

A Guide to Creating a Revolutionary Digital Menu Board

Best Practices in Developing, Designing, and
Maintaining an Impactful Digital Menu Board

Delphi Display Systems: Digital Menu Board Best Practices

As digital menu boards become more prominent in drive-thru establishments worldwide, Delphi Display Systems has gathered meaningful data revealing the most effective techniques to increase sales, increase profitability, and overall brand loyalty.

Delphi Display Systems defines its digital menu board best practices as credible methods that are proven to effectively communicate a brand's products as well as a brand itself. These best practices can be applied from a single store to an entire enterprise.

This eBook dissects the following topics: content, layout, menu strategy, menu changes, and physical location.

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CONTENT

Menu board content typically showcases all food items that a restaurant sells. Content is essential in communicating what a customer's options are and how much each item costs. Well-defined content includes all visual components: pictures, icons, text, and numbers displayed on a digital menu. Content, which includes visuals, animations, fonts, and prices, should be easily identified and clear to customers.

Visuals

Visuals assist customers in easily identifying what they will be ordering. Therefore, visuals need to be quickly comprehended and clearly readable. All content should completely fit within 1920 by 1080 pixels, with a 5% allowance for the edges of any menu screen. Any content under 100 pixels is considered unreadable from a reasonable distance (three feet to twelve feet directly away from a menu board). Resolution should be as clear as possible, with 4K resolution an option for close viewing.

Images and visuals chosen to represent an item for sale should be saved and uploaded to the menu as TIFF, EPS, JPG, SVG, PNG, or MP4 video files. These images should not only be recognizable when displayed to customers, but should display glamorized versions of the original food item.

When choosing to add a promotional limited time offer or graphic pop-out, fewer words and a more direct visual message will be most effective in capturing customers' attentions. Furthermore, these treatments are most effective when surrounded by a contrasting color, selected from the rest of the menu.



Animations

Animations aid in grabbing and holding customers' attentions when viewing a digital menu display, more so than static images. Be careful in adding too little or too much animation, as you may distract a customer from ordering or viewing your menu. Animations are best used when subtly hinting at a promotion, introducing a product, or replacing a previous menu item with a new one. The frequency of animations can (1) occur once every certain number of seconds, (2) occur to multiple items at once, or (3) occur continuously.

It is recommended to animate visuals more often than copy. Promotions, combo buttons, and food items are easily animatable and visually appealing to viewers. Animating copy, prices, or food descriptions may cause reading difficulties.



CIAO SIGNATURE SANDWICHES



CIAO BURGER
1/4 pound beef patty, melted cheddar, grilled onions, lettuce, tomato, mayo, ciao sauce

6
650 cal



MUSH MELT
1/4 pound beef patty, grilled mushrooms, melted swiss, grilled onions, ciao sauce

7²⁵
690 cal



DOUBLE TURK
2 grilled turkey patties, melted cheddar, roasted red peppers, lettuce, ciao sauce

7⁵⁰
850 cal



STRAMI MELT
layers of juicy pastrami, melted cheddar, sliced deli pickles, lettuce, fresh onions

7
570 cal

25¢ CHANGE YOUR CHEESE



CRISPY CHIC
buttermilk battered chicken breast, melted cheddar, ciao coleslaw, dill pickle slices

6²⁵
680 cal

MORE to EAT

★ GRILLED CHIC	429 cal	free-range chicken breast, lettuce, tomato, ciao sauce	6²⁵
★ CIAO WRAP	522 cal	beef patty, grilled onions, lettuce, tomato, ciao sauce	6
★ CRISPY CHIC WRAP	490 cal	buttermilk battered chicken, lettuce, tomato, ciao sauce	5⁵⁰
★ STRAMI WRAP	473 cal	pastrami, lettuce, tomato, dill pickles, fresh onions	6⁵⁰

COMBO UP AND SAVE SOME DOUGH

1/2 price soda with any sandwich & fries combination



Menu size is either 1920x1080 px or 1080x1920 px.

Padding room around edges.

Animations made to visuals, not text

Food items "glamourized."

