

How to Create a Safer, More Informed Workplace with Digital Signage

A simple guide to creating a safe and healthy work environment in the wake of COVID-19.



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A need for increased safety and awareness

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on workplaces around the world. We've seen governments encourage those who are able to work from home to do so for extended periods of time, in an effort to contain the virus. Many businesses have already experienced extreme financial hardship, and there has been a baseline forecast of a [5.2 percent contraction in global GDP in 2020](#). We've seen essential workers such as doctors, nurses, supermarket assistants and postal workers adapt the way they work, significantly increasing health and safety procedures to protect themselves and limit the spread of infection.

As the world continues to grapple with COVID-19 and workplaces oscillate between closing and reopening, the way they operate has changed dramatically for the foreseeable future. Employers must put health and safety at the forefront of all operations and communication, and implement stringent measures to limit the spread of the virus. The key challenge that workplaces will need to overcome as they reopen is timely, efficient communication of health and safety messages, while minimizing disruption to productivity as much as possible.

One tool employers should embrace during and in the wake of the Coronavirus Crisis is digital signage. This ebook addresses the ways digital signage can be used to help create a safer, healthier work environment, by keeping employees up to date with the latest information and guidelines.



Introduction to digital signage



What is digital signage?

In its simplest form, digital signage describes the sharing of information or content via one or more digital displays, and is often used to communicate a message with a specific audience or group of people.

There are multiple advantages of digital signage, but two of the most widely acknowledged include:

- The information shown on screen is dynamic rather than static, which means the user has the potential to be exposed to a variety of messages at different locations and points in time
- The on-screen content can be programmed remotely from one single source, allowing messages to be updated in real-time for different purposes

Because of the visual and real-time nature of digital signage, and the accessibility of digital displays, it has grown rapidly as a form of communication and information sharing in recent years. In fact, the global digital signage market size was valued at [\\$17.23 billion USD in 2018](#), and is projected to reach \$32.12 billion by 2026.

While many workplaces are facing unforeseen losses as a result of COVID-19, investment in digital signage should remain top of mind. The following section explains why.

How can it be used within workplaces?

Digital signage offers a unique, cost-effective means of keeping employees engaged, as well as informed with relevant information. It also takes the pressure off IT admins and heads of departments,

providing them with an easy, resource-friendly way to get important messages out to employees, clients, customers and visitors in real-time, without the hassle of traditional newsletters and online portals. Generally speaking, digital signage provides employers with the opportunity to:

- **Spread awareness:** Keep employees, clients, customers and visitors informed with the latest news, achievements and milestones
- **Share ownership:** Provide employees and visitors with access to change digital signage around the workplace, giving them the opportunity to have input and take ownership
- **Encourage teamwork:** Showcase imagery and messages that celebrate company results, as well as team and individual achievements
- **Offer guidance:** Clearly display meeting schedules, lunch menus, maps of the building and emergency procedures

How can digital signage be used during and post-lockdown?

Digital signage is increasingly being used by businesses around the world as a form of emergency messaging. When facing a health crisis, the ability to provide clear instructions and updates quickly and en masse is crucial. This is particularly true of HR professionals and managers, who hold a level of responsibility for the health of staff and visitors.

Digital signage provides an opportunity to present updated messages in real-time, communicating the importance of personal hygiene, the signs and symptoms of Coronavirus, and specific procedures employees should follow.

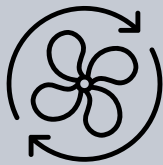


Some of the benefits of embracing digital signage during COVID-19 include:

- **Be prepared:** Pre-prepare any COVID-19-related messaging and signage ahead of time to ensure you're ready for workers to return.
- **Reach a lot of people, quickly:** Whether you're a workplace of 25 or 2500, installing digital signage around different areas of the office or workplace allows you to communicate with a large volume of people simultaneously.
- **Share updates in real-time:** In today's climate, health and safety guidelines are constantly updated. Ensure you can keep up with changing recommendations by sharing the latest information in real-time, rather than relying solely on more time consuming, manual methods of information sharing such as noticeboards or internal company newsletters.

- **Create a sense of order and calm:** Digital signage is certainly useful for sharing practical information, such as reminding people to wash their hands regularly and keep a safe distance from each other. But it can also help to encourage a sense of calm. Reassure employees by sharing information about the process to follow if they feel unwell or have any questions.

