



Culver's EzSign TV Installation

Goal

Communicate daily specials, price changes and new menu items, as well as old favorites

Solution

Two 42" LED backlit
LG EzSign TVs

Results

Versatile digital menu boards that are easy to manage and update with multiple items

THEY STOOD THERE FOR 30 SECONDS

Zach and Mike Steffens, the owners of a Culver's restaurant in Palatine, Ill., know their customers stand at the menu board for less than a minute before they make their selection. That is not a lot of time to communicate daily specials, price changes and new menu items, as well as old favorites.

With humble Midwest origins dating back to the 1980s, Culver's was founded on the principle that it would only serve fresh, cook-to-order meals including its trademark ButterBurgers and custard. Now, a mature fast casual restaurant chain with 428 restaurants

in 19 states across the United States, the Culver's menu now features more than 50 items. With constantly changing daily specials, soups and of course, the custard "Flavor of the Day," it can be a challenge to communicate information quickly. Plus, doing all of this at minimal cost makes for an even greater challenge.

As with many independently owned and operated franchise businesses, the equipment the Steffens used to share this information with their customers was outdated static signage, such as pin boards. Aside from their bland aesthetic, these boards needed to be updated daily, a process that can waste valuable staff time when opening the restaurant each morning. On the other side of the restaurant, was a bargain consumer model flat-panel display mounted near the cash register, which was limited to showing a looping DVD of the Culver's content. The flat-panel alone was an indication that the Steffens had bigger ideas about how to grab their customers' attention. However, using a consumer model in a commercial space, which is a common practice, limited their chances for success.



Culver's original signage was simplistic and wasn't as effective at conveying the multiple daily specials and featured items



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EzSign™
TV Signage Solution



EzSign TV allowed the Steffens to loop their video on the left and feature other items on the right

"We'll be able to share with our customers more products that we have everyday because those are the most important products for us"

Zach Steffens,
Co-Owner

The obvious solution for the Steffens was digital signage, but they faced perhaps the most common obstacle that small business owners and franchisees face when considering a digital signage solution: budget. The initial investment for hardware (the displays themselves) is only a small portion of the overall cost to deploy digital signage. In many instances, smaller businesses are priced out of sophisticated signage systems because of added costs to contract with an integrator to create custom, branded messaging, as well as manage content schedules and updates to the system.

The answer to Steffens' problem came in the form of a new turnkey digital signage solution from LG Electronics, aptly named EzSign TV. Designed for deployments of five or fewer displays, EzSign TV offers business owners a vehicle for displaying branded messaging while simultaneously showing broadcast television or input content. In addition to the display itself, the package includes software that gives owners a choice of more than 50 templates that can be customized with proprietary images and text. Not every menu item on the standard menu was accompanied by a picture, so with EzSign TV, the Steffens thought they could better highlight those items, and still play their looping DVD. They could also deliver their daily specials more efficiently.

"We'll be able to share with our customers more products that we have everyday because those are the most important products for us," said co-owner Zach Steffens. "For example, we have a barbeque pork sandwich, tuna salad and chicken salad wraps, but there isn't enough room for pictures of them on our static menu boards. We also do a daily special!"

To complete the Steffens' vision of more effective information delivery relevant to their Culver's they determined that two 42-inch LED backlit EzSign TV models were needed. One would replace the tedious, traditional daily specials board and the other would replace the consumer flat-panel TV that hung on the opposite side of the counter. For the latter display, the Steffens intended to employ a template that allowed them to run their DVD, as well as display the menu items they couldn't otherwise highlight with pictures. They moved quickly, ordering new signage displays the first week of February and scheduling the installation for the next.