Prices clear, but not overbearing.

Fonts contrast against background.

Fonts

Fonts help to communicate a brand's voice to customers. A type treatment, consisting of at least one header font and body font, should be chosen to accentuate a brand's voice to customers. This is typically taken from a company's existing branding guidelines.

Font sizes should be easily distinctive from a heading to a description. The minimum size of a font should still be visible from 12 feet away. As a rule, type should not be under 30 points. If a disclaimer message is to be used, type should not be under 24 points. Remember that different fonts have different visual numerical point sizes, so a 24-point size in one font may be smaller or larger than a different font.

Font colors should contrast with whatever the background color is. For example, a white font would be most visible with a darker background.



Prices

The pricing of food items should be easily identifiable while not overpowering the food item itself. For example, a white font would be most visible with a darker background.



- Product price is in different color from background
- Product price is easily found
- Product price contrasts with other fonts

LAYOUT

A strategic layout of a menu makes a menu's contents easily understandable and visually appealing. Strategic layouts promote quicker customer decision-making by organizing menu categories and simplifying the beginning of the order process. Effectively leveraging a menu board's sizing attributes and manipulating the spacing between menu items will provide a flexible structure to your menu's content.

Sizing

Menu board sizing is important to consider when determining the image and copy size requirements of a menu's design. Depending on how big a menu board's display monitor is, some images may require enlargement or reduction.

Indoor and outdoor menu boards typically have different dimensions. In general, the minimum size of an indoor menu board monitor should be 40 inches (diagonally).

The general minimum size for an outdoor menu board is no smaller than 46" with 55" being the industry standard size. For both indoor and outdoor menu boards, a display's maximum size depends on a business' location, menu board placement, and dimensions of the building.

Spacing

Depending on a menu designer's strategy, spacing between each menu item and category may vary greatly. However, spacing should generally be equal around all elements of a menu's content. Whether spacing is an eighth of an inch or an entire inch apart, spacing standards should be consistent throughout the entire menu layout.

Spacing should also be considered when adding in a promotional LTO, pop-up, or visual. Spacing should be able to accommodate the additions and takeaways of promotions in a clutter-free manner, without too much change to original formatting.



Varying space between food items

Padding around menu is even throughout

Consistent spacing within each menu section

Padding around menu is even throughout

STRATEGY

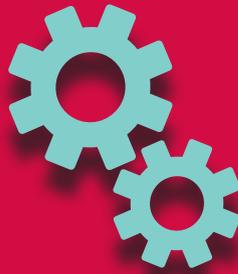
A digital menu board strategy can be defined as a plan to achieve a specified goal using a digital design process. That specified goal should include a brand's message, the problem a digital menu would solve, and the use of a logo within the menu.

Messaging

A brand message should be a single sentence that describes who a brand is and what a brand does. This single sentence provides a summary of a brand's tone, a brand's audience, a brand's vision, and a brand's positioning in the marketplace.

Therefore, it is essential to first decipher that brand's message in order to provide an effective, intelligently-designed digital menu board solution. A menu's content and its verbiage can then be made to embody and leverage the brand's message and positioning strategy.

Menu choices, themes, a color palette, and other design factors should be chosen based on fitting a brand's message. In deciding upon menu choices, each food and beverage item should reflect a piece of a brand. The theme of a menu should be an extension of the brand's logo, mission statement, and other foundational elements. A digital menu's color palette should also reflect a brand, but also use basic color understanding in promoting the mood of its restaurant. For example, red represents energy or anger., while blue generally represents coolness and trust.



Goals

A digital menu should be designed and implemented with the purpose of achieving a QSR's goal, or set of goals.

Below are example goals that can be measured and achieved with the implementation of a digital menu board:

- Easier to manage and change for dayparts, seasonal promotions, and other factors
- Better to interact with customers, creating stronger loyalty to the brand and a more enticing reason to come to a given restaurant
- More easily visible for customers in a geographical location that need easier ways of viewing a menu from a vehicle

With goals set in place, a digital menu board can be designed to provide significant return on investment.