Setting up an effective digital signage strategy



In its simplest form, using digital signage within workplaces during COVID-19 is effectively utilizing an additional communication channel to share health and safety messages with employees, visitors and clients.

According to [Kelsen](#), “Creating content for digital signage is no different from creating content for any other screen. It takes thought, process, and strategy to create compelling, effective content. With digital signage, content (with relevance), is king. The power of digital signage is delivering creative, compelling content that is relevant to viewers.”

But before you dive head first into formulating content that is relevant and engaging, it’s imperative to spend some time deciphering what your digital signage strategy is. Your strategy will help clarify exactly what content is needed, and should be the thread that ties all of your digital signage messages together.

[Schaeffler](#) notes that providing “the right message, at the right time, to the right audience, can and should motivate the audience to do things that they otherwise would never have done.” If you spend some time thinking about the following questions, you’ll be on your way to forming a digital signage strategy that encourages people to prioritise health and safety during COVID-19 and into the future.

What do you want to communicate?

Perhaps the most important of all steps when deciphering your digital signage strategy is distilling exactly what message you are trying to communicate. In the case of COVID-19, you may want to remind employees about ways they can help minimise the spread of infection according to the [World Health Organization](#), such as washing hands frequently, avoiding touching eyes, nose or mouth and practicing respiratory hygiene.

Who are you trying to communicate with?

Clarify exactly who you want to share your message with. Most workplaces are made up of a variety of individuals with different roles, responsibilities and interests. These vary drastically from one workplace to another. For example, the types of roles that exist within a multinational technology company will differ from the roles within a small warehouse facility. There are usually departments that serve different functions, such as HR and recruitment, product teams, communication and marketing departments, sales teams and customer support teams. During and in the wake of COVID-19, it's important to tweak your message, according to who you're communicating with. For example, the product team may need to take additional hygiene practices into account when designing and testing products, and the HR department may need to be more aware of certain health and safety procedures.

How do you want to communicate?

Once you've clarified who you're communicating with, it's time to determine which medium they are likely to engage with best. For example, people passing through a hallway or entering a cafeteria may be more likely to respond to a reminder to wash their hands thoroughly and cough into their elbow if it's accompanied by icons or images that make the message stand out. Often, a combination of text and imagery – whether it be through static images or video – is effective when it comes to digital signage. The most important thing is that your message is clear.

Where do you want to communicate it?

Placement of digital signage is extremely important, particularly when it comes to promoting health and safety messages. Aside from departments and meeting rooms, it's important to consider areas where employees tend to gather in groups, including entryways, cafeterias and other shared spaces.

Often, a combination of text and imagery – whether it be through static images or video – is effective when it comes to digital signage.

Setting up effective digital signage within specific workplace environments



When it comes to sharing safety messages, it's important to over-communicate in order to nudge people to adopt the correct behavior. We've all seen examples of paper flyers and noticeboards in office hallways, but as the situation continues to evolve and guidelines change overnight, these traditional forms of communication are no longer scalable. Screens can serve as a vehicle to display crucial messages and visual cues. It's more efficient, more convenient, and safer to use screens as content can be remotely managed and

updated without needing to touch physical posters or noticeboards.

From meeting rooms to cafeterias to shared office spaces, every workplace is made up of areas that serve separate purposes and require particular guidelines to be communicated. There are many ways digital signage can be used within these environments to increase safety and awareness for employees and visitors.

Meeting rooms

Meeting rooms are spaces where employees tend to congregate for extended periods of time to discuss projects and business initiatives. Here are several examples of how digital signage can be used to promote safety and awareness in this type of space.

Use room agendas to encourage safety, teamwork, and punctuality

Many prompts can come from a single display. As shown in the above example, a meeting room agenda can welcome attendees while also prompting them to 1) maintain social distancing, 2) stick to the topic of the meeting, 3) present wirelessly without the need to pass around any cables or dongles, and 4) stick to the allotted meeting duration.

Use image galleries to support ongoing communication efforts

Having similar messages reiterated is key to communicating what's important. While a message can be conveyed with the written word, imagery has been proven as a potent medium for grabbing attention. There are numerous image galleries that can be set up for professional use, such as [OneDrive](#) or [Dropbox](#). An image or series of images can be synced from resources such as OneDrive in order to reinforce not only hygienic behavior but also the kind of professional punctuality that we could all benefit from regardless of whether or not we're in the midst of a global pandemic.



