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It'd be Great if I Could See it!
A guide to evaluating LED wallboards and LCD displays for the call center
by Inova Solutions

Executive Summary

This white paper discusses three key considerations for selecting real-time data displays, including: visibility, content flexibility and cost. After weighing these points against their needs, many call center managers find **a mix of LED wallboards and LCD displays** provides maximum impact of metrics and messages.

Light Emitting Diode, or LED, wallboard displays have been the call center's workhorse for the past three decades. In the last few years, the trend has moved toward plasma and LCD displays for the glitz and glam they provide. But how do you decide between the bright, tried-and-true LED displays and new, flashy LCD displays? It's easy to look toward well-designed call center digital signage and let LEDs fall completely off the radar, but that could be a costly mistake. One call center manager found this out the hard way:

> Tim, the call center manager at Widget Company, wanted to replace the outdated LED wallboards in his center that were going on ten years old. He was blown away by the beauty of real-time metrics on LCD displays during the demo he watched. Sally, the salesperson for Super Signs, suggested Tim use a combination of LEDs and LCDs so all 50 agents in his center had plenty of visibility. He took a quick look at new LEDs, but decided they weren't flashy enough to impress the management team at Widget Company. After getting approval from his CFO, Tim signed a purchase order for five, 50-inch LCDs and the software to display Widget Company's real-time data. After the LCDs were up and running, Tim invited the management team to the call center to see what a great choice he made in replacing the center's old LED wallboards with new LCD digital signage. The CEO asked an agent in the middle of the call center what he thought of the new displays and the agent replied, *"It'd be great if I could see it!"*

We put together this guide to help you decide which display technology makes the most sense for your call center. Don't make the same mistake Tim did and forget about the importance of visibility of your real-time data displays.

Consideration #1: Visibility

Viewing Distance

Text on LED wallboards can be clearly read from up to 100 feet away, which is roughly three times the maximum viewing distance of even the largest LCD screens. For small call centers, one or two LCD screens may be sufficient. However, in large centers and centers where agents are spread across medium and large size rooms, the distance of agents furthest from LCD displays needs to be accounted for. And although it seems like the bigger the screen the further the viewing distance, monster-size LCDs actually only add a few extra feet of visibility. Real-time data displays greatly enhance customer service and provide value in the call center many times over, but they aren't very helpful if agents can't see the data.

Viewing Angles

If you have a plasma or LCD television at home you probably know that when you're watching TV at an angle the picture is difficult to see. Commercial-grade LCDs are higher quality than home LCDs, but you still need to be aware that agents sitting at a 20-30 degree (or more) angle will have a difficult time seeing what's on the display. LED wallboards on the other hand are still easily visible at sharp angles and work especially well as supplements to LCDs in corners or other areas where agents are sitting at an angle.

What makes commercial-grade LCD displays better than consumer-grade LCDs in the call center?
- Designed for all day use
- Include necessary ports for digital signage equipment, such as computers and media players
- Cooling mechanisms and heat dissipation plates keep screens cool and working longer
- Option to lock out menu buttons keeps people from interfering with the display
- Most consumer warranties become void if the display is used commercially
- Higher refresh rates help prevent burn-in
- Stronger housing and power supplies

Glare

Bright light interference, whether it's due to overhead lights or windows, can also impact the visibility of call center digital signage. Plasma and LCD technology have come a long way in the few years they've been on the market, but even a small amount of light in the wrong spot can cause extreme visibility problems. Inova OnTrack® LED displays come with an anti-glare coating for optimal indoor viewing, so glare on LED wallboards isn't a problem.

Figure 1 shows an LED wallboard and LCD display side-by-side. If these were up on the walls of your call center, which would you find easier to read?

Figure 1: To-scale images of an LCD display (42") and an LED wallboard (OnTrack M4).

Bottom line: LED wallboards offer greater visibility than LCD displays.

Consideration #2: Content flexibility

Depending on your goals, the flexibility LCD displays provide can be a tremendous asset in the call center. If you plan to only show metrics and simple threshold-based or scheduled messages, LED readerboards should suffice. However, the old adage "a picture is worth a thousand words" really proves true with LCD digital signage displays.

Incorporating various content elements like Microsoft® PowerPoint®, Adobe® PDF and Flash files, videos, web content and pictures makes digital signage more interesting and informative than traditional LED wallboards. The learning curve for digital signage software is low because you're able to include content you already have in formats you're already familiar with, such as PowerPoint.

Digital signage allows for agent recognition and corporate messaging. You can show a picture of the Agent of the Month and include branded corporate messaging, with your company logo and colors, while still showing vital metrics and messages.

Flexibility can also be found with varying content on each sign. If you have an LCD display in the break room, you can display a condensed version of your vital metrics and additionally show a local or national news or weather station. Agents can catch up on the news during their break, but can still see, for example, if there is an unexpected spike in calls waiting and return to their desks to help clear out the queue.

