

“Do you realize if it weren't for Edison we'd be watching TV by candlelight?”

— Al Boliska

VISUAL TECHNOLOGY

Seeing is Believing

The use of television screens in retail settings isn't really a new concept. The screens themselves, however, have changed significantly and will continue to do so for years to come.

Sports bars were among the leaders in bringing televisions out of living rooms and into restaurant settings. The ease and convenience of watching a major sporting event while someone else does the cooking and serving is a big attraction for their patrons.

How much more inspiring would your store be with a couple of well-placed big-screen televisions, used to show equine-related sporting events or even just images of horses galloping through a field?

The newest visionary technology involves embedding screens in retail floor space. Flasma, a company in the United Kingdom, was the first to design and patent the equipment.

The technology is used primarily as a point-of-purchase marketing tool, but has been adapted to dozens of uses. Installation is fairly straightforward, and the units are vented to meet health and safety requirements. They are waterproof, scratchproof and can support heavy foot traffic patterns.

A Flasma sunk into the floor beneath a riding helmet display in an equine retail

store could, for instance, show images of helmets being fitted and worn by a variety of equestrians.

Clothing-integrated displays are another technology still in development but with great potential. Essentially, employees wear a microthin LCD screen on the front or back of their shirts with images fed through radio signals, such as those used by wireless Internet connections. As employees pass through zones, different images are collected and displayed. Employees in a store's clothing department would have various scenes of individuals wearing what was available in the store, and when that employee moved on to the tack department, the images would change to represent tack items.

Industry analysts watching the French company developing this technology have dubbed it "human teletubbies."

Catch the Vision

- > Plasma television screens attract attention. Retailers can use them to promote products or show video or DVD productions pertaining to equine pursuits.
- > Digital signage, such as scrolling message boards, can be used effectively to attract customers into a store and keep them there longer.
- > Large screen projectors can turn a blank wall or ceiling into an eye-catching customer magnet.
- > Electronic point of sale signage can spark interest in items on your shelves.

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