



September 2021

FEATURE

Big, Bold and Beautiful

A successful brand loyalty strategy starts with the right technology and finishes with sound execution.

BY JERRY SOVERINSKY

[Print](#)
[Share](#)
[0 Comments \(/issues/september-2021/big-bold-and-beautiful\)](#)


The article is brought to you by Abierto, a NACS member.

Marketing and advertising failures fall into one of two generally accepted buckets: beautiful concepts that no one sees; and horrible concepts that everyone sees. For convenience store retailers overwhelmed by a growing list of competitors (Amazon, dollar stores, grocery and

warehouse, among others)—not to mention a labor shortage—the advice is timely and underscores an urgent industry need: how best to create an engaging in-store experience that builds brand loyalty among consumers.

For Rick Sales, president of engagement solutions provider Abierto Networks, “Brand messaging must be eye-catching as well as consistent. Having great digital content is just half the process. The other half is making sure that it plays at all of the right stores at the right times and in a way that will achieve the desired frequency of exposure.”

Sales’ answer: Big, Bold and Beautiful, an alliteration of value propositions that equals results, according to Sales. “3B content is not simply a playlist of large, pretty pictures,” he says. Rather, it combines five distinct elements:

1. **Simple:** The content must be clear and easy to understand, with messaging as succinct as possible.

Popular Articles

FEATURE

The Hot Sellers (/issues/july-2021/hot-sellers)

A look at the brands driving inside sales, plus advice from category managers for accelerating growth.

FEATURE

Making History (/issues/august-2021/making-history)

Convenience has had three waves. Are we already in the fourth?

FEATURE

Tech for Good (/issues/august-2021/tech-good)

The new NACS TruAge™ digital age-verification system is frictionless, secure and reliable.

FEATURE

Hidden Gems (/issues/july-2021/hidden-gems)

During the pandemic, low-key categories gained new luster.

FEATURE

We Got This! (/issues/august-2021/we-got)

The NACS Show returns for a vibrant in-person experience in Chicago this October.

FEATURE

Lessons in Leadership—Live (/issues/july-2021/lessons-leadership%E2%80%94live)

At the NACS Leadership Forum, industry leaders reflected on the leap into the future and the necessary innovations they implemented.

Advertisement

Popular Categories

2. **Large:** The content must be visible, incorporating high-quality, accurate imagery and pictures.
3. **Moving:** Motion and animation, including video, are most effective.
4. **Creative:** Quality is as important as quantity.
5. **Precise:** Messaging must be on brand for messaging, colors, fonts and imagery.



Listen to Convenience Matters podcast No. 297 "Quality Digital Content Matters" to learn why high-quality, effective and well-designed digital content is important, especially when the goal is to enhance the customer experience.

- NACS News »
- Retailer Focus »
- Feature »
- Trends and Research »
- Category Management »
- Legislative »
- Foodservice »

For convenience store retailers, the advice produces a paradox: The need to differentiate one's brand is more important than ever, yet internal resources are stretched thin. The answer, Sales said, rests on technology: Retailers can deliver engaging and consistent brand messaging by leveraging smart, integrated tools.

And there's no time to waste, Sales said.



(<https://www.convenience.org/Solutions/Cool-New-Products-Discovery-Center>)

Advertisement

Advertisement

Advertisement

IMPROVING THE IN-STORE EXPERIENCE

"There are three main reasons why the on-premise, in-store experience is critical now," Sales said. "Consumers' expectation for high-quality digital content is already high, driven by their existing mobile and online experience." Unless you are able to match that expectation, you risk losing credibility and engagement.

"This is about perception," he continued. "How well you are using digital content and technology and delivering a robust digital experience directly influences a consumer's perception of your brand." He likens this to the foundational need to provide clean bathrooms: "A memorable on-premise digital experience will significantly influence how consumers think of your brand."

Finally, to maximize your digital campaign, you must be able to cut through the media clutter. "Generating awareness is a contact sport in today's c-store," he said. "With thousands of messages assaulting consumers' senses, you must get them to focus on your limited time offers, loyalty program and your coffee. This is not a sales lift initiative. It is a survival initiative."

But successful execution is not a matter of becoming a first adopter. Before embarking on any digital commitment, it's best to view things through the proper lens. "Digital is not simply a cost," Sales said. "It is an investment in generating sustained sales volume."

INTEGRATE FOR IMPACT

There are no shortages of vendor options when it comes to digital in-store tools, but Sales said it is important to evaluate not just capabilities but approach. "The key is not impressions but engagement. And that occurs when you have a tightly synchronized messaging system."

Abierto, for instance, offers its OPEN Platform, a portfolio of modules that retailers can use to build a seamless network of digital touchpoints. It does so by focusing on creativity as well as consistency.



CREATIVE

OPEN incorporates a robust content management system (CMS) that allows retailers to quickly automate the creation and distribution of creative content throughout its modular system. An intuitive online dashboard makes creating messaging simple and straightforward, while easy-to-manage playlists refine distribution by daypart, devices and other customizable options.

