

Companies Get on 3D Bandwagon With Focus on Ads

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By Mark R. Madler

The days of the one sheet are numbered.

For decades the standard advertising format in movie theater lobbies, the paper and cardboard one sheet poster is being supplanted by a high tech method.

A static display just won't cut it anymore to catch a viewer's eye.

Advertising follows the same path taken by music when analog recordings switched to digital and in feature films as 35mm films gradually are supplanted by versions distributed to theaters on a disk or through a satellite.

"We see the digital realm coming to theater lobbies in a big way," said Greg Agostinelli, head of the digital signage lab at Stereoscope Studios, a Burbank company adding a 3D twist to film promotion.

The Valley region is rich in companies developing methods to bring 3D content to the big and small screens but for right now Stereoscope and Provision Interactive Technologies in Chatsworth are the ones using the technology for the next generation of advertising although approaching it from different directions.

The Provision method involves 3D holograms in which images of products project out from a kiosk in a retail store. Stereoscope builds on existing digital signage, a growth industry reaching its first level of maturity as networks get established and business models get settled.

"Now that digital signage networks are in place they can take the premier spots and take it a step further by adding 3D," said Bernie Laramie, of Stereoscope.

The Digital Signage Association puts global industry revenues at \$1.1 billion.

Last year, Clear Channel Outdoor made Los Angeles part of its digital billboard network. Signs throughout the city run a continuous loop of eight second advertisements that play to passersby a thousand times a day. In May, Metro unveiled a digital strip inside the northbound Red Line subway tunnel between the Hollywood/Highland stop and the Universal City stop to advertise retailers, films and television shows.

Laramie himself saw the prevalence of this high tech signage when at the food court of a Century City movie theater. All the menus, he noticed, were digital.

China, however, emerged as the world's leader in digital signage.

Three Chinese companies are on the NASDAQ and combined have more than 100,000 screens on buses, in airports, lobbies and other public areas.

Even with the fewer number of screens in the U.S., consumers are bombarded with hundreds of advertising images per day and are bound to tune out.

Stereoscope and Provision want consumers to tune back in.

"Anyway that somebody can break out of the clutter is a way to get your message across," said Marty Shindler, a consultant from Encino with clients in the entertainment industry.

By placing kiosks in retail locations, Provision can create images for advertisers that get to shoppers to where they make most of their shopping decisions, said Curt Thornton, president and CEO of Provision.

The first roll out of the kiosks is in Fred Meyer stores in Portland, Ore., a grocery store part of the Kroger chain. In Southern California, Provision will locate the kiosks in 47 Hispanic grocery stores belonging to four different chains.

The kiosks, however, are more than just about the holographic images.

They are, said Thornton, a new way to get coupons into the hands of shoppers and more importantly to get them redeemed. Most coupons sent through the mail, inserted into newspapers or printed on the back of a grocery store receipt go unused.

The kiosks have a touch screen from which a shopper can press a product icon and the machine prints a coupon on the spot. When done this way, Thornton said, the store wins because a purchase is made; the manufacturer wins because their product is sold; and Provision wins for displaying the advertising.

"That's the power of the 3D kiosk," Thornton said.

The interactive feature appears prominently in a kiosk Provision is developing for a major national banking chain. When a holographic car appears from the screen, a bank customer waves their hand through it and the kiosk dispenses a ticket directing them who to see for an auto loan.

Stereoscope also has in development a personal kiosk with interactive features in which a shopper can touch the screen to twist and turn a cell phone to view it from multiple angles.

For now, Stereoscope is developing its technology for promotional purposes with the long-term view of using it for entertainment purposes.

Once people see in movie theaters, retail stores and other places how good 3D can look without having to use glasses to view the images they will be more inclined to want to see it in the home environment.

"That's where we see it going in time – 3D in the home without glasses," Laramie said.



Area Firm Pioneers 3-D Advertising

http://www.dailynews.com/ci_9871288

By Melissa Lambarena
July 14, 2008

Floating above a retail display in an Oregon supermarket, the image of the Coke can looks realistic enough to grab. But it's only a hologram: a full-color, high-resolution image created by Provision Interactive Technologies, the Chatsworth-based company that is pioneering the use of 3-D videos and images for commercial advertising.



"A marketing genius came up with the name 3DEO," said Provision Chief Executive Officer Curt Thornton. "Back in the early-1900s, there was audio. In the 1970s and '80s, we have video. In 2000, we have 3DEO."

