ScreenCloud

The Guide to Getting Started with ScreenCloud Digital Signage

Learn how to use ScreenCloud to create effective digital signage screens

Intro

Here are a few common scenarios that lead to an organization thinking carefully about its digital screens:

Your workplace is being transformed and you've been asked to organize content for the screens that are hung in public areas.

In your school, or place of worship, you want to improve community and communicate directly with students, parents or members, with timely notices.

You want to improve your customer experience, by sharing rich digital menu boards that update with new pricing, and which items are available.

Your HQ wants to be able to communicate better with the employees who spend time in a crew room regularly, but who might not necessarily check their email or intranet.

In all of these scenarios you're tasked with getting content onto the screen, a little something we like to call digital signage.

With ScreenCloud, getting your content up onto your screen is made easy. Controlling one screen, or 100 screens, from anywhere, becomes simple. Less of a job for IT, and more accessible to everyone. Giving everyone within the organization a voice.

In this guide, we'll give you the keys to a digital signage rollout using ScreenCloud that will help you to fulfil your digital signage goals.
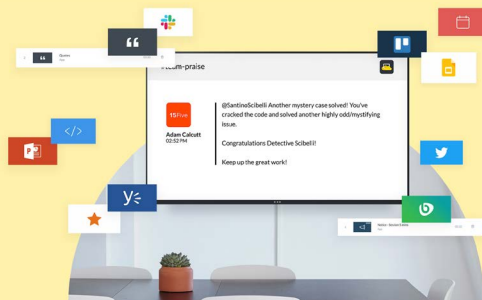
Contents

What is digital signage?

" Digital signage relates to content being shown on digital TV screens, often updated in real time and used for marketing, advertising or internal communication purposes. Digital signage was used historically for advertising in public spaces, but now it is used for sharing information in schools, restaurants and offices. For example as a student digital bulletin board or a digital menu board. Digital signage is the new 'third screen' that creates shared information experiences.
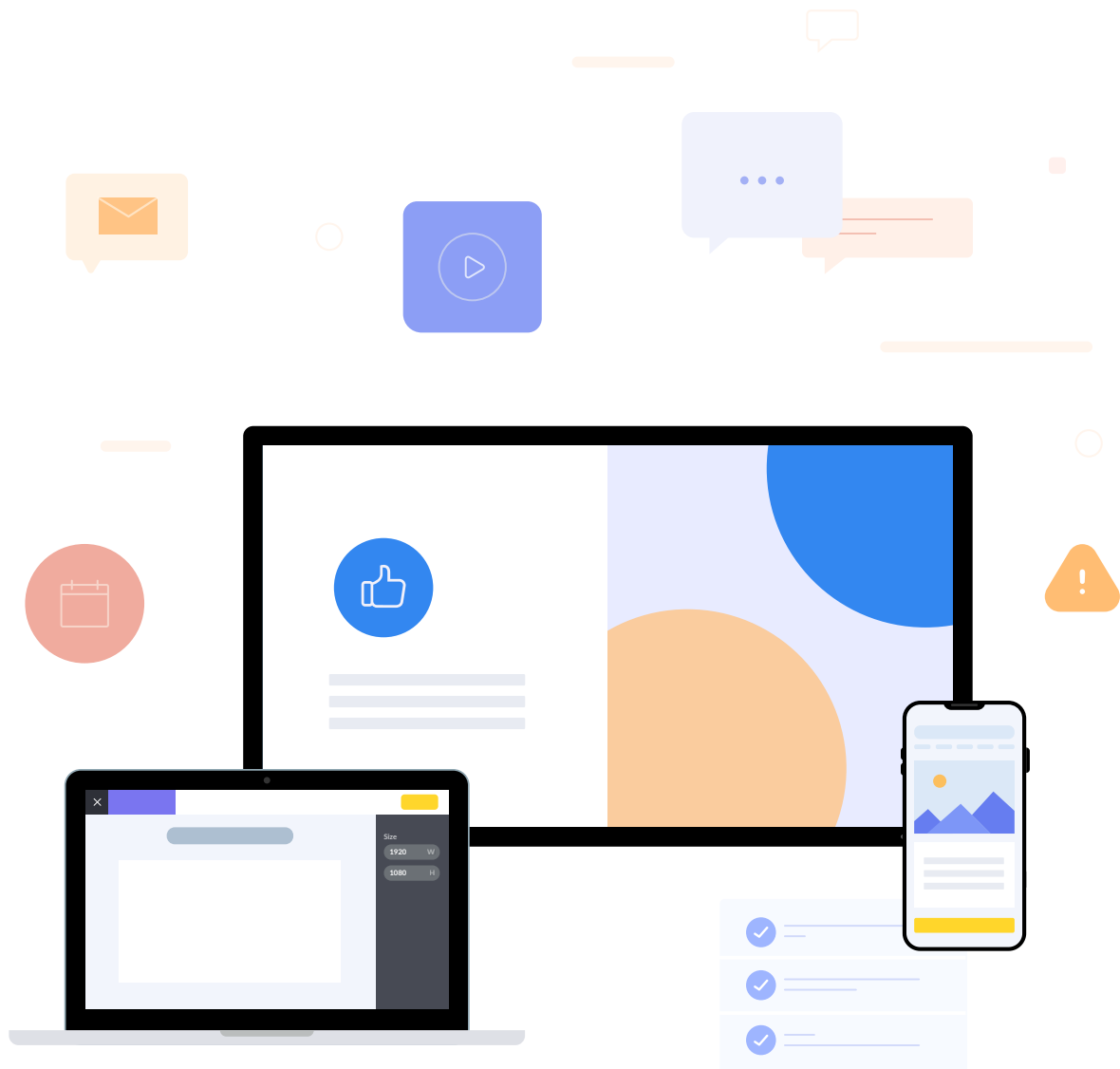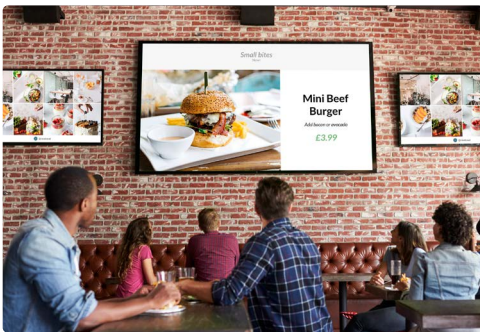
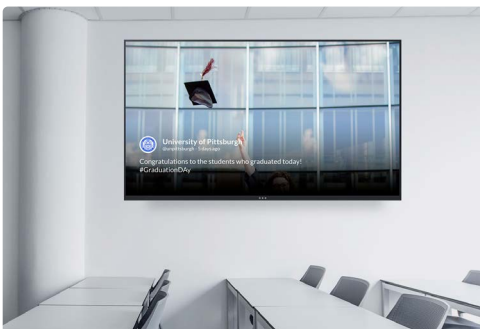# Why digital signage is relevant today