Use video to encourage engagement and showcase commitment

Depending on the message, videos can be used to communicate in a way that's unique from images. While a static screen can be effective for a checklist of meeting room etiquette, a video requires visual attention in order to get the whole story. Of course, video can also be used for safety messages, but the above example is meant to remind us that everyone needs a word of encouragement from time to time. Videos can be used to accentuate brand values or any positive initiatives and stories that have taken place. While safety is the number one priority, it's also worthwhile to spread the good news (when appropriate).

Use Google Slides to remind employees of support services

Part of maintaining a healthy and safe workplace is ensuring employees feel well supported as they return to the office. Set up a Google Slide sharing workplace initiatives such as who to contact if someone is feeling stressed or anxious, the location of meditation spaces around the office, or reminders to take a proper lunch break.

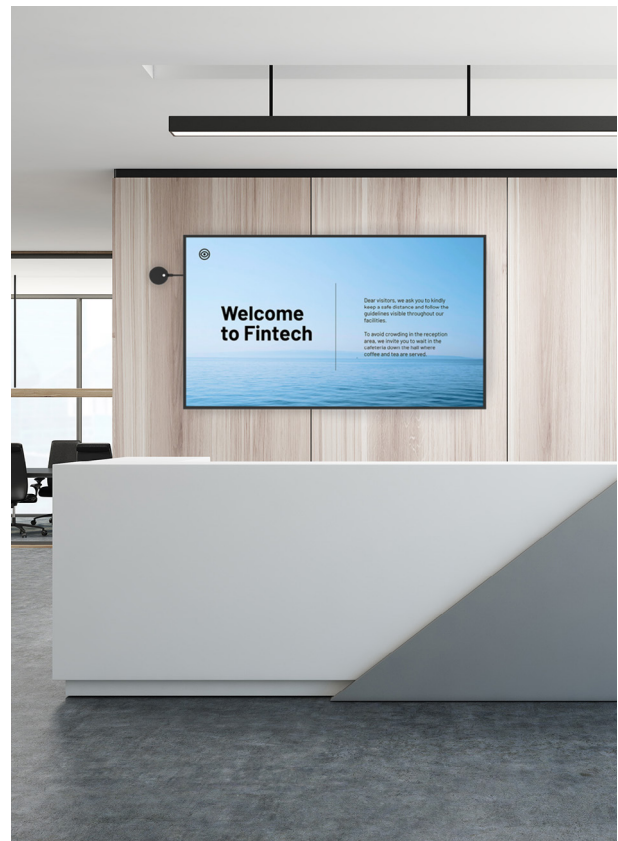
Shared spaces

Open, communal spaces around work are often the epicenter of activity, where people wait for meetings to start or socialize with colleagues. High-traffic spaces like the lobby or the office cafeteria need special care to keep everyone safe. If we don't rethink our usual habits and plan accordingly, shared spaces can quickly become disorganized and overcrowded.

Use a website to create a welcoming, reassuring atmosphere

In a reception area or similar space that's open to the public, a [website](#) can be an educational asset to showcase. A website might summarize what the company is doing for its employees and/or the community during a difficult socio-economic period.

A website can also be used to welcome back employees and create an inviting atmosphere for guests. For example, a welcome screen may invite visitors to enjoy tea or coffee in the cafeteria in order to avoid crowding in the reception area. While physical safety is the top priority, signage can also be used to send motivating messages that reinforce the importance of mental health. Don't hesitate to use websites or slides to promote available resources such as psychosocial support covered by employee insurance.



Use a room overview to promote organization and punctuality

Having [room overviews](#) scattered around hallways can help attendees get to the right room on time, improving punctuality and productivity. As employees return to work, there will be new limits on the number of people allowed in a given area at a set time. This means that punctuality will be more important than ever if we are to 1) avoid throwing other events off schedule, and 2) avoid crowding in hallways as people wait for their colleagues to clear out of the room. In addition to supporting punctuality, room overviews can also help workplaces that plan to repurpose some meeting rooms for temporary office space. Some organizations have adopted this strategy to accommodate larger distances between people who normally sit in open-plan offices. A room overview can help communicate this by displaying rooms whose agendas specify "blocked for desk work".