Among Provision's latest products is the 3DEO Media Center or kiosk. Kiosks - each projecting the image of a floating soda can - are being installed at 29 Fred Meyer Stores in Portland, Ore.

"What's new and different is that, thanks to 3DEO's proprietary technology, your product will be floating in space and rotating in the third dimension. The effect is compelling and traffic-stopping," said Lynn Gust, executive vice president of merchandising and advertising for Fred Meyer Stores.

"Besides the 3-D display, the 3DEO unit also has a user interface and can dispense coupons."

Thornton said the 3DEO units will be installed this summer at 47 independent Hispanic markets in Southern California. With market research showing that 70percent of purchasing decisions are made in-store, the high-tech kiosks are designed to influence impulse buyers.

"Most Hispanic consumers don't shop by themselves. They go with their family, so if they have a child, automatically he is a buyer, too," said Ben Remez, president of Clear TV Inc., which is working with Provision on the new kiosks.

Provision started in 2001 as a hardware company that sold products like black boxes and displays. It expanded in 2006 to digital media and now has a dozen employees.

Although Provision has implemented 3DEO technology for retail advertising - its clients include Adidas, Kodak, Procter & Gamble, Toyota, Disney, and Johnson & Johnson - Thornton said it could be adapted for education and other uses.

"It can be used for a medical X-ray or body scan in 3-D, government homeland security and flight avionics. People who fly in 3-D space need 3-D displays."

Thornton said his company's technology works for video games and could someday be adapted for television. There also are plans to bring three-dimensional technology to the automotive industry. Daihatsu, a subsidiary of

Toyota, hired Provision last year to create a holographic dashboard that presents 3-D warnings and vehicle notifications.

"The Tokyo Motor Show launched the concept car, and it was the hit of show," Thornton said.

"The American market doesn't adopt technology as quickly as the foreign market. It is less of a risk taker and wants to see the product proved," Thornton said.

The next big thing: Holography

http://www.exhibitcitynews.com/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=624&Itemid=1

Written by Kathy Watterson, Editor
Monday, May 05, 2008

Attendees had a glimpse of the immediate future at the combined KioskCom Self Service Expo & Digital Signage Show held at Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas April 16-17. Clearly, digital signage, holography and other state-of-the-art technologies are about to transform the showfloor – and business as we know it as well.



Curt Thornton

Innovations showcased in some of the booths I visited made traditional graphics and AV solutions seem quaint and outdated.

“Plasma screens and LCD screens are ubiquitous now – people expect them – so everyone’s looking for that next big thing,” said Curt Thornton, president and CEO of Chatsworth, Calif.-based ProVision (www.provision.tv), a digital media company he founded in 2001. “Holography is that next big thing.”

He said holography has been around for a few decades, but just wasn’t sophisticated enough for many practical applications – until now.

“In 1976, it was science fiction,” Thornton pointed out. “Remember that famous hologram scene in Star Wars when someone accidentally touched the right robot button and out popped the princess in mid-air? Well, we have higher resolution than that now. There’s no light beam, and we can do larger images. And the color is fantastic. It all adds up to a big wow factor.”

Thornton said he had attended the KioskCom Self Service Expo last year, but was now a first-time exhibitor at the show. He added that he’d been lucky to get prime space right next to the showfloor entrance because he had only registered six to eight weeks earlier.

Why did he decide to come as an exhibitor this year?

“They didn’t have the Digital Signage Show part last year,” he noted. “It made a lot of sense to combine the two shows because they share mostly the same market. I’ve noticed a significant growth in attendees at this show versus other digital signage shows.”

He said his company had explored the tradeshow/conventions/meetings industry previously but found it too segmented to approach in practical terms.

“I think that market is large enough, but it’s hard for small companies to get in by themselves,” he explained. “We started chasing the tradeshow industry in 2004, 2005, but walked away because it was so segmented and spread out. And before that, we were mostly in R&D even though we were revenue-producing – we were selling prototypes as seeds for the market.”



3DEO Rewards Center

Eventually, when word got around about the company's proprietary holographic technology, the marketing dynamics shifted in a positive way, he said.

"Now that we have a recognizable platform with our 3-D holographies, the major players in the tradeshow industry – the exhibit houses – are approaching us now," he said.

"Our current focus is leveraging the 3-D holographic display as a digital media platform. They see the wow factor."

I was about to be wowed myself. I'd seen first-generation and second-generation holograms in museums: alluring, shimmering images not quite there, like ghosts caught between dimensions. Their colors were enticing, but washed out. They seemed fragile, even ethereal, and had to be viewed from a certain angle to be seen at all.