Internal communications

- Unlock data
- Remind and reiterate key notices
- Impress visitors

Public spaces

- Promote products
- Scale promotions or updates
- Increase brand presence

Communities

- Provide real time notices and information
- Involve students or members in content creation
- Share events and activities

Why digital signage is relevant today

Second-screen viewing

Digital signage taps into the "second screen" viewing trend that consumers started. Whether walking down the street, shopping in a store or even working in a coffee shop, we are used to viewing multiple screens simultaneously, to search out what's important.

Surfacing data

We are in a deluge of more notifications than ever. Digital signage is a shared medium, where just the most important notices, content or product information can be surfaced in a way that makes it highly visible.

Connected spaces

Our homes, offices and even our cars are becoming transformed with digital experiences. We expect our systems to talk and connect with each other, to provide us with the richest digital experience possible at all times. Digital screens help connect the systems and information around us.

Setting up your digital signage

Now that you know why digital signage is so popular and effective, in today's world, let's look at what you actually need to set it up.

If the words "hardware" and "software" have you reaching for the nearest IT person, we have good news for you. The hardware and software we'll discuss in this chapter are tools that you're likely already familiar with.

For example, if you have access to a TV and have a laptop or desktop computer to hand, then you're already 70% of the way there.

Our mission at ScreenCloud is to make it as easy as possible for you to hook your screens up to amazing content. This means creating hardware and software solutions that don't include any of the following:

