

FOYER

Interactive

Over the past couple of decades, the cinema foyer, or lobby – its form and function – has certainly seen some change, but how does its future augur today, and, equally important, how could it begin to look in your theatres? Well, all good buzzwords, aside, cinema lobbies are already becoming more ‘digitally-interactive’, while offering unsurpassed selling opportunities. At CineEurope, recently, a collaboration between **YCD Multimedia, Littlebit Technology, NEC (Europe), Intel** and **Coca-Cola**, unveiled a taste of tomorrow’s newly-interactive lobby. *Screentrade* was there to investigate. Savvy exhibitors take note.

Our cinema lobbies are changing – and fast. From being once-fairly pedestrian, even relatively austere, spaces for patrons to meet with friends, queue to buy tickets and choose from limited concessions-ranges, but barely as areas for movie-goers to ‘hang out’, they’re now becoming entertainment destinations in their own right. Today, the offer typically comes with a luxury lounge and executive bar facility (and/or cafeteria or in-theatre dining); it’s a place to gorge on upscale concessions; will be wi-fi-connected, along with other casual, movie-based, entertainment for customers waiting in line. Today, then, the cinema lobby is seen as a place to *encourage* dwell-time, because, for the exhibitor, greater dwell-time means a potentially greater spend-per-head. And to keep their attention, interest, and thus their very presence in the lobby, the customer must become engaged. By means of the latest interactive technology, and with well-defined lobby-space demarcations, cinema operators can take advantage of further revenue-generation opportunities, premium selling, self-serve ordering (including loyalty programme membership), ad-space rental, and upselling in general.

Having witnessed the new technologies, first-hand, we believe that, as a natural extension of Cinema’s post-digital-turned-IT evolution, we’re probably seeing the cinema lobby-of-the-future, as an immersive environment – in utilising revenue-generating digitally-interactive touch-screen posters and signage to engage movie-goers as soon as they *enter* – unfold before us. And, here, a collaborative partnership between YCD Multimedia (YCD), Littlebit, NEC, Intel and Coca-Cola, illustrates just what was recently demonstrated



PHOTOGRAPHY: Courtesy of YCD Multimedia

at CineEurope. YCD's C-nario Digital Signage Suite, this year, showcased new themes for the lounge, underscoring, for example, the added value of digital signage, and not just to the overall movie-going experience, but also to the all-important revenue-enhancement by virtue of the 'tools' available for use within each area.

In fact, in our opinion, the new lobby configurations represent the inevitable result of digitally-inspired progress – on the one hand, simply because the technical possibilities exist; but, on the other, because the customer-self-service and exhibitor-revenue-generation opportunities that go hand-in-hand with tomorrow's vision of lobby development, together with the perennially-short pre-movie concessions window, remain perhaps too significant to ignore. For those who couldn't attend CineEurope, recently, or else missed the lobby demos, what follows represents a cursory trip through the new-style of interactive theatre lobby coming soon to a theatre near you.



WELCOME ABOARD – Motion-sensitive vertical panels at the cinema entrance (shown here in white and orange) entice with a display of moving Coke bottles and bubbles, priming customers for potential purchase

THEATRE ENTRANCE

The start of the cinema experience is of course the entrance, and the 'entrance archway' in the CineEurope demo lobby, represents the cinema entrance, and thus the first potentially interactive customer point-of-contact. On arrival, customers – by dint of their approaching mounted vertical panels – can make the illuminated panel's Coke bottles and soda bubbles 'sway and dance', which is then followed by onscreen directions once a customer stands in front of the display. The patron's camera-monitored movement cleverly translates their approach into dancing imagery and illustrates how digital signage can be used to create a fun, interactive experience to engage customers, one that perhaps primes them to purchase. The effect could also work particularly well for cinemas in higher-traffic areas – like in shopping malls, for instance – encouraging passers-by stop, take notice and make a purchase (see inset picture, above).