People couldn't resist reaching for the holograms. This 2-D photo can't begin to do justice to the 3-D technology shown here. The bananas image was actually projected several feet in front of the unit. This photo was taken at KioskCom Self Service Expo & Digital Signage Show held at Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas April 16-17.

People couldn't resist reaching for the holograms. This 2-D photo can't begin to do justice to the 3-D technology shown here. The bananas image was actually projected several feet in front of the unit. This photo was taken at KioskCom Self Service Expo & Digital Signage Show held at Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas April 16-17.

One glance at the ProVision booth told me holography has definitely come of age.

A bright yellow bunch of bananas was suspended in mid-air a few feet away. After 10 seconds or so, it turned end over end and withdrew but was immediately replaced by a box of Tide, which in turn pirouetted away, yielding the nonexistent stage to a floating cup of Starbucks coffee. (Not surprisingly, Starbucks is already a ProVision client.)

The wow factor hit me right between the eyes – figuratively, of course, but these holograms are so convincing it's hard to

believe they're not tangible objects. Attendees stopped dead in the aisle, instantly captivated. Many people couldn't resist the temptation to reach out and touch them, including me. Logically, we realized we couldn't touch them. But we had to try. In fact, there was something downright compulsive about it.

"That's one of the most useful things about it," Thornton pointed out. "We've come up with applications based on the fact that people simply can't resist putting their hands through the images."

He said it was a small step from that realization to a wealth of commercial applications.

"Take the idea of waiting in line. Why waste that time? Soon, when you're in line at the grocery store – or the bank or the airport or the post office – you'll be able to reach out for images representing products or services you're interested in. Your movement might send a signal to a device that prints out a coupon, saving you money. That's called reward printing, and we're already testing it in stores. When people see the image and react to it, they get a coupon. Touching the place where the image appears could also cause an application to be printed out, or maybe directions to an appropriate person to see or to another part of the building."

About three feet behind the images and projecting them was ProVision's 3DEO Rewards Center, the company's flagship product. I asked about the distinctive name, which had a familiar ring to it.

Holograms to Add Depth to In-Store Promotions

Kiosks pushing products on in 3-D will debut in L.A. groceries.

http://www.exhibitcitynews.com/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=624&Itemid=1

By Booyeon Lee
May 5, 2008

Holograms – yes, those 3-D images Darth Vader used to communicate in “Star Wars” – are coming to Latino grocery stores in L.A.

Developed in Chatsworth, a patented technology projects into space 3-D images in high-resolution streaming video. The product will be rolled out in 47 grocery stores in Hispanic neighborhoods in the L.A. area.

The holographic video, displayed in kiosks, would feature advertisements and content about products sold in the stores.

The system, developed by Provision Interactive Technologies Inc., will also soon pop up in duty-free stores internationally. It recently partnered with drinks giant Diageo, behind brands including Smirnoff and Baileys, to bring advertisements of its products in hologram form. This model would incorporate an “air touch” element where consumers can touch the floating images to get more information on the products.

“No one is used to seeing that anywhere other than science-fiction movies,” said Chief Executive Curt Thornton.

Thornton said the company is responding to research that shows more than 70 percent of purchasing decisions are made inside a store. That’s why many checkout counters at groceries feature small television screens with news and advertisements.

“Those flat panels are everywhere – in homes, stores and at work – and people are beginning to tune them out,” Thornton said. “But images floating in space are something truly new.”

Provision has recently sealed a partnership with a top advertiser, but Thornton declined to disclose the brand. A national grocery chain is also testing the product in 30 of its stores in the Pacific Northwest.

Founded in 2001, the company of a dozen employees is funded mostly through angel and private equity investors. It recently went public in February under the name Provision Holding Inc.



Daihatsu and Provision building HLXX 3D holographic dashboard, the future

<http://www.engadget.com/2008/03/28/daihatsu-and-provision-building-hlxx-3d-holographic-dashboard-t/>

March 28, 2008
By Paul Miller



If those darn kids would get out of the way, what you'd see before you is a fancy new dashboard that Daihatsu teamed with Provision Interactive Technologies to build for its latest concept car. They're calling it HLXX, and it's pretty straightforward: there's a traditional flat screen 2D dashboard that is used for all the usual driving infos, with a 3D holographic screen in front that overlays warnings or alerts so they're more easily seen by the driver. Daihatsu hopes to have HLXX in production vehicles by 2012, but until then we suppose we'll just have to pretend these gauges and dials on our dashboards are 3D. Oh wait.