Reams of cables
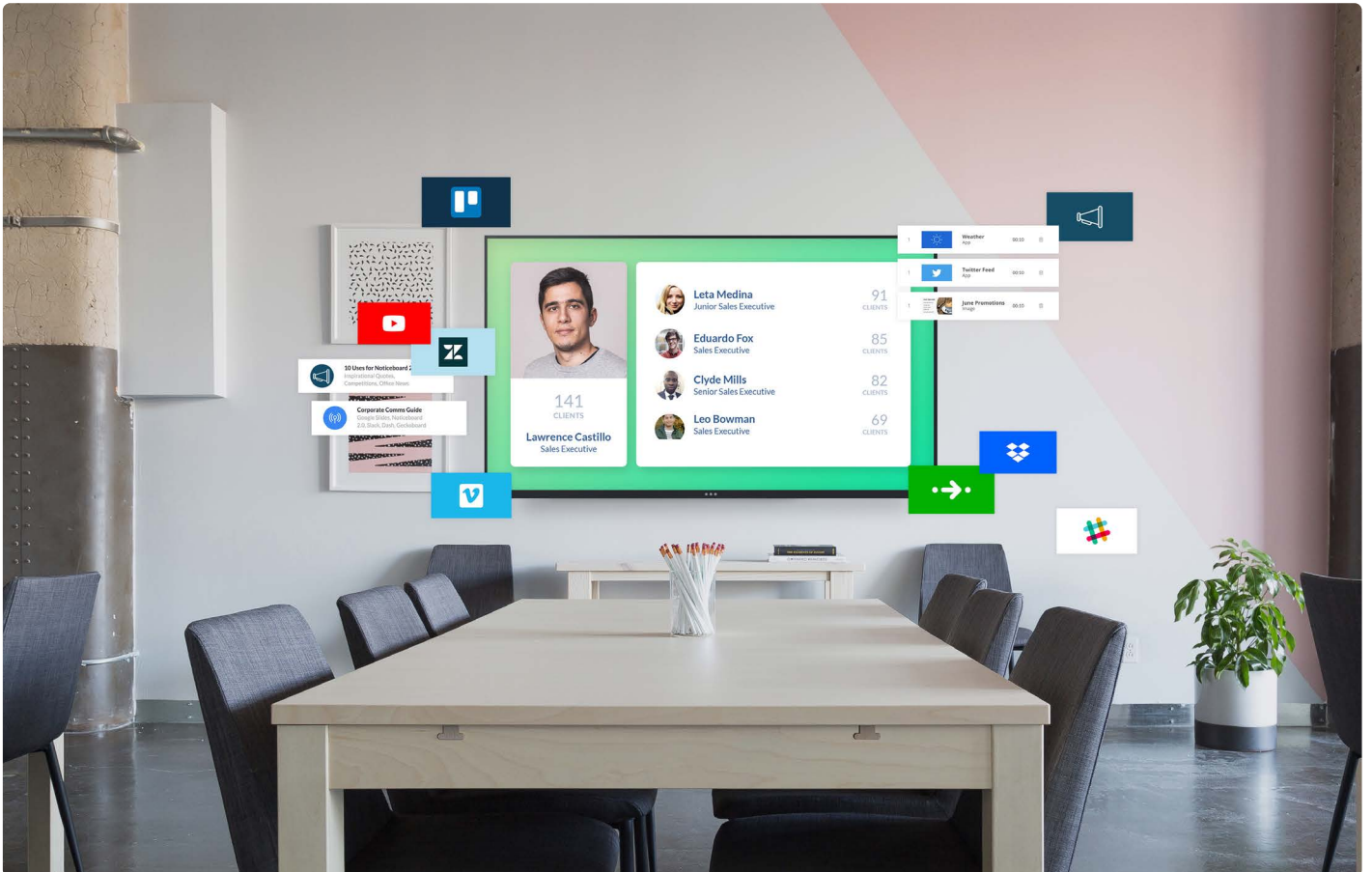
USB sticks

DVD players

Expensive media players

Hardware that needs to be physically removed to be updated

To use ScreenCloud you'll need three things:

1 A smart Android TV or a regular TV paired with a media player. If you need help choosing a media player or screen here are some resources that may help:

> The Buyer's Guide to Digital Signage Hardware
> Our Hardware Selector Tool

2 A laptop or PC where you can upload content

3 The content (images, video, powerpoints etc.) that you want to share, or one of our apps from the ScreenCloud App Store such as a Twitter or Instagram gallery instance.

Once you have your hardware in place (and remember, you can test this out on any screen you already have - even your one at home!), here are the two steps to get ScreenCloud set up.

1. Download the ScreenCloud app

Where you download from will depend which hardware you are using but here are some of the app stores where you can find the ScreenCloud app hanging out:

Google Play
(from your Android TV or tablet)

iOS app
(for iPads, Macbooks and iPhones)

Amazon App Store
(if you're using the Amazon Fire Stick or another Amazon product)

Chrome store
(from desktop or the Chromebit)