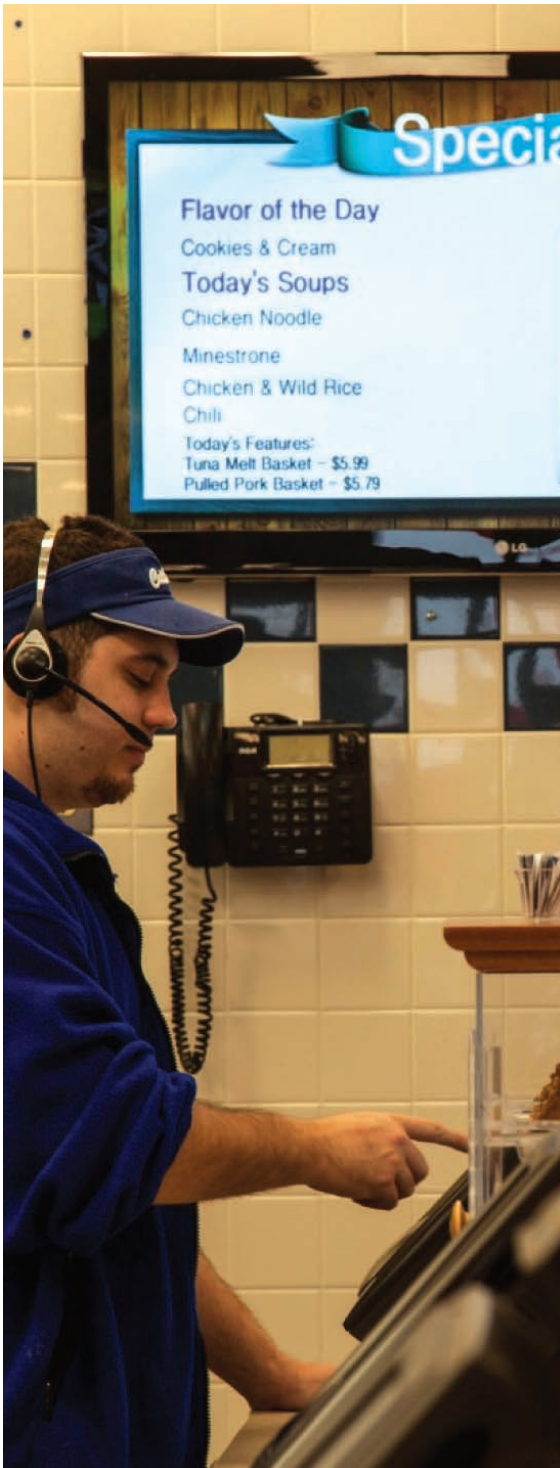
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Culver's new specials menu drew customer attention only minutes after being installed

For a restaurant that only closes three days a year with owners who work six days a week, quick and painless installation was a must. The job was given to a local installer who specializes in flat-panel systems. Replacing the consumer display was simple. With the new display already compatible with any standard mounting equipment and weighing only 28 pounds – comparable to the old 32-inch display – Gibrich was able to mount and connect it to the DVD player hidden in the ceiling in just over an hour. Replacing the daily specials board was more difficult, though, as the integrator needed to fit the display almost flush against a delicate tile wall.

While Gibrich worked on the displays, Zach and Mike went to their office to download the EzSign TV software to their computer and begin building templates. The process took only four steps: selecting a template, uploading pictures, updating text and exporting to the USB drive. Once running, they chose a template that incorporated a section to display looping video and another section for menu items. They used menu pictures from the Culver's corporate website and added their own text. They moved finished templates to the display via USB drive, which the display automatically recognized and read. In minutes, one of the two pieces of signage was already fully operational.

As the daily specials are constantly changing, the Steffens selected one basic template to work with and made a version for each day of the week. They finalized the full week's specials menu concurrently with Gibrich's final touches on mounting the display. After that, they downloaded all seven templates to the TV at once, so they could switch to the next day's with the click of the controller instead of updating daily. With both signs displaying content, the Steffen's installation was complete in a little over three hours, right as the restaurant opened for the day.



LG's EzSign TV upgraded the Palatine Culver's aesthetic appeal and message delivery



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