At the heart of the back-end process is the automated distribution of content, which uses metadata tagging and intelligent APIs. "This is how we guarantee that we can automate delivery with high accuracy," Sales said. "By tagging digital content with metadata tags and using APIs to communicate, execute decision rules and collect data, OPEN can automate all scheduling, playlist building and content distribution tasks, freeing designers from these time consuming, highly detailed chores."

The focus for retailers, Sales said, is not on hardware know-how but software capabilities. "OPEN helps you automate your processes so that you can focus on creating an amazing on-premise consumer experience." This reduces labor requirements, a critical resource savings that a retailer can reallocate to maximizing customer engagement.

“

Brand messaging
must be eye-
catching as well as
consistent.

“By streamlining administrative tasks, improving performance, accuracy and reliability with automation and providing dedicated expert support and quality hardware, digital content creators and producers can focus on crafting the brand’s message into every communication and enhancing the in-store experience with amazing digital content,” he said.

CONSISTENT

Once a retailer enters and schedules content, distribution occurs through high-profile

touchpoints, both inside and outside the store. These touchpoints include digital menus, video walls, interactive kiosks and LED signage—the primary visual landscapes associated with a store.

OPEN Menu allows retailers to create bold, functional menus that can be updated in real-time. The modular design allows retailers to change images, prices and fonts quickly and even off-site.

OPEN Videowall includes oversized messaging that a retailer can project across large format displays. Like OPEN Menu, OPEN Videowall incorporates bold messaging that is easily configured and that syncs automatically.

OPEN Kiosk applies to interactive touch screens, allowing retailers to engage with both customers and employees. Deliver targeted messaging—for instance, COVID surveys to employees—and capture interactions and engagement, valuable metrics that allow you to continually refine messaging to improve performance.

OPEN LED is designed for the forecourt, a proprietary, large format animated messaging (images and videos) module that rotates content and is available in varying sizes up to 150 feet. Transparent film projects a futuristic feel that engages customers, a dynamic first impression designed to draw customers into the store.

Collectively, the OPEN modules deliver consistent and precise messaging that delivers on Sales’ Big, Bold and Beautiful imperative. “Research has shown that effective, on-premise digital messaging combines big, bold and beautiful content with frequent and timely exposure.”

To test its OPEN system for effectiveness, Abierto recently conducted an awareness survey at a major retailer to gauge the impact of its OPEN LED window film technology. Preliminary results (the survey is ongoing as of publication) of brand awareness and shopper behavior are compelling:

- Increased recall among participants
- Increased current and future in-store traffic
- Increased unplanned purchases
- Increased perception of store cleanliness and safety

“The findings illustrated that OPEN LED signage can help communication with potential shoppers in an effective, memorable and helpful way, increasing both traffic and ring,” Sales said.

DIFFERENTIATION WHEN DOING DIGITAL

Few retailers would argue about the value of digital advertising today, but deliberation is key, Sales said, ensuring execution produces maximum positive impact. “Technology, combined with awesome content, can influence consumer perceptions of your brand and raise awareness of your offering, ultimately creating brand preference and loyalty.”

But it's a strategic coordination of these elements that will determine success, one with a foundation predicated on execution. "Remember, you don't want to be the retailer with the amazing messaging that no one saw, or the retailer with the lousy messaging that everyone sees," Sales said.

"These self-inflicted wounds are preventable."



ABOUT JERRY SOVERINSKY

Jerry Soverinsky is a freelance writer and NACS Magazine contributing writer. See his work at www.jerrysoverinsky.com (<https://www.jerrysoverinsky.com>).

Related:

Feature (/category/Feature), Retailer Focus (/category/Retailer-Focus), Trends and Research (/category/Trends-and-Research)

0 Comments

NACS Magazine

 Disqus' Privacy Policy

 Login ▾

 Recommend

 Tweet

 Share

Sort by Best ▾



Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH



OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS 

Name

Be the first to comment.

 Subscribe  Add Disqus to your siteAdd DisqusAdd  Do Not Sell My Data

DISQUS

NACS

NACS serves the global convenience and fuel retailing industry by providing industry knowledge, connections and issues leadership to ensure the competitive viability of its members' businesses.

About NACS Magazine

- Subscribe
(<https://www.convenience.org/Media/NACS-Magazine/Subscribe/SubscriptionForm>)
- Advertise
(<https://www.convenience.org/advertise>)
- Editorial Guidelines & Submissions
(</content/editorial-guidelines-submissions>)
- Permissions & Reprints
(</content/permissions-reprints>)
- Contact NACS Media Group
(</content/contact-nacs-media-group>)

(<http://www.convenience.org>)
● Back to Top ^

HELP
([HTTP://WWW.CONVENIENCE.ORG/HELP](http://www.convenience.org/help))

© NACS All Rights Reserved.

Privacy Policy (<http://www.nacsonline.com/Pages/PrivacyPolicy.aspx>) | Terms of Use (<http://www.nacsonline.com/Pages/TermsOfUse.aspx>)