**LOBBY INTERIOR
DIGITAL POSTERS, BOX OFFICE,
CONCESSIONS AREAS & LOUNGE**

As an increasingly modern alternative to printed movie posters and one-sheets, today's interactive digital versions offer cinema operators more options to target films toward specific audiences, as well as according to the time of day – the recently well-documented 'day-parting' phenomenon. Replacing static promotional images with animated film posters draws attention because of the

sudden fluidity of movement which, in turn, becomes a point of attraction. These can also be used to promote additional messaging, such as advertising loyalty and other frequent movie-goer memberships, or even special combo-promotions to encourage audiences to save on admissions and concessions. The same panels can also be used as advertising displays – either for cross-promotional advertising e.g. for contradeals with local restaurants or other businesses in the same mall or street, and/or to run revenue-splits so that their use as an advertising vehicle

becomes more quantifiable; or even as a direct source of ad-revenue whether done directly or via third-party agencies. Meanwhile, box office screens and signage, in addition to displaying the usual movie showtime information, can also feature other content, such as displaying the number of seats remaining for a particular showing; or perhaps even as a second-by-second countdown to that showing, thus allowing customers to choose to go to a later show, while, in the meantime (and if adults),

ADULTS ONLY – Relaxing, ambient and classy – the lobby's adult-segregated area, equipped with elegant white seating, offers excellent opportunities for premium selling

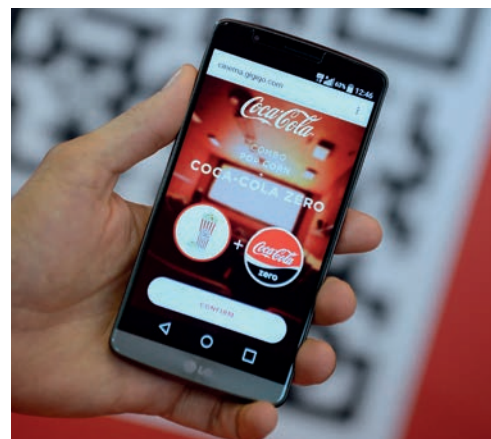
heading, perhaps, for the lobby's bar area before the film-start. The box office screens are also capable of showing teaser-content and pre-sales info of upcoming screenings and other special ticket-and-combo deals being offered for selected film-times.

Unsurprisingly, among the bigger areas of focus is the Concessions area because, outside of admissions, it continues, by far and away, to be the largest revenue-source for cinemas. With this in mind, the Coke Lounge concession area is designed to be a fully-immersive

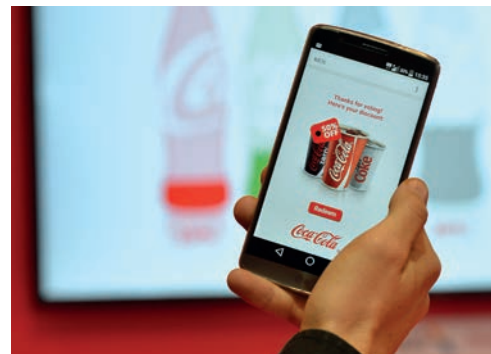
experience for customers, combining powerful visuals, also sound and interactive elements to the concessions-ordering transaction, and seems to be where these elements come into their own. The first such consideration is customer self-service.

SELF-SERVICE ORDERING

The first element introduced here is a 'mobile pay-and-order' system whereby, upon scanning a QR code, (see image-cluster, below), movie-goers could select from, and pay for, the various combo options and thus eliminating the need even to queue – and while not advocating a replacement for casual, if still very important, social interaction, we agree this to be a



SELF-SCANNING – Self-service ordering offers customers the same, if not more, upselling options, while also a way to avoid queueing during periods of heavy footfall



particularly useful alternative during heavy lobby footfall when perhaps, potentially, movie-goers could miss their film-start due to long queues,

or perhaps just want to save time. How does it all work? Customers order by scanning a QR code and then, in fast-food restaurant-style, wait in a designated 'pick up' area of the counter to collect their orders when ready. Significant, too, with this particular route, is that there are several built-in prompts for upselling options to purchase combos. However, for those choosing to order via the conventional concession counter, they may do so from the digital menu board options while, this time, being surrounded by 'suggestive audio and visuals offerings'. So, how does *this* work? Here, customers watch in high-definition, as well as hear, the opening of a Coke bottle,