2. Pair up your screens

Once you've downloaded your ScreenCloud app, you'll see a pairing code appear on screen that looks like this:
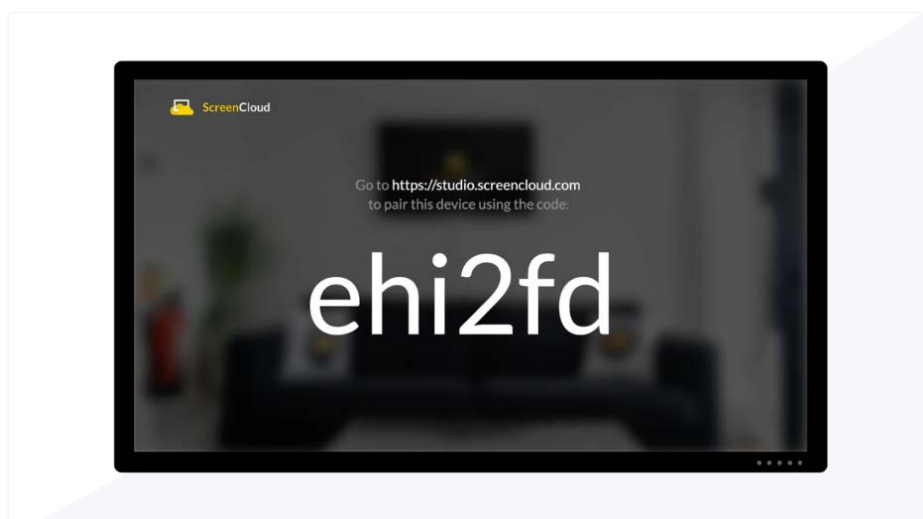
02

Now, on your laptop or PC open screencloud.com/freetrial and set up an account (or log into your existing account). Once logged in, you can navigate to **"Screens"** and choose **"Add Screen"**.
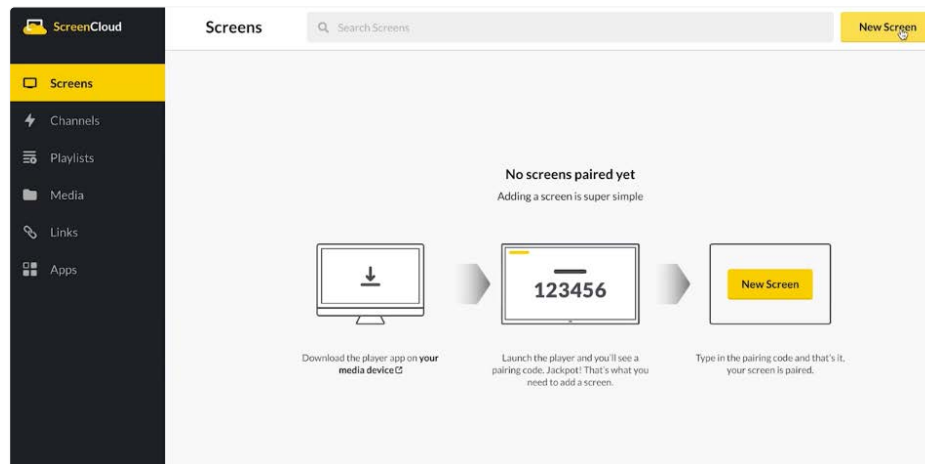
Here's where you enter the pairing code, which links your screen to your ScreenCloud account.

