What to Look for When Planning Lobby Screen Content

Start With the Viewer in Mind

A lobby screen is one of the first things a visitor sees. Whether it sits in a corporate reception, a medical office, or a retail location, that display sets a tone. It can inform, direct, or sell. But too often the screen runs a slide deck that nobody planned, and the result is a blur of logos and dates that the audience ignores. The fix is not a bigger screen or a fancier template. It is a checklist that forces you to think about what the viewer actually needs at that moment.

This article walks through the points to check before you publish anything on a lobby display. The goal is content that earns attention and keeps delivering value day after day. The same logic applies whether you manage one screen or resell digital signage as part of a recurring service. When you get the basics right, the screen becomes a tool instead of a distraction.

Define the Primary Purpose

Every lobby screen needs a clear job. Without one, the content becomes a random mix of announcements, stock photos, and old promotions. Start by asking what the viewer should do after looking at the screen. The answer might be "find the right floor" or "learn about today's special offer." Write that answer down. It becomes the filter for every piece of content you add.

If the purpose is wayfinding, every slide should support navigation. If it is promotion, each frame should push a single call to action. A screen that tries to do both at once usually does neither well. Choose one primary function and let everything else support it.

For agencies reselling digital signage, this step is also a sales tool. When you help a client define the purpose of their lobby display, you show that you understand their business. That builds trust and makes the recurring service harder to cancel.

Check the Physical Environment

The screen does not exist in a vacuum. The room around it affects how people see and use the content. Check these factors before you build a single slide:

- **Distance and size.** How far away will the typical viewer stand? A screen behind a reception desk that is 10 feet away needs larger text than one mounted at eye level in a hallway. A common mistake is to fill the screen with detail that nobody can read from the spot where they actually stand.

- **Lighting.** Bright overhead lights or direct sun on the screen wash out colors and make text vanish. If the room is bright, use high-contrast color schemes and avoid thin fonts. Test the screen at the brightest time of day.
- **Viewing angle.** A screen mounted high on a wall forces viewers to look up. That changes how long they are willing to read. Keep key information - like the call to action or the main message - in the upper or middle part of the screen so it stays visible even from an angle.

These physical checks are easy to overlook when you are focused on design. But they matter more than the font choice or the color palette. A screen that is hard to see is a wasted investment.

Build a Content Calendar, Not a Slide Deck

Many lobby screens suffer from stale content. The same slide runs for months because nobody remembers to update it. A content calendar solves that. It assigns a lifespan to each piece of content and schedules replacements in advance.

A good calendar includes three layers:

- **Evergreen content** that never goes out of date, such as brand values or a welcome message.
- **Rotating promotions** that change weekly or monthly, depending on the business cycle.
- **Urgent messages** that override everything else, such as a schedule change or a safety notice.

A calendar also helps you track what worked. If a promotion slide got no response, you can replace it with something else and measure again. Over time, you build a library of effective content for customer facing displays that you can reuse across different clients or locations.

Keep Each Slide Focused

A single screen frame should communicate one idea. If the viewer has to read three sentences to understand the message, the design is too busy. Aim for a headline that fits in six words or fewer, a supporting line if needed, and a clear visual. The visual should reinforce the message, not decorate the slide.

For example, a slide announcing a lunch special does not need a photo of the entire menu. It needs one appealing image of the special and a short line that tells the viewer where to go. The

same principle applies to wayfinding slides: show the floor number and the department name, not a map of the whole building.

When you limit each slide to one message, the screen becomes easier to scan. Viewers who are walking past have a chance to catch the information they need. That is the difference between a screen that informs and one that just blinks.

Test the Timing and Transitions

How long each slide stays on screen matters as much as the design. A common default is 10 seconds per slide. That works when the content is simple and the viewer is standing still. But in a lobby, viewers are often moving, and they may only glance at the screen for a second or two.

Test your timing by standing at the farthest point in the room and reading a slide aloud. If you cannot finish before the next slide appears, the timing is too fast. If you finish and wait, it is too slow. Adjust the duration so the average viewer can absorb the message without rushing.

Transitions matter too. A slow fade or a spinning effect looks dated and wastes time. Use a simple cut or a fast fade that does not distract from the content. The screen should feel responsive, not flashy.

Remember that the same rules apply when you plan content for customer facing displays in a retail location. A customer deciding whether to enter a store has even less patience than a visitor in a lobby. Keep the timing tight and the message direct.

Include a Clear Call to Action

Every screen should tell the viewer what to do next. Even a welcome screen can include a soft call to action, such as "Ask our receptionist for today's special." A promotion screen without a call to action is just decoration.

The call to action should be visible without effort. Place it in the lower third of the screen, where the eye naturally lands after scanning the headline. Use a button shape or a contrasting color to make it stand out. But keep the design simple; a busy background will bury the call to action.

For a lobby screen, the call to action often points to a physical action: walk to the elevator, pick up a brochure, speak to a staff member. Make sure the action is easy and the location is obvious. If the call to action says "Visit our second-floor showroom," the screen should also show how to get there.

Review and Refresh on a Schedule

A lobby screen that never changes stops being useful. Viewers who see the same slide every day stop seeing it at all. Set a recurring review date, such as the first Monday of each month, to update the content. During the review, check each slide against the original purpose. Does it still serve the viewer? Is the information accurate? Does the design still look fresh?

For agencies offering managed digital signage, this review cycle is a natural point to contact the client. You can offer to refresh the content as part of the service, which creates recurring revenue and keeps the client engaged. The client sees value, and you get predictable income.

Treat the screen as a living channel, not a one-time project. The small effort of a monthly review pays off in audience attention and client satisfaction.

Put It All Together

Planning content for a lobby screen does not require a big budget or a design team. It requires a methodical approach. Define the purpose, check the physical setting, build a calendar, keep slides simple, test timing, include a call to action, and review regularly. Each item on this checklist removes a common reason why lobby screens fail.

When you get these details right, the screen becomes a reliable point of contact with the audience. It guides, informs, and prompts action without needing a person to stand there and explain. That is the real value of a well-planned lobby display, and it is the reason businesses invest in digital signage in the first place.