SERVICE WITH A SMILE – Alongside the digital self-service ordering options, customers can still order concessions via the traditional route



WAYFINDER'S PARADISE – Good signage and wayfinding at the stand remain the hallmarks of a usefully interactive lobby

ABOUT THE YCD PARTNERSHIP

YCD Multimedia



YCD MULTIMEDIA IS a leading global provider of advanced digital signage software solutions, serving the retail, telecom, banking, gaming, plus entertainment, hospitality, educational, transportation and corporate markets. Founded in 1999 and having acquired C-nario (a leading digital signage company), in 2011, YCD provides businesses and organisations with a fully-scalable platform to attract and engage customers, while communicating their brand. YCD's software offers unmatched capabilities in driving digital signage networks including high-impact video and mosaic walls in a native, pixel-perfect resolution. To date, the company has partnered with industry leading customers, including Fortune 500 corporations, and some of the world's most recognised brands. YCD operates worldwide, with offices in the U.S., UK and Israel, as well as enjoying an international network of partners to serve clients around the globe.

www.ycdmultimedia.com

Littlebit Technology AG



LITTLEBIT TECHNOLOGY AG, an independent Swiss-based company, is a leading wholesaler of PC components and peripherals from numerous big-name manufacturers. Headquartered in Hünenberg, and with subsidiaries in Altenstadt (Germany) and Vienna (Austria), the wholesaler has operations throughout the German-speaking territories. The company produces its own range of computers under the axxiv brand; and, based on the axxiv systems, Littlebit Technology also develops customised solutions for diverse vertical fields of application.

www.littlebit.ch

Intel

INTEL – Consumers love the personalised interactions that progressive retailers provide today, while, at the same time, businesses looking to know their customers better are turning to their data. Use Intel-based solutions to put your best brand forward and bring shoppers' customised experiences and data-protection across all channels. From enhancing store-traffic also conversion, to optimising brands across channels, Intel helps businesses delight their customers with responsive store technologies while making their data both actionable and secure.



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NEC



NEC DISPLAY SOLUTIONS offers the most comprehensive and solution-oriented portfolio available today. From the classroom to the boardroom, and from the airport to the cinema, NEC has a full-range of desktop, large-screen LCD displays and projector solutions for any imaginable display need. Superb quality and reliability are inherent within the brand; added to this, a solution precisely-tailored to the users' requirements and backed by a robust warranty and support service, NEC offers trustworthy performance which big brands can rely upon.

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Coca-Cola



COCA-COLA, among the world's leading marketing companies, continually thrives to support channel and sales outlets with great marketing concepts and visionary ideas. For CineEurope 2014, an industry benchmark had been established by showcasing cutting-edge technology underlined with a solid business case. The amazing digital signage installation at Cinema City, in Tel Aviv, became the template, going forward, and catalyst for teaming-up with its creators at YCD Multimedia. Together with the company's European partners, Coca-Cola created not only the impressive showcases at CineEurope's 2014 and 2015, but also entered into a joint-initiative – www.cinesuccess.com – as a first-point-of-call for cinema operators looking to implement digital signage in their theatres.

www.coca-cola.com



TEEN SCHEME –
Brightly-decorated with gaming and social media options, industrial-looking furniture helps to signify the theatre lobby's teen zone

VIDEOTECH –
(see panel, right)
Video walls in designated lobby areas improve brand visibility and awareness while helping to skilfully delineate the teen and adult areas

see the accompanying 'clink-clink' of ice-cubes dropping into the glass, along with the effervescent fizz as the drink is poured, and thus adding new and life-like dimensions to the concessions-ordering experience. The visuals may also convey real-life depictions of freshly-popped popcorn as a further immersive enticement.

