

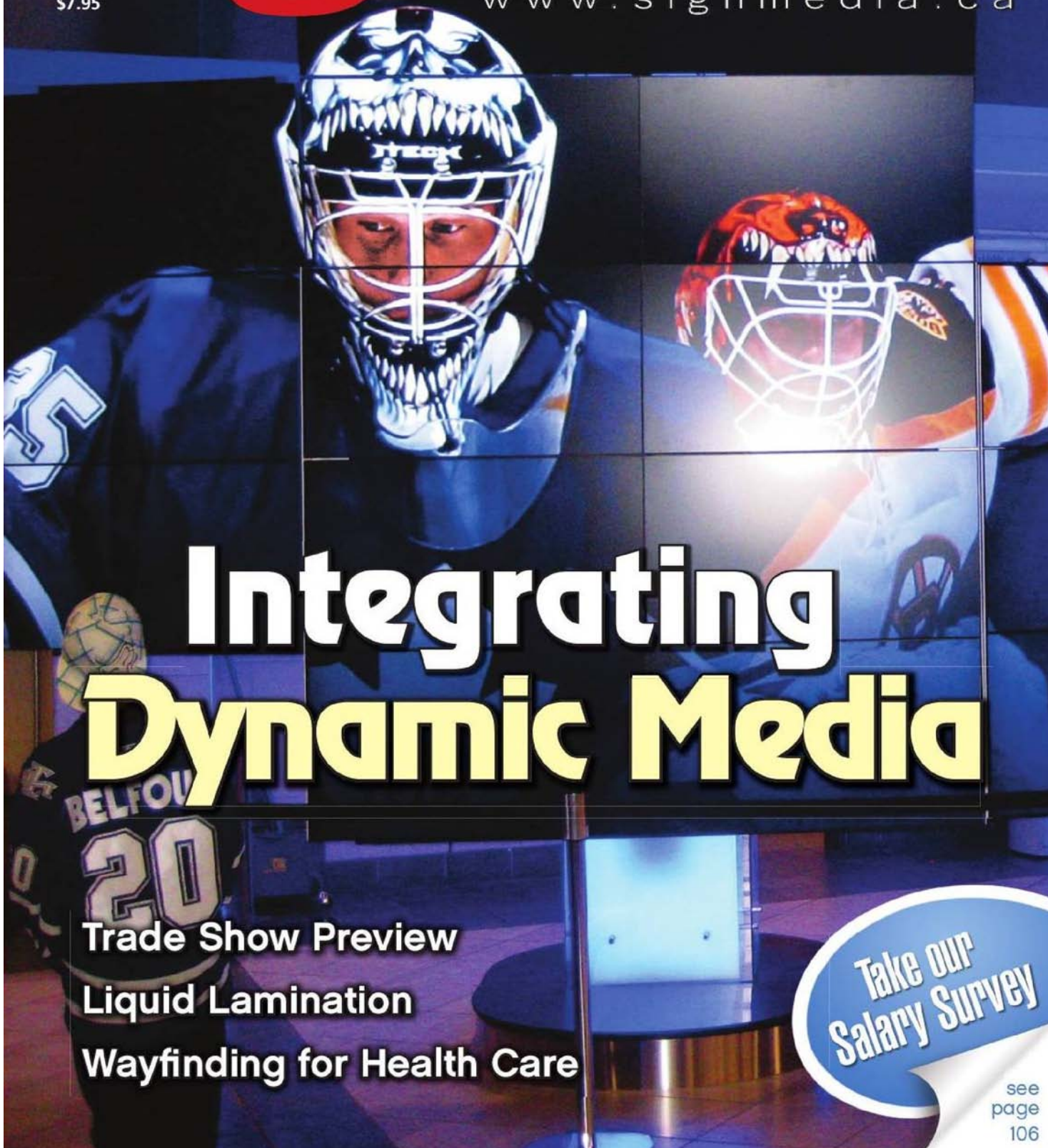
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# Integrating Dynamic Media

Trade Show Preview

Liquid Lamination

Wayfinding for Health Care

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Salary Survey

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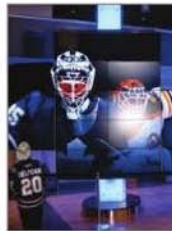
#### On the cover:

Operated by Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment (MLSE), the Air Canada Centre uses a new system of dynamic displays integrated into its architectural design to highlight its teams, events and exclusive corporate sponsorships.

MLSE worked with integrator Digital Display & Communications (DDC) in Waterloo, Ont., and software provider Omnivex in Concord, Ont., on the multimillion-dollar project, which is anchored by large media walls—including a 42-screen array at Gate 1.

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Photo courtesy DDC



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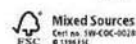
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# Integrating Media Into ARCHITECTURE

Buildings are  
being turned  
into billboards.

By Lyle Bunn

**D**igital signage has typically been added to existing environments, with each screen mounted on a pole or wall or placed on a shelf. Today, however, with increasing frequency, it is being more fully ensconced into the form and function of a retail store, transit station, event facility or public-gathering space, becoming a sort of 'architectural media.'

