

# DIGITAL BANNERS: WHY 1S AND 0S MAKE DOLLARS AND SENSE



A theatrical set is a combination of engineering, practicality and imagination that, at its best, becomes part of a show's narrative. Some sets become iconic, and forever associated with their production; the rotating barricades of **Les Misérables**, the boat making its way through a sea of candles in **Phantom of the Opera**, the helicopter taking off from the stage in **Miss Saigon**. All of these achievements in staging are the work of a team of talented and creative designers challenged to not only create a spectacle, but make it in the service of story.

As each new technical innovation comes to live theatre, designers eagerly put it to use to create new experiences for their audiences. The recent revolutions in LED screens, high-powered projectors and real-time computer manipulation of high resolution video has opened up a gigantic digital toolbox, with almost limitless possibilities for imagery. Even **Les Misérables** has been given a digital rebirth, with its new production replacing the physical barricades with an equally gasp-drawing virtual set.

## CURTAIN UP

The ubiquity of digital video technology means that your event can benefit from the same attention-grabbing visual techniques that wow Broadway audiences. With the right content, your brand, message and story can fill screens, dance across walls and create long-lasting impressions in your audience's memories. Even better, your content can be transported to new venues, re-used in electronic communication, broadcast on web and re-purposed as a promotional tool after your event is over.



'Digital Banner' is a catch-all term for a combination of techniques, equipment and strategies that all use digitally created graphic content to enhance a live event. These methods were created in art and theatre, honed by audio visual companies and are now harnessed

by communicators who know how to use the power of image and motion to reinforce their message. A Digital Banner can be any combination of static, animated or video content displayed on screens, projected on surfaces or animated across LED lighting fixtures. The options with projection alone are almost limitless; for example, you can project a presentation including animation on a central screen while projecting static branding onto two peripheral screens, all from one projector.

## SET THE SCENE

With so much blank canvas, you need to have a clear creative and technical direction in order to use Digital Banner effectively. To start planning a Digital Banner, first establish what venue or venues you intend to deploy them in. Smaller function room spaces will be well served by projection to a modest central screen, augmented by strategically placed flat-panel displays. Larger theatre-style presentation spaces can support multiple projection screens and projection onto walls. Extremely large ballroom or gala centres are a huge opportunity to stretch your imagination, as they can utilise multiple sized custom screens, curved screens and projection mapped immersive visuals, all on a grand scale.



The development of your content and decisions about its technical implementation needs should be made hand-in-hand. As such, it's imperative that your audio visual provider works as closely as possible with the content creator – the best AV companies now have graphic designers, computer animators and video content creators in-house. This is the ideal model, as the creative team will know the company's technical stock well, and will optimise any visuals to look their best when displayed on their equipment.

## DESIGNING TO MESSAGE

Your aim is to have your Digital Banner reinforce the message of your presenters and create the best possible environment for your audience. Your visuals are a direct representation of your organisation's image, goals and vision. Take your speaker's PowerPoint or Keynote presentations as a starting point and work through them with the content creators. They will be able to pick out themes and select static or animated visuals that support their points, highlight the most important sections and help structure the presentation with visual markers. While an address is being delivered and its accompanying presentation runs on a central screen, secondary screens and displays can work subtly alongside it, running complementary content that ties your brand to the message and picking up on key moments.



While you don't want to shift your audience's focus from speakers during their presentations, introductions, walk-ups and other natural breaks in proceedings allow you to use the whole Digital Banner to entertain the crowd. While a presentation may focus on the central screen while other displays idle, an introduction for a person, award or product can see all visual displays work in unison to immerse the whole venue in a single visual sequence. An image can traverse the room making heads spin, light and fire can rise from every corner or a 360 degree crowd can rise to its feet and applaud. You can make these transitions with tight and precise timings before bringing focus right back to centre.

## READY SET GO

With your content ready to go and the vision clear for the event, you can now focus on delivering the experience to your attendees. During the event, video operators will ensure that all presentations are queued up on a central computer and can be edited at a moment's notice if necessary. All of your creative content will be deployed across projectors and screens via media servers run through powerful video mapping software. With solid technical guidance from the director, lights will go down, animation and video will come up and your first speaker will take to the stage in the centre of the Digital Banner you have created.

As your presenters speak, slow video loops of your logo and slideshows of images pertinent to your theme run unobtrusively on secondary displays, quietly setting the scene in your audience's peripheral vision. At the moment where the major new product or direction is unveiled by the CEO, all displays leap into life in concert with the key image and text of the day. As the details are explained, different points and illustrations make their way to different parts of the room, adjusting and focussing the audience's attention as necessary. As the presentation ends, the room becomes one image, surrounding the crowd in the environment of the idea



## TAKE IT FURTHER

After the applause has died down and the audience has left, your Digital Banner is ready to keep working for you. Follow-up with your attendees via email, framed in the same style and content as the event. Send out a link to video highlights of the event, hosted internally or externally, but again tied back to their experience with use of the same content. You have created a memory that is branded with your visuals in each attendee's mind, and every time you communicate with them using the same images, they will remember what it was like to be there. If your content and message were compelling, their recall will now be even stronger.

If the event is travelling, you can now take your existing content and work with another venue and adapt it as needed. Projections can be scaled up and down according to room size and available surfaces. Images that were split across multiple devices can be amalgamated to one, or vice-versa. Digital Banners are malleable, and coherent content with a clear message will translate well no matter what media is carrying it. Your digital content is now a business asset that cost a fraction of a physically themed event, can be reused infinitely and be scaled to fit in your customer's handheld device or fill an arena. That's a significant return on your investment..

## PACKAGED CREATIVITY

Encore offer Digital Banners as part of their Event Impact packages. In-house content creators work with you with options for either static or animated imagery. Standard display options include projecting from one projector onto multiple screens or from multiple projectors onto ultra wide screens, if your venue can physically accommodate them. In all cases and all combinations, Encore work with you to bring out the heart of your message, and enhance your event with the right combination lighting, sound and decoration to fit with your theme.



While there are standard packages, that doesn't limit your ability to create something truly unique. Encore's creative team and event planners love to extend themselves by creating totally individual events that perfectly encapsulate an organisation's aim. Whether it's bringing out the character of a novel event space, creating a new display concept for a revolutionary product or finding a way to communicate a radical idea with absolute clarity, the Digital team love a challenge. That's the great thing about the digital vision tools of modern AV – it's never been easier to bring the hardest-to-imagine concepts to life, and it's never been more affordable to create a theatrical experience for your audience that's every bit as entertaining as a night on Broadway.

## MORE INFO

Speak to your local Encore representative or get in touch by emailing [info@encore-anzpac.com](mailto:info@encore-anzpac.com) or call **1800 209 099 (AU)** or **+64 9 259 0025 (NZ)**.