See Figure 2 for an example of how to vary sign content from the call center to the break room.
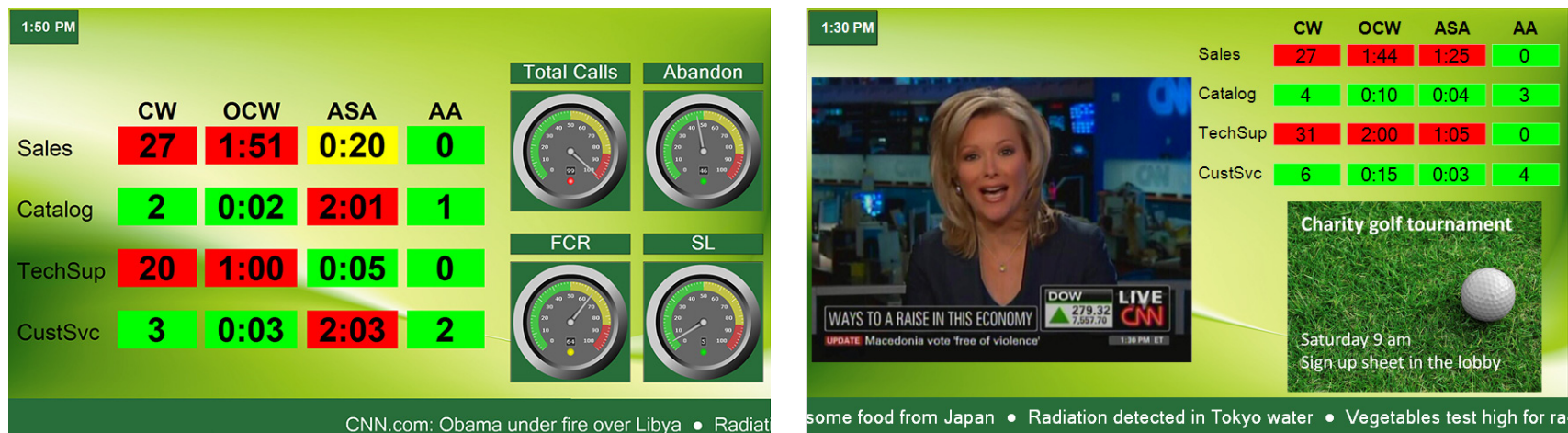

Figure 2: Digital signage gives great flexibility to the content you want to display. This figure shows how you can use different layouts and content in the call center (left) and in the break room (right) to keep agents informed and engaged no matter where they are.

Bottom line: LCD displays offer more versatile content options.

Consideration #3: Cost

Energy savings

OnTrack X Series LED wallboards from Inova Solutions use energy-efficient Power over Ethernet (PoE) technology draw both power and data from your existing network. These

> **"** These wallboards are so efficient they consume only about 15 watts per display, **roughly 20 times less energy than comparable LCD screens.**

wallboards are so efficient they consume only about 15 watts per display, roughly 20 times less energy than comparable LCD screens. This translates to serious energy savings.

Like the X Series, OnTrack M Series wallboards are also energy-efficient, even though they use AC power. These wallboards use between 50 and 300 watts per display depending on the display size.

While not as energy-efficient as wallboards, LCD displays have come a long way in the last few years. Many commercial models are even ENERGY STAR compliant. Efficiency will likely continue to improve as the technology becomes more mature.

Expected life and warranty

The expected life span of an Inova LED display is about 10 years (and we've been building them for 27 years). They're very sturdy and rarely have problems so they usually long outlast their depreciation time.

This is another area where LCDs have made great strides, but the three year warranty means you can expect to replace an LCD display about three times before you may need to replace an LED wallboard.

Bottom line: LED wallboards are less costly to purchase, implement and operate.

So how do you decide?

You know your call center's needs better than anyone, so start there:

1. Determine your needs and goals
2. Consider visibility, content and cost
3. Speak with a sales consultant to answer your questions
4. Evaluate how each technology can meet your needs

Many of Inova's customers find that a mix of LED wallboards and LCD digital signage works best for them so that all agents can view the data and the system administrator can use a variety of content to communicate metrics and messages. Some centers have found that it works best to display LCDs prominently, as the focal point of the room, and use highly-visible LEDs to reinforce key metrics in the corners of the room. Others have found that visibility issues can be resolved by hanging LCDs from the ceiling. Whatever your needs and goals are, Inova will work with you to make sure your solution accomplishes exactly what you're looking for.

Evaluating your options and using the knowledge of an experienced vendor will help you in your decision and keep you from making the same mistake Tim did!

About Inova Solutions

Inova Solutions is a leading provider of communication solutions that help call centers, schools and universities, transit facilities, hospitals and others communicate vital, real-time information. For more information, visit www.inovasolutions.com/call-center-reporting.