



SIGN OF LIFE:

HOW TECHNOLOGY WILL DRIVE BUSINESSES IN THE POST-COVID WORLD

MEDIA & TECH SERVICES

PJ SOLOMON



As COVID-19 restrictions lift and businesses are reopening and planning for the future, technology is playing an even greater role in long-term solutions to keep consumers safe.

Currently, businesses, especially retailers and restaurants, have been limiting the number of consumers on premise and setting up additional cleaning stations. Unwritten social norms now need to be codified visibly for consumers. Businesses, particularly retailers and restaurants, will continue to expand the use of digital signage and menu boards to communicate these rules. The changed world will require thoughtful strategies for fully engaging the future consumer in the physical world.

Touchless Screens

The introduction of touchless and voice-activated signage solutions will keep customers informed of policies, as well as provide another advertising vehicle. Signage software and hardware solutions use QR codes and cell phones to minimize the need for social contact between employees and customers. The suite of digital signage packages being developed are allowing reopening businesses to dynamically communicate policies, sanitization standards, and real-time updates with customers.

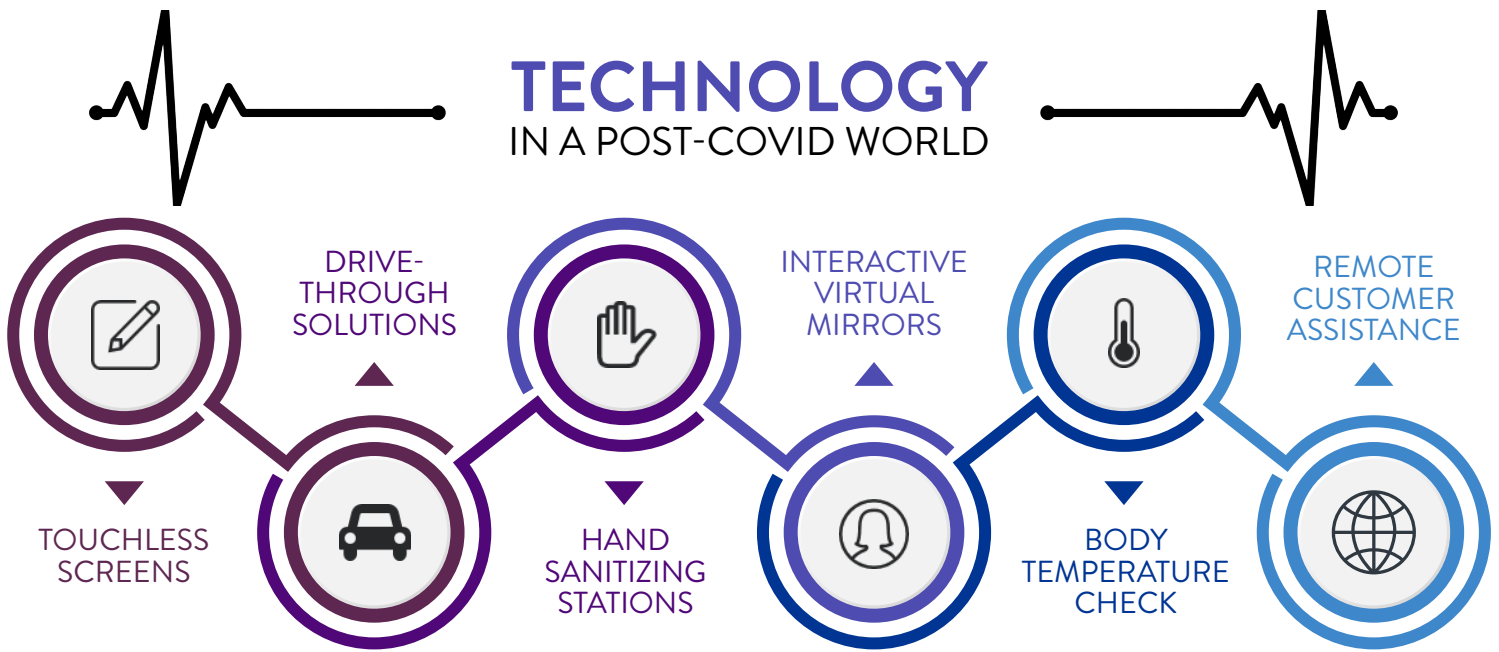
Body Temperature Check

To avoid having high-risk customers entering businesses, temperature checking will become more prevalent and increasingly automated through the use of kiosks at entry points. "Instant-check products" can ensure personnel and patrons experience safe and efficient access control. High-performance hardware and camera software provides instant, accurate results. Hotel check-in desks, office lobbies and existing security gate passages are beginning to leverage this technology. Additionally, temperature checking solutions that use non-touch infrared technology, facial recognition and customized flagging metrics will further help businesses execute safer reopening.

Drive-Through Solutions

Social distancing and stay at home orders have drastically altered revenue streams for fast food and quick service restaurants. They now almost exclusively rely on drive-through, delivery and curbside pickup. According to The Wall Street Journal, drive-through sales at certain QSRs have increased from approximately 70% to roughly 90%, creating increased demand for smart AV solutions. Mood Media, for example, has seen a steady increase in demand for its digital signage solution for restaurants, which has new artificial intelligence integrations, drive-through metrics and real-time update windows. Demand has increased 20% from restaurants in some markets, and Mood Media has expanded into

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smaller restaurants and coffee shops that did not previously have drive-through systems.

Hand Sanitizing Stations

Hand sanitizer stations have become, and will continue to be, integral to the on-premise experience. Installing advanced hand sanitizer stations will help reduce the spread of the infection while also improving hygiene. Digital signage Content Management Systems (CMS) can be used to remotely update displays with important public health messaging or other content, providing further opportunities for business owners to combine traditional digital signage with hygiene enhancement machines. As governments consider mandating hygiene technology measures as conditions for reopening businesses, digital signage solutions will see a boom.

Interactive Virtual Mirrors

The feasibility of the old way of department store shopping - walking around with a store employee, handling several pieces of merchandise - has been drastically altered. Adhering to heightened hygiene standards means the amount of intermittent cleaning and restocking required may render that process extinct. Virtual mirrors are already being used in certain retail stores and we will see wider adoption and further innovation here by retailers. Software can be used to create a customer avatar, providing an interactive virtual try-on experience for the customer.

Remote Customer Assistance

As businesses seek the necessary balance of retaining enough employees and reducing on-premise browsing times, retailers

will begin using mobile technology to connect with customers before they arrive in store. Startups are enabling businesses to send out sale reminders and personalized product suggestions to their customers, as well as offer guidance and consultations from on-premise associates via text and video chat. Key to this new normal, digital signage will offer workable solutions for businesses to reopen and engage their customers in a safe and healthy environment.

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