Now you can control your screen from anywhere and add new content, cast to a screen, create a schedule or change what's being shown at any time.
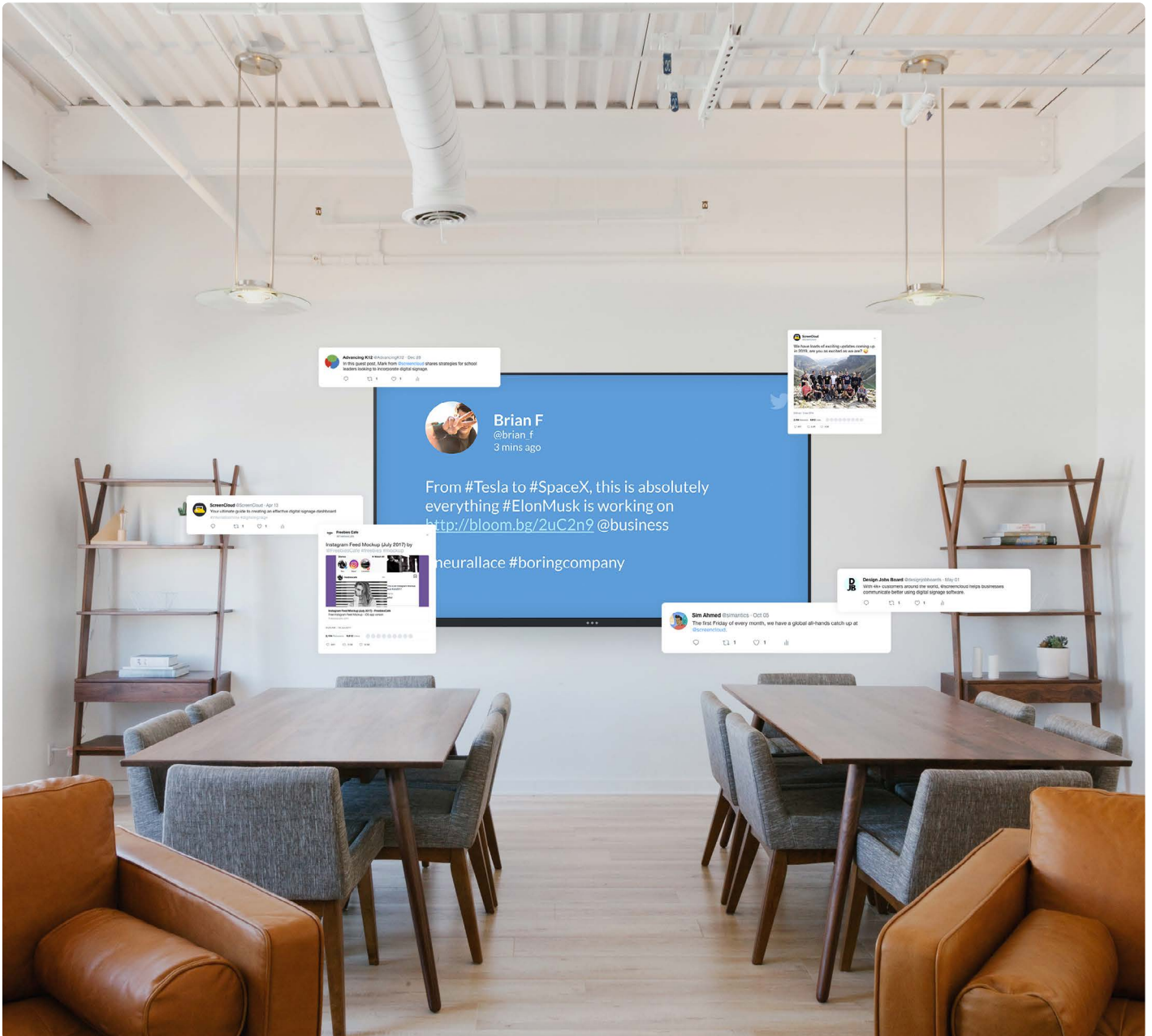
At this point you may also want to navigate to **Settings > Users** and invite any colleagues want to share the management of your screens. ScreenCloud does not charge for adding extra users to your account.
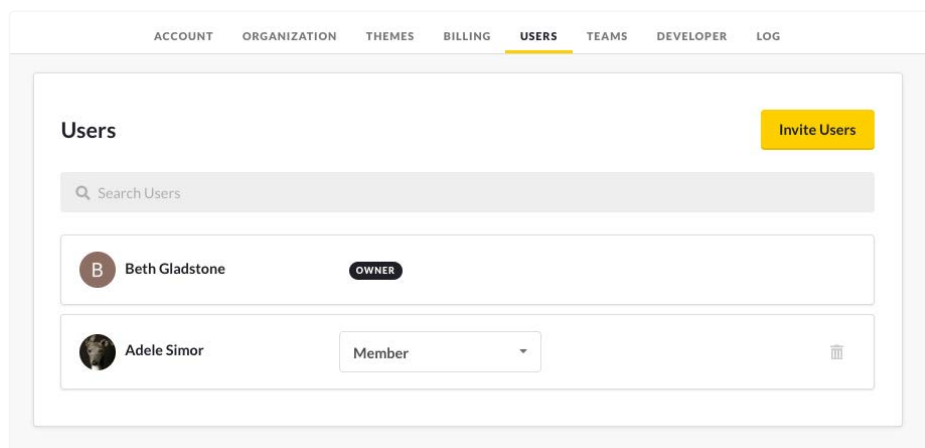
Using ScreenCloud's features

ScreenCloud has been designed to give you more control of your screens, and to be universally easy to use. Here are some of the features that you might like to explore in your digital signage journey.

03

Screens

This lets you add, group and name your different TV screens, so that it's easy to determine which screens are based where.

Key uses:

- Add tags to segment screens based on where they are, who uses them or by what content they show

- Search by group, name, location or tag and make bulk changes to screens, like casting to multiple screens at once

- Cast to a screen or take it over, before returning to the regularly scheduled content

Channels

Channels let you determine what plays on one, or multiple, screens at any one time. A bit like a TV Channel for content.