The goal of this type of project is to provide a compelling, high-impact experience through the integration of dynamic signage into the physical infrastructure. By more clearly and powerfully expressing a brand, the thinking goes, overall communications aims can be more fully achieved.

"By integrating media into the design of automotive dealership façades, for example, we create landmarks that are highly differentiated from traditional building forms within the same streetscapes," says Chester Niziol, president of Architectural Media in Pickering, Ont., which uses the concept when developing retail and commercial spaces. "We can turn these buildings into billboards, projecting a brand image on an ongoing basis at little or no additional cost to the client."



Photo courtesy Architectural Media

Maple Leaf Foods commissioned the incorporation of digital media into the lobby of its ThinkFood product development facility in Mississauga, Ont.



Photo courtesy BMW Toronto

At BMW's flagship dealership in Toronto, large-format prints are an integral part of the building design, welcoming visitors to a media-rich facility.

One example is a flagship BMW dealership in Toronto, the façade of which Nizio's company developed to showcase not only cars, but also large-format messaging. The media is part of the building, rather than added onto it.

Architectural Media has also helped develop Honda's Powerhouse and Acura dealership image programs, integrating screens to reinforce the two retail brands through building design.

### Compelling locations

Shoppers, patrons, visitors, students and staff are presented with hundreds of brand messages vying for their attention, loyalty and spending every day. By providing a physical expression of a brand, architecturally integrated digital signage better allows messages to stand out and engage these groups.

One example can be found at the Air Canada Centre (ACC), home to the National Hockey League's (NHL's) Toronto Maple Leafs and the National Basketball Association's (NBA's) Toronto Raptors, as well as many concerts and special events. It is reportedly the second busiest arena anywhere in the world, behind only Madison Square Garden in New York, N.Y.

Owned and operated by Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment (MLSE), the facility uses a new system of dynamic displays, integrated into its architectural design, to highlight its

teams, events and exclusive corporate sponsorships. MLSE worked with integrator Digital Display & Communications (DDC) in Waterloo, Ont., and software provider Omnivex in Concord, Ont., on the multimillion-dollar project, which is anchored by large media walls—including a 42-screen array at Gate 1—and also includes one- and two-screen configurations.

The dynamic signage has allowed much of the clutter in the ACC's concourses to be cleared away, by replacing a previous mix of basic monitors, plastic signs, printed photos and even handwritten notes on the walls. It is supported by the building's information technology (IT) network, which runs along the building's main columns. Content is programmed and updated from a control centre.

Unveiled in late 2009, the ACC's new digital signage network was subsequently honoured with an Apex Award at the 2010 Digital Signage Expo (DSE) and in the Digital Signage category of *Sign Media Canada's* 2010 National Sign Competition. MLSE says other North American stadium and arena managers are now interested in it as an example for future rollouts.

Other media possibilities include lobby displays and 'store within a store' designs. Display software provider Scala has won numerous awards, for example, for the integration of digital signage in the Inspirience Centre,



Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment (MLSE) recently revamped its digital signage at the Air Canada Centre (ACC), using the opportunity provided by structural renovations to incorporate the network into the building's architecture.

a Netherlands showroom for German consumer appliance manufacturer Miele. A media management system controlled not only the room's video and audio elements, but even scents.

"Digital signage is a key element in the overall trend toward more engaging environments that express a brand more fully immersively," says David Keene, chair of one of the judging panels that honoured the Scala project.

**The value of personality**

Every commercial location can express its own 'personality' by reflecting its overall purpose in architectural design and décor. Electronic displays—along with posters, signs, wayfinding elements, photography and other graphic elements—should reinforce this intention, whether it is to motivate purchases, inspire aspiration, invoke pride of association, extend and advance branding, improve the exchange of information or support on-site personnel.

Dynamic media in these environments may include digital signs, video projections, interactive kiosks, touchscreens, gesture-based systems and/or connectivity with mobile devices. The value of adding such features to a facility may be found in return on investment (ROI) or return on objectives (ROO).

ROI is often based on achieving engagement with the largest intended audience. When architecturally integrated digital signage is easily noticed, this audience will receive the messaging

presented—sometimes at an unconscious level—and be motivated to engage with further opportunities, e.g. to buy a product or attend a future event.

ROO may be achieved through the cohesion of display elements to define branding characteristics for the audience, creating an experience that is relevant to the given location. Shape, size, colour, materials, sound and emotional impact can all figure prominently in this brand expression. The dynamic nature of digital signage allows the brand message to be refreshed regularly.

**The big picture**

Harmonizing physical structures with digital media not only helps ensure consistent expression of a brand, but also creates contextual continuity. And given this cohesion, costs can be minimized for some of the individual elements, while digital signage, can help enliven the overall environment.

The central control and updating of messages—as in Miele's Inspirience Centre example—may provide benefits in locations where there are frequent interactions with the intended audience. Connected display systems can improve these relationships by contributing more to the 'conversation' and thus making the brand more applicable to that audience.

*Lyle Bunn is an independent digital signage consultant based in Brighton, Ont. For more information, visit [www.lylebunn.com](http://www.lylebunn.com).*

"Digital signage is a key element in the trend toward more engaging environments."  
– David Keene