

Commercial vs. Consumer Screens

Many organizations investigating an investment in digital signage ask why they should invest in “high” priced commercial flat panel screens, when they can go to their local Future Shop, Best Buy or other big box store, and get “the same thing” for much less than the cost of a commercial grade display.

The question is an understandable one. After all, the quality of image on consumer grade LCD TV’s is quite amazing, and the price point has dropped considerably over the past few years.

Let’s take a closer look at what the real differences are and how they could affect a digital signage project.

The key differentiating factors that should influence the purchase decision are as follows:

Feature	Commercial LCD Flat Panel	Consumer LCD TV
Manufacturer Warranty	Most come with a 3 year parts & labour depot warranty	Most come with a 1 year parts & labour depot warranty NOTE: most manufacturers warranties revert to 90 days if Consumer TV used in a commercial environment
Manufacturer Warranty Upgrades	Most offer optional 3 or 5 year on-site replacement warranty	None (Retailer may offer extended depot warranties)
Operating Hours	Designed to withstand high heat, dust and grease environment running up to 24 hours per day	Designed for maximum 8-10 hours of use per day, in residential environments
Screen Protection	Protective glass over LCD screen to prevent potential damage	None
Ambient Light Sensors	Most come with integrated ambient light sensors - adjusts screen backlight to lighting conditions	Few have this technology
Public Display Security Features	Most have controls hidden, with ability to lock out to prevent tampering	All controls available from front of TV
Display Orientation	Most can be run in portrait (tall) or landscape (wide) mode	Consumer TVs only run in landscape (wide) mode
LAN / RS232 Control	Yes	No
TV Tuner	No	Yes
Media Player Compatibility	Designed specifically for AV and PC standards compatibility	Designed for TV and video compatibility (cable box, DVD, BluRay, game consoles etc.) with limited PC compatibility
Image Burn-in / Retention	Most feature advanced anti burn-in & image retention features	Standard features

The above factors contribute to the value equation of implementing commercial LCD displays in a retail environment. What is the real cost of a failed consumer TV in a retail environment?

Although there will be capital cost saving up front with consumer grade LCD TVs, the potential for lost revenues, early screen replacements, no warranty repair coverage, as well as additional installation costs for replacement screens, commercial LCD displays represent a far better value. Utilizing commercial grade panels does not guaranty that they won’t fail, although the chances of a failure are much less likely.

Bottom line, for a slightly higher price, you’ll have a reliable digital signage solution and peace of mind.

For more information on Digital Signage, please visit us at www.getsignage.com

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