ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING*

You need to know to make great digital signage content

* (almost)
What makes content great?

• Copy writing
• Visual components
• Motion & animation
• Sound
• Placement & environment
5 Secrets to Crafting Great Copy
#1: Keep it short!

- No more than 5-6 words per message, 3-4 is better.

- Optimal message length is about 22 characters.
Correctness by Word Count

% Correct

2 3 4 5

Word Count
#2: Make it easy to read

- Be declarative – it’s ok to lead with a question as long as you also supply an authoritative answer.

- Be grammatically complete and use “standard” language.
#3: Pace Yourself

- Put only one idea (two at most) on the screen at a time.

- Make sure text is on-screen for long enough to actually read it.
#4: Pre-Chunk Your Messages

• Things are easier to remember when pre-arranged into groups of like items (like phone numbers).

• Use things like **Repetition, Alliteration and the “Rule of 3”** to encourage viewers to ingest the message as efficiently as possible.
#5: Craft your Call-to-Action

• Should be on the screen at all times.

• Actions that can be taken immediately work best.
  – **Get** 15% FREE
  – **Ask** a salesperson for details

• Think Google “AdWords” –style.
  – A search for “advertising” yields:

  - **Facebook Advertising**
    Reach the exact audience you want with relevant targeted ads.

  - **Sell Smarter**
    Increase your ad sales with the AdMall
More Tips for your Call To Action

- Target common needs
- Use trigger words to grab attention
- Test the "reading level" of the text
- Use action words and be vivid
- Use commands
Video Sample #1: Great Copy

Supplied by: Amscreen
Client: Coca Cola
Video Sample #2: Great Copy

Supplied by: Amscreen
Client: Volkswagon
Fontography 101

• Don’t use multiple font types
  – Mixing sans and serif fonts is very hard to read! Stick with serif for readability.

• DON’T USE ALL CAPS
  – The letters block together and take longer to read and decipher

• Don’t stack lines
  – Try to keep each message to one line to reduce comprehension time
The Myth of "Power" Colors

• In practice, when focusing on glance media we’ve seen no over-arching relationship between color and content performance

• There were specific cases where changing a clip’s color may have altered performance, but not enough data to be conclusive

• Most of the time, when people think they are altering colors, they are really altering contrast schemes
Contrast

- Avoid overlapping areas of complementary colors (e.g. red and green)

- Any combination of similar color value (brightness) will produce low visibility
Results: Color/Contrast

Correctness by Color

% Correct

50 55 60 65 70 75 80

Black/White Black/Yellow Blue/White Blue/Yellow Green/White Red/White White/Black

Color Schemes
Video Sample #3: Color/Contrast

Supplied by: DDN
Client: 7-Eleven (House spot)
Silhouette

- Extremely important for discerning between moving elements

- It’s the only thing noticeable about elements in a viewer’s periphery
Layout – Composing a Shot

• Visually separate distinct elements of a shot to speed up comprehension
Scenes & Shots

• Short- and long-format clips alike can be split into scenes and shots:

  One 15-sec clip
  Two 7-sec scenes
  Four 3.5-sec shots
Scenes & Shots

Every frame or shot should function as a stand-alone "poster"
Video Sample #4: Composition

Supplied by: Artisan Complete
Client: Home Hardware
Video Sample #5: Composition

Supplied by: DDN
Client: 7-Eleven (house spot)
Motion
Silhouette & Motion

• Silhouette should be used to check perception and recognition of any complex or moving images.

Good

Bad
Getting the hang of Timing

• Don’t let motion interfere with readability or comprehension

• 1 ½ - 3 seconds of full attention max for glance media, (may be a bit longer for “captive audience” networks)

• Leave enough time to read text!
Common Pitfalls with Timing

• Motion makes recognition times skyrocket and comprehension rates plummet.

• Every second that text is moving on the screen is basically a second that it can’t be read.

• Nowhere does that become more obvious than with...
Tickers

• Moving text takes anywhere from 2-10x or more time to recognize/comprehend

• Scrolling text has 10-22% lower recall rate versus "fade in/fade out" delivery

• In-place displays such as fade and blast are better than motion-based displays like ticker for rapid identification of items
Testing Your Spot’s Timing

• If you’re the DESIGNER: make sure you can read the copy 5x in the allotted time

• If you’re a REVIEWER: make sure you can read the copy 3x in the allotted time

• Ensure that the text can be read from a non-ideal angle of incidence
Quick Tips on Motion

• Motion on the periphery is more subtle than motion in the middle of the field of view

• The static elements should be the most important features of the ad

• Subtle motion can visually enhance without reducing recognition or comprehension
Video Sample #6: Motion