Key uses:

- Organize your content into a Channel and schedule when each piece of content plays

- Schedule content in advance on a micro-level, like seasonal campaigns or a birthday message

- Custom-brand the entire Channel using your own brand theme

- Use smart preview to see exactly what's playing on your screen at any one time

Media

Did you know you can upload unlimited media files to ScreenCloud? These makes adding your own presentations, images or video really simple.

Key uses:

- Tag media files

- Set an expiry date for media

- Organize content within nested folders

Playlists

Playlists give you more control over what displays on your screen and lets you join voices together within your organization.

Key uses:

- Drag and drop new content easily
- Nest playlists within Channels, allowing local branches to mix content from HQ with localized content

Apps

The ScreenCloud App Store offers 80+ integrations that allow you to add and integrate content to your screens from where it already lives, like social media channels, Gsuite or Dropbox.
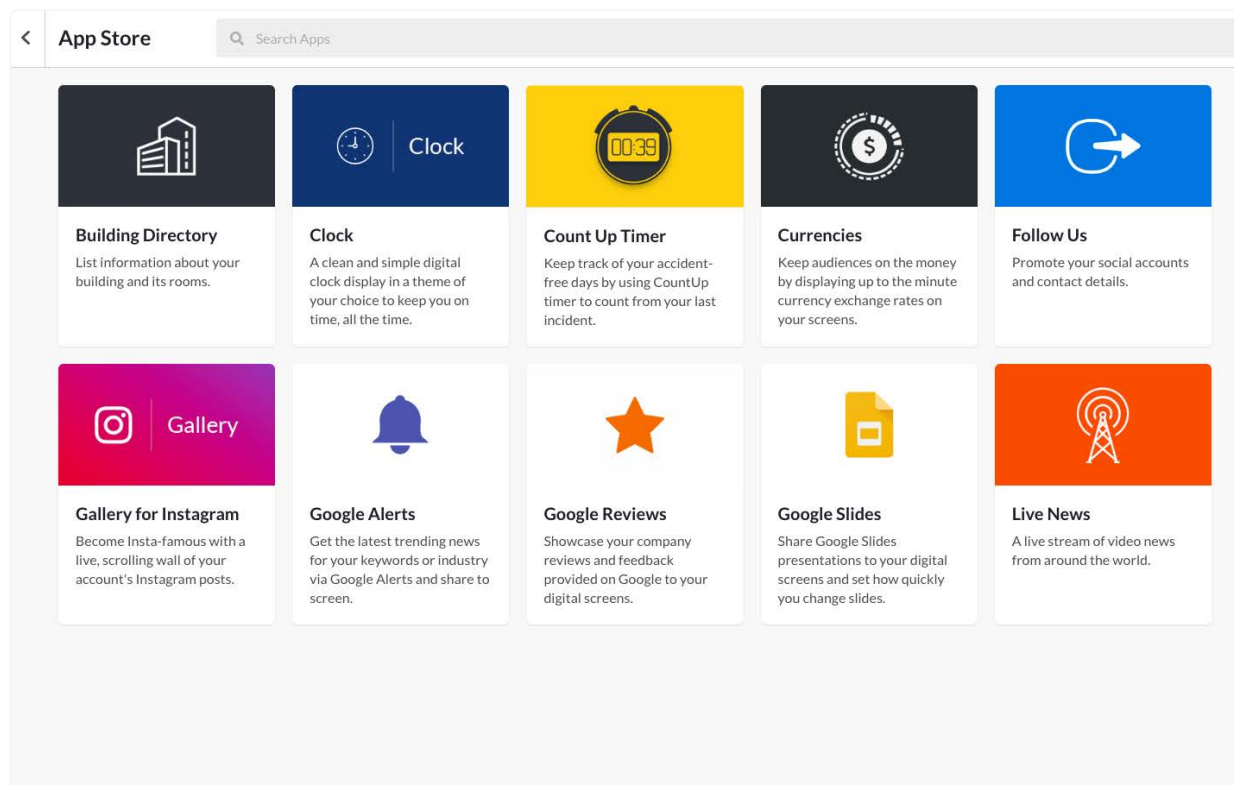
> ## *Key uses:*
>
> - Add content from tools you already use like Slack, Dropbox and Twitter to your digital screens
>
> - Integrate with automated content, so your dashboards, metrics or social media content always shows the latest information