Goal examples:

- Lower cost of manual panel updates to outdoor menu boards
- Change prices easily
- Provide better visibility for customers
- Stronger durability in various weather conditions
- Better brand recall



Logo

The logo of a brand should be displayed prominently on the menu's design or outside hardware, depending on space availability. Be it large or small, the logo should be readily identifiable as the brand, while being subtle as to not compete with a menu's contents. The logo should not only match a single QSR's sub-brand, but the entire brand that the QSR may be under. Location-wise, a logo may be placed anywhere on a menu display as long as it does not take away from the menu itself.



Logo displayed prominently on display

Logo large enough for visibility, but small enough to not distract from menu items

Logo connects to menu color scheme and theme



CHANGES

Menu changes should be considered a valuable opportunity to optimize your digital menu board investment. Changes, such as a daypart switch, may be made daily, or situationally; perhaps a combo deal may be displayed during a certain day of the week, depending on a given brand. Whatever the need for a menu change, precautions should be taken in the design phase to maintain fluidity and ease-of-updates.

Few QSRs never make changes to a menu. Keep in mind that some form of change will happen, for example, a seasonal item is available for a limited time, or an ingredient may become controversial and be removed from the menu. To prepare, promotional programs, daypart menu changes, and proofreading standards should be developed and referenced when changes are needed.

Promotional

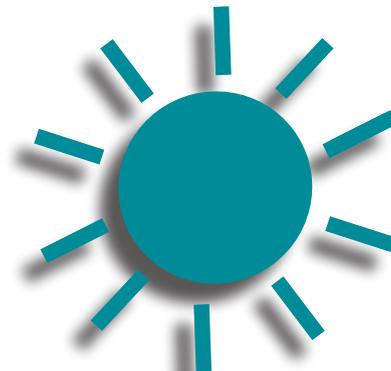
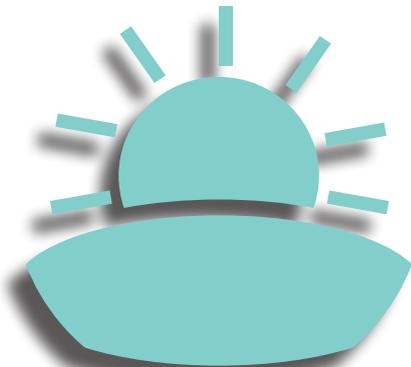
A digital menu display can host a variety of easily manageable promotional changes, some of which may occur by the minute, day of the week, or even by the year. Digital assets should be made to accommodate those changes. Those digital assets include but are not limited to:

- Prices
- Visuals (still images, videos, animations)
- Segmented menus (kids meal, low-cal, etc.)
- Seasonal promotions
- Daypart promotions
- Limited Time Offers (LTOs)

Dayparts

Strategic segments of the day may benefit from different menus or promotions. If more than one group of food items will be sold throughout the day, multiple daypart menus should be made with the time segment and items served, keeping the general demographics of the customers in mind.

Demographics, such as where customers may be going after ordering food, where customers are coming from, what kind of person is ordering, and more, should be considered when strategically planning for, showcasing, and executing daypart menus.



Proofreading

To aid in loss prevention and brand credibility, proofreading is an important step in the digital menu development process.

It is in a brand's best interest to read through each item of a menu board, confirming that an item description fits its title, a price fits its menu item, is correct both on the display and in back-of-house, and is visually well-represented. Reading through each promotion and checking daypart menu times ensures the strength of a brand's credibility.

The final step of developing an effective menu board solution is a trial run within a store's physical location. A trial run features a designed menu, with all scheduling and promotions in place, in position at the restaurant that plans to use the menu. This trial run provides visibility to mistakes, reveals sunlight/night time factors that affect the display, and more, catches menu board problems before customers find themselves lost or confused.

LOCATION

The physical location of a menu board—its distance from a customer's vision, outside weather conditions, and its location in perspective to an order confirmation system/speaker post, all play major roles in a digital menu board's success.

Distance

Depending on whether a digital menu board is serving as an indoor or outdoor display, the distance a customer may be from a menu board, is one of several factors that should be considered.