Supplied by: Amscreen
Client: Mentos
Video Sample #7: Motion

Supplied by: Amscreen
Client: Renault
Sound
The 5 Classes of Sound

• Human Voice
• Music
• Natural Sound
• Noise
• Silence
Two Sound Approaches

• Inside the store, there are two approaches for using sound:

  – **Passive**: Employing sounds that aim to influence shopper behavior without their specific knowledge (e.g. Muzak “tempo programs”)

  – **Active**: Using sounds to interrupt current shopper behaviors with the goal of shaping a new behavior
Why you shouldn’t use it

• Annoying soundscapes have been shown to reduce shopper dwell time

• If your sounds compete with those of the host venue, the venue may decide to disconnect you

• Employee fatigue may encourage workers to disconnect or otherwise sabotage your digital signage equipment
Why you should use it

“Appropriate, well-designed soundscapes can increase sales in shops by up to 50% in some cases, and between 5 and 10% as a rule.” – Julian Treasure, Chairman, The Sound Agency

![Pie charts showing the percentage of shoppers who made unplanned purchases and those who purchased a different brand after hearing a retail ad.](chart1.png)

![Pie charts showing the percentage of shoppers who made unplanned purchases and those who purchased a different brand after hearing a retail ad.](chart2.png)
Some rules of thumb with sound

• Don’t rely on sound alone to make your message

• Use sound to augment an already-compelling visual message

• Visual messages should always work (i.e. be comprehensible) without sound

• Consider closed captioning ONLY if your visual storytelling is confusing
Video Sample #8: Sound

Supplied by: PRN
Client: Nabisco
Video Sample #9: Sound

Supplied by: DDN

Client: 7-Eleven (House spot)
Environment
The Decompression Zone

• The “decompression zone,” as Paco Underhill describes it, is a messaging no-man's land at the store entrance

• Lasts for 15-20 feet inside the store

• Thus, in general we do not recommend placing digital signs near entryways
Performance by Location

In a 2-story furniture store chain, kiosks in the main channel were used 6x as often as those in the landing area:
Viewing Angle

Optimal viewing angle is a function of:

- Screen & content size
- Most common approach vector
- Existing obstructions
The Angle of Awareness

- Moving shoppers keep a roughly 20 degree FOV in active attention.
- Keep screens within the FOV range that you expect shoppers to see it from.
The Active Attention Zone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance between viewer and screen</th>
<th>Vertical % of attention zone occupied</th>
<th>Horizontal % of attention zone occupied</th>
<th>Total % of attention zone occupied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 feet</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 feet</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 feet</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 feet</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sizing text for HD screens

• Optimal text size depends on screen resolution and desired character height:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance (feet)</th>
<th>Minimal Readable Text Height (inches)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5' - 50'</td>
<td>1&quot; - 2&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50' - 100'</td>
<td>2&quot; - 4&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100' - 200'</td>
<td>4&quot; - 8&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• On a 40" screen with 1366x768 resolution, 2" text is about 50 pixels tall. On a 40" 1080p screen, it's about 125 pixels tall.
Is a Bigger Screen always Better?

% Correct by Attention Occupied by the Message

% Correct

% Attention Zone Occupied
Does Venue Lighting Affect Performance?

Correctness by Brightness

Avg Brightness

% Correct

57 62 66 69 78 85
What about Screen Orientation?

Correctness by Orientation

Orientation

Landscape

Portrait

% Correct

63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
What is Visual Clutter, and why does it Matter?

![Correctness by Clutter](chart.png)
So, where should you spend your time?
What about environmental factors?
Environmental Items to Act On

#1: Visual clutter in your environment is BAD.

Maybe those “clean store” policies have some legs...
Environmental Items to Act On

#2: The higher the contrast, the better the visibility

It’s one of those “duh” concepts that people still ignore.
Environmental Items to Act On

#3: Landscape, not portrait.

This one still surprises me.
Environmental Items to Act On

#4: Shorter message = higher recall.

We saw significant differences even within the confines of the “seven plus or minus two” axiom.
Environmental Items to Act On

**#5:** A little bigger ≠ a lot better.

Even quintupling the amount of space that a message occupied had little effect when it still only took up a small amount of the active attention zone.
About the Author

Bill Gerba is CEO of WireSpring Technologies, whose software and services power thousands of digital signs, kiosks and other devices around the world, serving companies like Procter & Gamble, BP and Walmart. He is a member of POPAI’s digital signage technology standards and awards programs, and is a regular speaker at industry events. Bill also authors WireSpring’s popular Digital Signage Insiders blog at wirespring.com/blog

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About WireSpring

Since 2000, WireSpring has provided hardware, software and expert advice for digital signage, kiosk and machine-to-machine (M2M) projects. Learn more about us at www.wirespring.com

FireCast EasyStart
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