Use image galleries to encourage food hygiene and safe distances

As in the case of the room overview, digital signage in cafeterias can help enforce safe distances via punctuality. Having employees take their lunch break in shifts is a logical way to minimize contagion if anyone at work is sick and doesn't know it. For both meeting room bookings and lunch shifts, the displayed times can demonstrate caution by including a 5-minute buffer between events. Some people will be eager to catch up with their work friends when they first get back, so having a buffer can help accommodate a bit of social loitering. In any space where food is served, a key topic for signage to convey is hygiene. Messages can be targeted at diners as well as anyone handling meal preparation (e.g. catering staff). In such settings, digital signage can remind people to wash their hands, use hand sanitizer, and clear away their own dishes and trash.

Bonus tip: use Looped Content for a combination of signage apps

[Looped Content](#) takes digital signage a step beyond the above examples, letting you combine different types of apps (websites, room overviews, etc.) to have different content playing on a loop. Looped Content is most relevant to shared spaces, as it's in these areas that people are most likely to gaze at a screen for an extended period of time.

Granted, almost anyone can occupy themselves with a smartphone while waiting around or taking a break. But if a digital signage screen does grab the attention of a passerby, it's a great opportunity to communicate anything from safety guidelines to employee benefits and company values. Looped Content can be the medium for your message, with the option to specify how long certain content should play on the screen before the next thing pops up.

Departments

Workspaces are often organized by department, meaning that colleagues who work closely together will occupy a space that's more or less fixed. Work stations are more static than meeting rooms or other shared spaces where employees and guests are constantly coming and going. When it comes to sending messages and fostering a particular atmosphere with digital signage, there are two implications specific to department spaces where the same people tend to inhabit the same area every day. The first is that the content on display can be tailor-made for a very specific group of people. The second that digital signage messages are more likely to be seen.

Use project management boards to help your team stay on track

Project management boards like [Trello's](#) help to track shared projects, offering a visual summary of which tasks have been done, what's currently being worked on, and what's still left to tackle. Consider the example of the HR department. This task force is often responsible for reintroducing employees to their familiar-yet-new workplaces. A Trello board can be used to help the HR department band together and stay on track with plans for a safe reopening. Lists of tasks can also be organized based on deadlines, such as "2 weeks before reopening", "1 week before reopening", and "The day of reopening".

A shared Trello board can help to transform a whirlwind of to-dos into an achievable quest for any department where collaborative work is ongoing. You can even



use boards to sync between teams, such as when customer support submits a task or request for the engineering team. The communications department can organize a Trello board to keep an eye on content ideas that have been approved and those that are still pending.

Use dashboards to reinforce sales targets and (healthy) competition

As the world works through a recession, any sales outreach has to be tactful. Demand for your product or service may also have decreased. That said, those who work in sales still have a job to do, and they shouldn't feel bad about doing it. While every department plays a key role, your sales team might need more encouragement than normal to balance the dynamics of advocating for a product or service while not coming off as pushy or insensitive.



Well-designed dashboards that reinforce sales targets and display time-specific progress can help teams visualize progress. Such designs can even gamify work by using targets to encourage healthy competition among colleagues. For example, a dashboard can include a picture that celebrates “Sales Rep of the Week” or “Account Manager of the Month”. You can spread the appreciation around by having various awards based on different products or services sold, total calls completed, etc. Success should be shared, especially when a department-wide milestone is reached. But recognizing individual achievement also goes a long way.

Use Google Slides to promote support initiatives

Screens in department spaces can also be used to spread messages of support and share information about services available to employees. For example, you can feature a [Google Slide](#) with information about how to access mental health and counselling initiatives, or remind people to take a

proper lunch break. Ensuring employees have access to this information can help spread awareness and ensure people feel supported within the office environment.

Remote device management management and wireless screen sharing for IT personnel

While using digital signage in workplaces is effective in sharing information, the method of sharing information is also safe. With [Airtame Cloud](#), IT administrators and communications departments can remotely update and manage screens, without physically touching noticeboards. During meetings and presentations, employees can also share their screen without needing to touch dongles or cords. Using Scheduled Content under the Looped Content feature, IT admins can plan digital signage in advance according to specific hours and days of the week. This way, admins can set a schedule for the week and get the correct message out at the right time with very little maintenance.

Warehouses and factories

The safe and efficient functioning of warehouses and factory floors is crucial to economies all over the world. Most businesses that sell physical products rely on these facilities to produce the goods that they then go on to sell to customers. We've seen the domino effect of COVID-19 on warehouses and factories, with companies large and small experiencing production delays as a result of facilities needing to adjust to recommended safety guidelines. Fewer staff on factory floors equals a lower production capacity, less products available to sell, slower delivery times, and a reduced bottom line for many businesses.

