network of displays across multiple locations, the principles are the same. Keep it simple, keep it current, and keep the audience in mind.

For more insights on building a sustainable digital signage practice, d-addicts.com offers resources tailored to agencies looking to create recurring revenue through managed signage content. The advice there focuses on practical steps that lead to long-term client relationships.