

# Developing a Digital Signage Strategy in the City of Hamilton

## MUNICIPAL INSTALLATIONS

### CASE STUDY

Located just 58 kilometres southwest of Toronto, the City of Hamilton is listed as the ninth largest metropolitan area in Canada with a growing population of more than 530,000. Along with the population the City has enjoyed tremendous growth in the arts and culture sector and is home to a variety of museums, performance venues, public gardens and community spaces.

The City of Hamilton needed a way to effectively communicate events and news not only to this diverse and growing community, but to its own city staff as well. They did have some existing outdoor signage from various suppliers that had gone into disrepair over the years, but they were mismatched solutions and there was no clear way to fix the problem. While recognizing that digital signage was a useful way to communicate internally and with the public, there was no strategy in place.



Realizing that moving forward with a variety of vendors, some of whom had fallen by the wayside, was not conducive to supplying clear and consistent messaging throughout the community, the City of Hamilton IT Department issued an RFP looking for a single supplier of digital signage for the City.

*“Thanks for always being there to help. I have told Heather many times before that in all the years with working at the City I have never worked with a vendor that was so helpful. I truly appreciate all the work your team does. Always above and beyond.”*

*• Patti Sargent, Desktop Analyst - Continuous Improvement/Information Technology/Corporate Services - City of Hamilton •*

### Capital Networks was selected as their digital signage partner for three primary reasons:

- A strong reputation and track record in digital signage dating back to 1991 not only illustrated an expertise in the industry but also instilled confidence that the partnership would not fall into neglect as it had with previous vendors. The City of Hamilton needed a partner they could learn from and grow with and the hands-on service provided by Capital Networks during and after the initial sale ensured that.
- Through the Audience™ content management system Capital Networks can provide a full menu of options that can be custom tailored to each application. An important detail for a City looking to convey a wide range of messages using various applications in different locations throughout the community. A key part of the selection process was time spent between the two parties discussing future needs and various options to ensure a perfect fit.
- The Audience™ platform provided the ability to segment the management and distribution of messages in an efficient manner and permitted various levels of content management access to the various departments while maintaining overall central control.

With the non-proprietary Audience™ solution Capital Networks was able to help the Hamilton I.T. department streamline the process of deploying public and private facing digital signage across the City while maintaining much of the infrastructure already in place.

Having outdoor signage on the same CMS as the indoor signage allowed the City to co-ordinate messaging across the network. Individual locations were able to publish their own venue specific messages and promotions, while the Communications department was able to supplement with their own messaging intended for the entire community (i.e., COVID-19 precautions, news alerts, promotion of city-wide events).

While the original scope of the project consisted of only 15 screens, positive feedback and requests received by the IT Department from other city divisions has resulted in a network that has grown to more than 50 deployments including:



- **City Hall** – Outdoor signage provides local news, municipal updates, promotion of upcoming events and city service information.
- **Gage Park** – This community garden and gathering space includes a greenhouse used as an educational center which is also available to rent for special events. Signs display event promotion, facility policies, park details and contact information.
- **Provincial Offences Department** – Indoor waiting room displays provide answers to frequently asked questions, confirm required documentation and next steps and reduce perceived wait time with automated entertainment feeds.
- **Public Health Department** – Elevator lobby screens provide building information, health and wellness updates, wayfinding and automated weather and Twitter feeds.
- **Public Works** – Network of internal facing screens across a variety of municipal venues provide coordinated messaging to employees not working at desks with limited access to email. Content includes health and safety tips, employee recognition, facility policies and event reminders.



To aid in the ease of continued expansion a lab environment was created within the IT department for ongoing live demonstrations and sandboxing, and a “Technology Showcase” was used to present the platform and its available features to other city departments. Hardware was standardized, and individual City departments can request digital signage and required features through a simple web form.

Capital Networks continues to assist the City by providing standardized screen templates made to City of Hamilton Brand Standards, customized documentation and forms to streamline the deployment process and remote training for each deployment to introduce new users to the tool.

“There are now approximately 12 displays up and running in our location. They’ve allowed us to reach and engage all employees across the division and provide them with important information and updates in a timely manner. Our employees really appreciate it!”

• Louisa Fortino, Program Compliance Officer - Public Works / Environmental Services - City of Hamilton •



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