Mobile management

ScreenCloud has a mobile site that lets you access, check and manage your screens from anywhere, and without having to download a separate app.
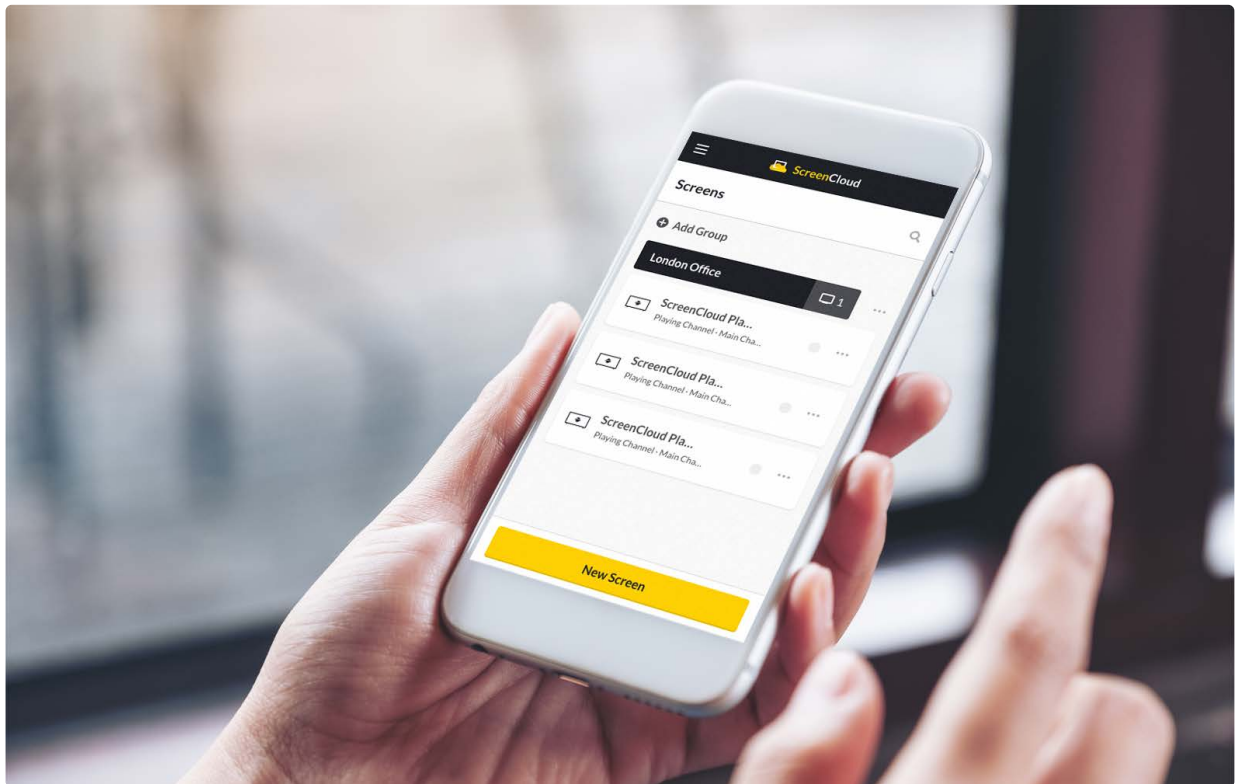
Key uses:

- Manage screens and change content from on the go

- Check screen updates easily

- Cast content from your phone to the screen in front of you

Users & teams

In ScreenCloud there are three levels of user (and more coming soon) which allow you to keep control over who is able to add and edit content. This helps to ensure your organization remains secure. We also support auth0 to connect with major enterprise SSO providers.

Key uses:

- Keep granular control of who is able to access your screens

- View an audit trail log of the actions taken within your account by different users

- Easily select user permissions when a new user is added

Content creation and management

Now that you have your hardware and software nailed, it's time to consider how you'll create and add amazing digital signage content to your screens.

It's much easier than you think and it's truly essential to making digital signage work harder for your business. Because regardless of the huge screen, the great (ahem) digital signage software and its positioning in your store, restaurant or office, it's the content that will be remembered.

To help you get started, here are three pillars of creating best practice digital signage content.

Three pillars of digital signage content creation

1. Content format

What do you want to show?

Here's where you can dip into the collateral you already have and the content you would like to have. If you're just getting started, pinpoint a campaign or specific medium you'd like to showcase. Whether it's notices from HR, the latest digital menu boards or secure dashboards, your screens can be used to share a wealth of content.

