

Case Study

Datapath x4 used on latest DOOH advertising format

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Datapath x4 multi display controllers have helped a leading digital out-of-home (DOOH) media owner achieve new levels of product promotion and customer engagement at Bluewater Shopping Centre in Kent. Here, three Datapath x4 units serve a nine-screen video wall with up to 4 x HD content. With millions of visitors passing through the doors of Bluewater every year, this showcase unit is already proving a huge hit with advertisers and shoppers alike.



Poole-based Limited Space is an established national media owner in the DOOH market that offers a range of high impact, premium advertising formats. Innovation was the name of the game when the company recently sought to replace an existing projector based advertising systems with video wall technology in the Bluewater Shopping Centre.

With 7000 employees manning 330 stores over 154,000 sq m of retail space, Bluewater (located near Dartford) is the UK's fourth largest shopping centre. Research conducted by Limited Space indicates that 51% of shoppers will buy on impulse: with 27 million visitors a year, what better place than Bluewater to launch a new advertising format.

AV Solution

To facilitate its ambition, Limited Space utilised the services of its long standing AV partner, Visionpoint Technologies Limited (Visionpoint). Visionpoint provides full turnkey, AV-based solutions from site survey, through to product recommendation, installation, content creation, hosting, uploading and scheduling, national field service support and full project management to a host of blue chips clients.

"The previous system relied on the use of rear projection, but Limited Space wanted to create a greater impact, utilising latest technology," states VPT Director, Alan Hopkins.

Visionpoint recommended the use of nine NEC X551UN 55" narrow bezel LCD panels (each measuring 55" x 55") in combination with three Datapath x4 multi display controllers. Each x4 controls the content across three screens.

“The project of creating a 165” video wall was extremely challenging in such a tight and confined space,” explains Alan Hopkins. “However, utilising a bespoke rig we ensured the whole structure could be moved on wheels and placed directly against a specially installed front glass window. One of the problems we encountered was a slightly uneven floor, but using the Datapath x4 allowed us to pixel align the screens negating this issue.”

Pixel Alignment

The latest Datapath multi display processors meant Visionpoint could pixel-align the content for a crisp and clear media message, presenting true HD content across all screens without the content being miss-aligned. As well as supporting standard HD quality resolution the system has been designed with future standards in mind, supporting up to UltraHD (4K) for a truly stunning display.

“There were two main benefits to using Datapath x4 controllers on this project: the ability to deliver content at 4K across the whole screen; and the potential to pixel align every screen to correct any slight imperfections,” confirms Bruce Warmer, Visionpoint Director. “When we were looking at the requirements for this project, we realised we couldn’t go any other way than Datapath x4.”

According to Visionpoint, the dual link DVI input capability on the Datapath x4 is also critical to the application as many competitor products only offer a standard single link. Furthermore, each output of the Datapath x4 can represent an arbitrary crop region of the original input image. The output resolution and frame rate does not need to be related to that of the input, as the Datapath x4 will optionally upscale and frame rate convert each cropped region independently.

Supporting Equipment

Browns Innovations speakers were employed to reflect Bluewater’s strict sound requirements, allowing Visionpoint to position the sound as to have the greatest effect to passing traffic yet not give cause for concern to other retailers due to sound bleed. In addition, Visionpoint was commissioned to design and install an interactive ‘transparent’ LCD product display which would house the actual product being promoted. This is installed to the left of the main screen and acts as an innovative ‘smart window’ where potential consumers can see the actual product, right in proximity to the point of purchase in the shopping centre.



The digital showcase screen from Limited Space has introduced a new media to the mall environment. The first brand to take advantage of the deluxe screen's offering was wristwatch specialist, Citizen. The bespoke artwork demonstrated the company's new Eco-Drive Proximity watch and offered shoppers the chance to text and win the product.

With cinema quality images, full screen surround wrap, back-lit box and the latest zonal sound technology, the screen captures the imagination of shoppers from every angle to deliver breathtaking showcasing opportunities. The interactive capabilities even provide shoppers with the opportunity to use their smartphones and respond to the content.

Juicy Rewards

Among other brands to since take advantage is Volvic, a project that led to the creation of an interactive digital billboard game to encourage shoppers to 'Get Juiced' for the chance to win prizes – a free bottle of the company's new Volvic Juiced soft drink. Here, shoppers were instructed to squash as many falling apples as possible in 60 seconds. Each fruit splat filled an on-screen bottle with apple juice, with brand ambassadors on-hand to reward players with a real bottle after the game.

Shopping centres are constantly evolving and diversifying. With this in mind, media owners and clients have had to embrace new ways to remain innovative and engaging – after all, shopping mall placement represents the final opportunity for an advertiser to reach consumers before they pass through a retailer's door. Limited Space, with a little help from Visionpoint and Datapath, has created a whole new era of product presentation.

