

Camelot Illinois' Retail Transformation

In retail, visibility is everything. A seen product becomes a purchased product—so consumer packaged goods (CPGs) jockey with each other for valuable counter space. Lottery products are often pushed to the side or even placed under the counter as a result. The Illinois Lottery is showing its way into consumers' minds through digital transformation.

Camelot Illinois, the private manager of the Illinois Lottery, began installing small footprint Countertop Display Units (CDUs) with retailers in February of this year in partnership with Carmanah Signs, a digital signage technology supplier to the global Lottery industry. The 22-inch digital displays fit snugly next to the terminal into what Camelot Illinois has dubbed its Terminal Surround, featuring retail fixturing designed by Fastrak. "This product is essential because we're looking at so many different types of outlets. In this COVID-19 environment, you want touchless options, and you want it to be visible," said Nora O'Sullivan, Director of Retail Partnership, Camelot Illinois. "Any digital solution also needs to be engrained in our system."

Camelot Illinois does offer the traditional planogram display or menu map, but this does not work for every retailer. For some retailers, it is too expensive to give lottery the necessary physical space in retail. "We're not going to have the ability to compete with CPG companies that pay for space, either directly or through higher margins. For instance, it takes two feet of linear space to showcase 48 games. That is too much for some of these big customers. They'll never do it," said Andrew Caswell, Retail Director, Camelot Lottery Solutions. "Innovation is something that we need to look at as an industry."

Other retailers are implementing clean countertop strategies where lottery bins and mats do not fit. For instance, Mariano's Supermarket, a grocery chain in Illinois, had a small physical board where the grocery clerks would showcase tickets. But the team at Mariano's still wanted to decrease counter space. The lottery approached them with digital CDUs as an alternative.

"The retailer was really excited

because they thought it would encourage their team to be more supportive of lottery and to pay attention to the customer when they came up asking about a ticket. We were able to consolidate the screen and planogram into one screen. It became a one-stop-shop for lottery on-counters," O'Sullivan said.

Camelot Illinois is also working with an upmarket Video Game Café. The owner bluntly told the lottery team that the lottery product did not fit in their shop. "The owner of that company was absolutely right; our product wouldn't fit into those locations. The shop had a heavy digital focus, and plastic bins would feel out-of-place. We offered them Digital CDUs, and they loved it," Caswell said.

Digital CDUs offer numerous advantages over other solutions. First, Carmanah's ActiVia Media Platform (AMP) software allows for dynamic rich media HTML5 content. Rather than static images shown in a slideshow format, the screens can showcase engaging promotions or game animations that are more likely to catch the consumers' eye, especially the more elusive demographics. "Think about millennials. If they don't want to interact with a big wall of physical scratch cards, the CDU offers them an alternative that they are more familiar with: screens. It brings it to life for them," said Caswell.

Second, the CDUs can be updated instantly. "For physical displays, you have lots of people working at it that require manual interaction, whether within sales function or with the staff within the stores, to get physical visibility of the product. We can guarantee the product's physical visibility as soon as we click a button. The cost savings, if it were widely adopted, is quite huge," Caswell said.

Third, AMP software gives marketers control of highly targeted messaging across an unmatched number of retailers – up to hundreds of thousands of displays. For instance, Carmanah's parent company, STRATACACHE, uses AMP to power more than 132,000 Digital Menu Boards at one of the world's largest Quick Serve Restaurants, customizing messaging based on many variables, including location, demographics and time of day.



"One of the really exciting things about working with a supplier like Carmanah is that they can send out different messages to each screen. Different retailers, like Mariano's Supermarket, will have completely different displays than others, like the Video Game Café. Now that we can tailor messages, it is going to make a difference," O'Sullivan said.

Finally, since the content is being distributed using AMP web-based software rather than the central servers, media is delivered in virtually real time. "STRATACACHE's AMP content management system brings the digital signage to life, efficiently distributing unique content to any display on the network from one central software platform," said Maxwell Goldstein, VP Sales – Americas, Carmanah Signs.

Camelot Illinois' digital retail transformation is a triple win for the retailer, the customer, and the lottery. Retailers sometimes must choose between positioning the lottery and other products. The CDUs allow them to have both. Customers can be delighted by energetic displays that attract their eye. Finally, the lottery benefits from pleasing both existing stakeholders and, perhaps even more critically, making themselves more attractive to new businesses.

"Digital technology is going to play a huge role in the future of lotteries. The CDUs are the first steppingstone to merge the digital and retail channels. Getting retailers on board early on with programs like this will enable the digital future to happen within their stores," Caswell said. "Retailers are not going to want to sell lottery traditionally within the next 10, 15 years. This is the first step to that evolutionary process."

And retailers have taken notice. "We've had a handful of big retail partners reach out to us about partnering with something more digital - like these screens and even more advanced," O'Sullivan said.