It's critical that operators and employers of workers in warehouses and factories take safety measures extremely seriously. This is first and foremost to ensure the health of their employees, and secondly to help the businesses that rely on the production of goods within these facilities to continue to function.

Communicate specific safety procedures using Google Slides

Warehouses and factories around the world have been and will continue to be impacted by COVID-19. Unlike many of us, operators and workers in these facilities aren't able to work from home, as they rely on heavy machinery and often operate dangerous equipment. As they readjust to new ways of operating, managers of these facilities need to adopt new procedures and safety measures to ensure employees are kept safe. For example, shorter shifts for workers, less people working at a time in a given



space, the distribution of PPE and more extensive cleaning measures.

Using Google Slides, warehouse managers can share specific instructions, such as how many workers are permitted within a certain area. They can also communicate cleanliness protocols, such as the need to wash and sanitize hands before and after entering the factory floor, maintain a safe distance between workers and ensuring each piece of material produced is effectively sanitized before it goes into packaging. Maps and images of the warehouse floor can also be shared via [Dropbox](#) or Microsoft Onedrive, to remind workers of allocated seating, where they should take breaks and which restrooms are open for use.



Share official guidelines with workers using visuals

When it comes to maintaining safety and awareness in these spaces, it's imperative that warehouse and factory managers adhere to the recommendations of experts and health authorities. For example, the World Health Organization provides a range of free, downloadable images and videos that communicate important health and safety measures. Using digital signage, these materials can be shared on screen within different areas, such as factory floors, restrooms, cafeterias and hallways. The guidelines that WHO recommends now may differ in six months' time, so it's important that the messages that are shared are up to date and relevant. The dynamic nature of digital signage means that the messages shared on screen can change over time as recommendations develop.

A combination of visuals, such as static images and videos, can be effective in capturing peoples' attention. Using

[YouTube](#), you can [stream videos](#) on your screens to remind workers of the measures they need to take when it comes to personal hygiene during COVID-19. There is also the option to share imagery directly from [WHO's website](#) using the public website URL.

Use project management boards to stay on track with tasks and track performance

As many warehouses and factories adapt to new ways of working, project management boards like Trello can help managers keep employees on track with tasks. By visually presenting the tasks that have been completed, the current priorities and tasks to work on in the future, managers can make it easier for employees to readjust to a new way of working. Trello boards can also be used to reinforce safety procedures, such as reminding workers to wear PPE before they approach certain machinery or to take additional precautions to ensure the surface they are working from has been sanitized.

Remote device management and wireless screen sharing for IT personnel

While using digital signage in workplaces is effective in sharing information, the method of sharing information is also safe. With [Airtame Cloud Plus](#), IT administrators and communications departments can remotely update and manage screens, without physically touching noticeboards. During meetings and presentations, employees can also share their screen without needing to touch dongles or cords. Using Scheduled Content under the Looped Content feature, you can plan digital signage in advance according to specific hours and days of the week.

This way, admins can set a schedule for the week and get the correct message out at the right time with very little maintenance. Businesses that rely on the production of goods within these facilities to continue to function.



How to get started

Do your research

Before locking yourself in with a digital signage platform, make sure you do your research. If you're interested in learning more about how Airtame can help with digital signage, you can check out our [website](#).

Some helpful Airtame resources

If you're an existing Airtame customer, or are considering adopting our solution, we're providing some complimentary assistance during COVID-19.

1. We've created a Health and Safety digital signage [template](#). To use it across your screens, simply 1) sign into your Airtame Cloud account 2) go to the Devices tab 3) tick the boxes next to your desired screen(s) 4) Click "Edit settings" 5) paste the template URL into the "Website" field and 6) click "Apply changes"
2. You can download and customize our [template](#). If there's any confidential information you want to share on your screens, we recommend using the [Google Slides app](#), available in Airtame Cloud.
3. Finally, we're offering customers free design resources for custom digital signage requests. Simply send your request to covid19help@airtame.com (including 'COVID-19 design help' in the subject line), and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

Other useful links

- WHO: [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) advice for the public](#)
- Airtame blog: [Use your screens to inform and encourage during the COVID-19 crisis](#)
- Airtame Cloud: [Take control of your screens](#)

Want to find out more about digital signage with Airtame?

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