Indoor Menu Boards

It is important to consider an indoor menu board's distance from every place a customer may be in the store. Consider a menu's appearance to a customer closest to the menu display, as well as its appearance to a customer farthest away (in the back of the store). While a customer in back may not be able to read certain prices and food descriptions, the general layout of a menu should look organized and engaging from any distance.

Outdoor Menu Boards

Outdoor menu boards will generally be viewed from a similar distance, as customers will be in vehicles following a lane to view the menu board. However, because digital menu boards typically use LED lighting, basic visuals are more easily comprehended before reaching a direct view of a menu board. Similar to a general layout of a menu for indoor menu boards, organizing a general, aesthetically pleasing menu should be performed for outdoor digital menu boards as well.



Weather

Given the uncontrollable nature of weather, outdoor menu boards need to be visible no matter what angle sunlight hits the display glass and no matter what conditions are like outside. Adjust monitor contrast settings, font and image sizes, and color choices to ensure visibility and easier ordering processes for customers in any weather or at any time of day.



Perspective

Consider where a menu board will be in relation to the order confirmation post, or speaker post. A customer's visibility to a menu board may be altered or hindered depending on the order confirmation post's placement in front of, under, or within the menu board. For example, if an allergen statement is at the bottom of an outdoor digital menu, and the speaker post is directly in front of that allergy statement, customers may not have visibility to the message when directly in front of the speaker post.

If viewed from an angle that overlaps the order confirmation post with the menu's view, design a menu layout that can accommodate that overlap. If a menu is being viewed directly head on, it is advised that a menu's layout be designed to be best viewed at a level directly across from a customer's eyesight.

If a customer is looking up at a menu board (for an indoor digital menu), that sits behind cash registers and employees, consider how those factors may affect the visual components of a menu's layout, and adjust accordingly.



CIAO SIGNATURE SANDWICHES

- CIAO BURGER** 1/4 pound beef patty, melted cheddar, pickles, onions, lettuce, tomato, mayo CIAO sauce \$7.99
- MEISH MELT** 1/4 pound beef patty, melted cheddar, pickles, onions, lettuce, tomato, mayo CIAO sauce \$7.99
- DOUBLE YORK** 2 ground turkey patties, melted cheddar, pickles, onions, lettuce, tomato, mayo CIAO sauce \$8.99
- SOUVASA** hot and spicy, jalapeno, tomatoes, onions, lettuce, tomato, mayo CIAO sauce \$8.99
- CRISPY CHIC** 1/4 pound chicken, melted cheddar, pickles, onions, lettuce, tomato, mayo CIAO sauce \$7.99

MORE TO EAT

- GRILLED CHIC \$2.99
- CIAO WRAP \$2.99
- CRISPY CHIC WRAP \$3.99
- HAMMY WRAP \$3.99

COMBO UP AND SAVE SOME DOLLAR

FRIES, PLEASE

- Vanilla Bean Chocolate Milk Shake
- Vanilla Bean Chocolate Strawberry Bananas

SHAKE IT

more DRINKS

- Vanilla Bean Chocolate Strawberry Bananas

EXTRAS

- Hot egg
- Grilled chicken
- Protein
- Protein

FRIES, PLEASE

- Vanilla Bean Chocolate Strawberry Bananas

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YOU'RE OUR HERO!

XTRA XTRA

TURN ANY SANDWICH INTO A DOUBLE FOR JUST \$2

ENJOY YOUR CIAO

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more DRINKS

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EXTRAS

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- Grilled chicken
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- Protein

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Delphi Display Systems: Conclusion

A powerful, influential digital menu board requires detailed planning, an execution plan, and long-term strategy. To profit exponentially from your investment in a digital menu board and this eBook's guidance, your menu board's content, layout, menu strategy, menu changes, and physical location must all be thoroughly considered, planned out, and implemented .

If you are planning to invest in a digital menu board for your business or need guidance in your decision making, contact a professional digital display provider such as Delphi Display Systems. Delphi Display Systems has been providing quality software and hardware for customers for over 20 years.



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