This powerful, also subliminal, sensory technique – the same, equally perhaps, acting as a deterrent against the deleterious customer practice of 'concessions smuggling-&-sharing' (whereby patrons either bring in their own refreshments or purchase fewer with the intention to share the same and thus to save money that could have been spent in the cinema)* – is further reinforced by POS screens which tempt with additional discounted items to be added and thus making for an especially well-crafted environment for helping to increase upselling opportunities. Additionally, a long ribbon of overhead displays in the Coke Lounge can be used to run upcoming movie-trailers, along with useful directional wayfinding to showings at specific auditoria, as shown on p59. Good to see at first hand is how the various elements all work in synch and in non-competitive fashion, such that the lobby offers a tight and cohesive arrangement. The other piece of good news is that of how the digital solution, which remains fully-scalable (see panel, right), can be readily adapted to suit any foyer configuration.

DISCRETE LOUNGE AREAS

Finally, the use of video walls in the two distinct areas of the lounge – the 'adult' and the 'teen' areas, respectively – makes it possible to create impressive-looking delineated



Lobby Interactivity Packages & Why YCD?

DEPENDING UPON REQUIREMENTS and the extent of lobby solution being considered – be it a part- or fully-interactive package – can run from a few thousands of dollars to over \$2m for particularly high-end fit outs. Indeed, the infrastructure costs, also those of the software, displays, and PCs, remain one part of the cost and system design and integration; while, content, typically the most expensive element, comprises another part of the total purchase. As an illustration only, digitising your lobby may start with elements starting in the \$15,000 - \$20,000 range.

Usefully, mom-&-pop operations, in particular, and/or perhaps others on limited budgets, may purchase lobby solutions *à la carte*-style, for example, installing digital menu-boards and perhaps movie posters or box office showtimes on a single-screen as a starting point, before adding to their newfound digitally-interactive suite when both time and cashflow become more favourable.


Setting YCD apart is the full-scalability of its software platform, so that whether just a single lobby location, or perhaps several hundred are to be interactively-digitised, then this can be readily done, and contrasts with modular-based software which requires extra costs and procedures in order to step-up. YCD's ability to handle both large and complex content 'out-of-the-box' – that is, with everything needed – contrasts also with some competitor systems that may require cinema end-users to dumb-down content so as to suit the limitations of the software's handling ability.

areas while using the opportunity to promote visible brand awareness. This is achieved by creating atmosphere and ambience, as well as via the incorporation of interactive and social applications. In the Coke Lounge, this happens during an entire 'take-over' moment – think 'interruptive marketing' for the same effect – during which all of the audio-visuals for the branding (e.g. of the drink being poured and drank) all reassemble during the same moment and with the effect repeated periodically – see below.

The concept for the adult lounge area has been created specifically to cater to older audiences by assuming a luxury experience with a thoughtful ambience in which cinema owners may construct their own social gathering-point for adults before and after the movie. In the process, a new area of revenue can be generated by offering cocktails wrapped in a targeted content environment with others that might appeal to a more mature clientele – see image below, also on pp56-57.



LARGER-THAN-LIFE –
Experience the cola being poured before your very eyes, thanks to the truly-immersive imagery and sound in creating ambience

By contrast, in the teen area, the approach seems to be to try to engage with the more lively and playfully-interactive applications to which free and/or discounted food-and-beverage items or special promotions may be secured for future visits – an approach which, it is felt, might also help engender customer loyalty (see main image, p60). The area incorporates games and social media content so that teens can share their movie-going experiences while encouraging others to attend the cinema, by viral means. We observed content to be tailored toward a teen audience through, for example, the showing of current music video clips and pop culture attractions, like the recent *Just Dance Now* game, which was showing at the time. 

www.cinesuccess.com

*See *Screentrade*, Winter 2013 issue, pp54-60.