Here, it's important to think about the positioning of your content. Whether the screen is internal, or customer-facing, viewers are more motivated by content that tells a story. Rather than telling the audience that you have 500 customers, tell the story of how you acquired those 500 customers. Rather than saying you've been around for ten years, tell the story of what those ten years have been like.
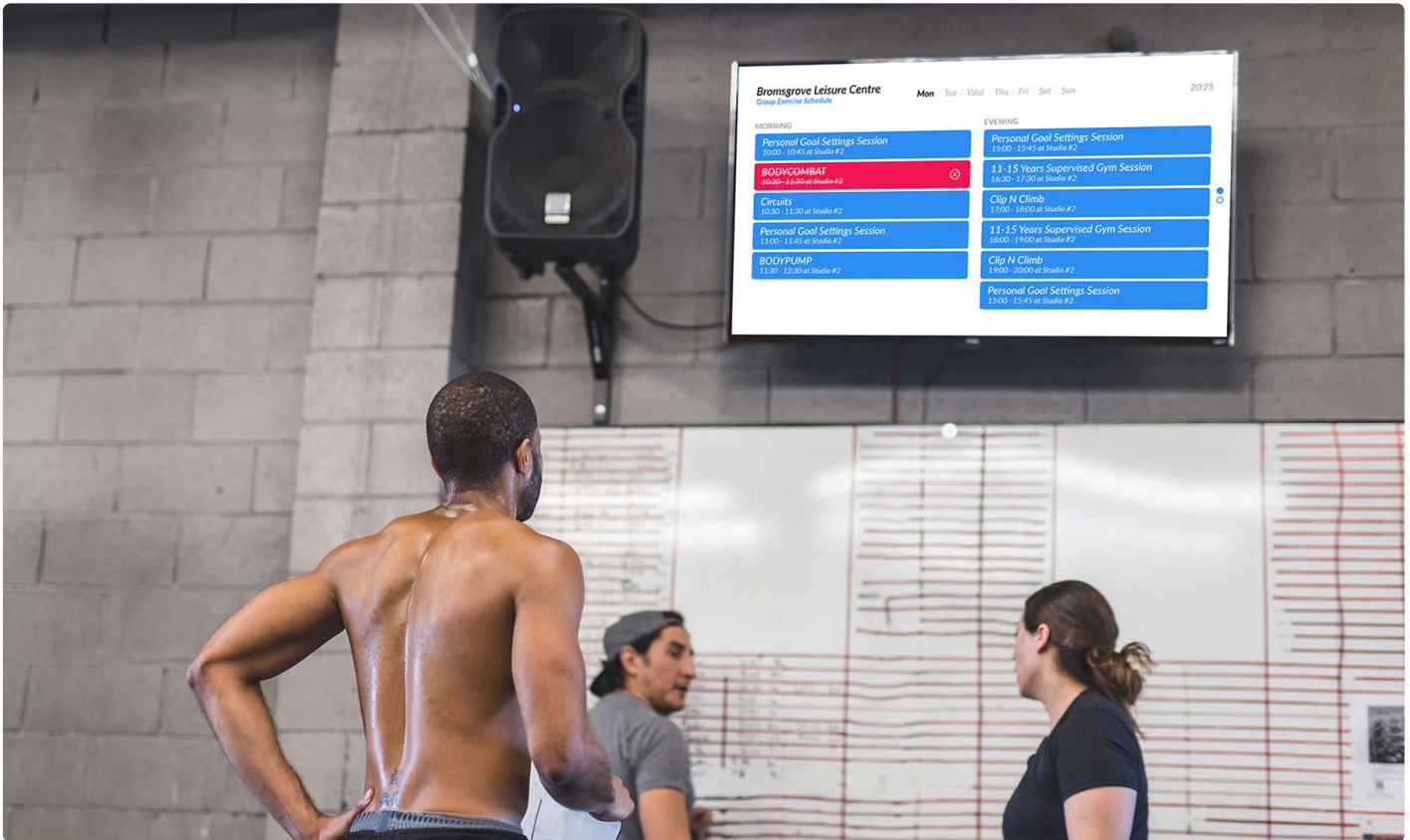
2. Content optimization

When and how do you want to show it?

This is a key question for figuring out how to optimize your content for your audience. For example, if you work in a convenience store, you may want to showcase breakfast items in the morning periods and dinner items in the evening. This seems so simple! Yet so many businesses miss out on this key step that ensures content relevance.

You also need to think about optimizing your content for the medium of screens. Compelling copy is essential in any marketing discipline but especially in digital signage, where you only have a few seconds to make an impact. At the same time, most screens are used in public places, ensuring that the content must have context in order to be digested, and at a glance.

Sense-check each piece of content before it goes live. Can my customers view this from a distance? Is the font type easy to read? Is it clear what message we are trying to display?
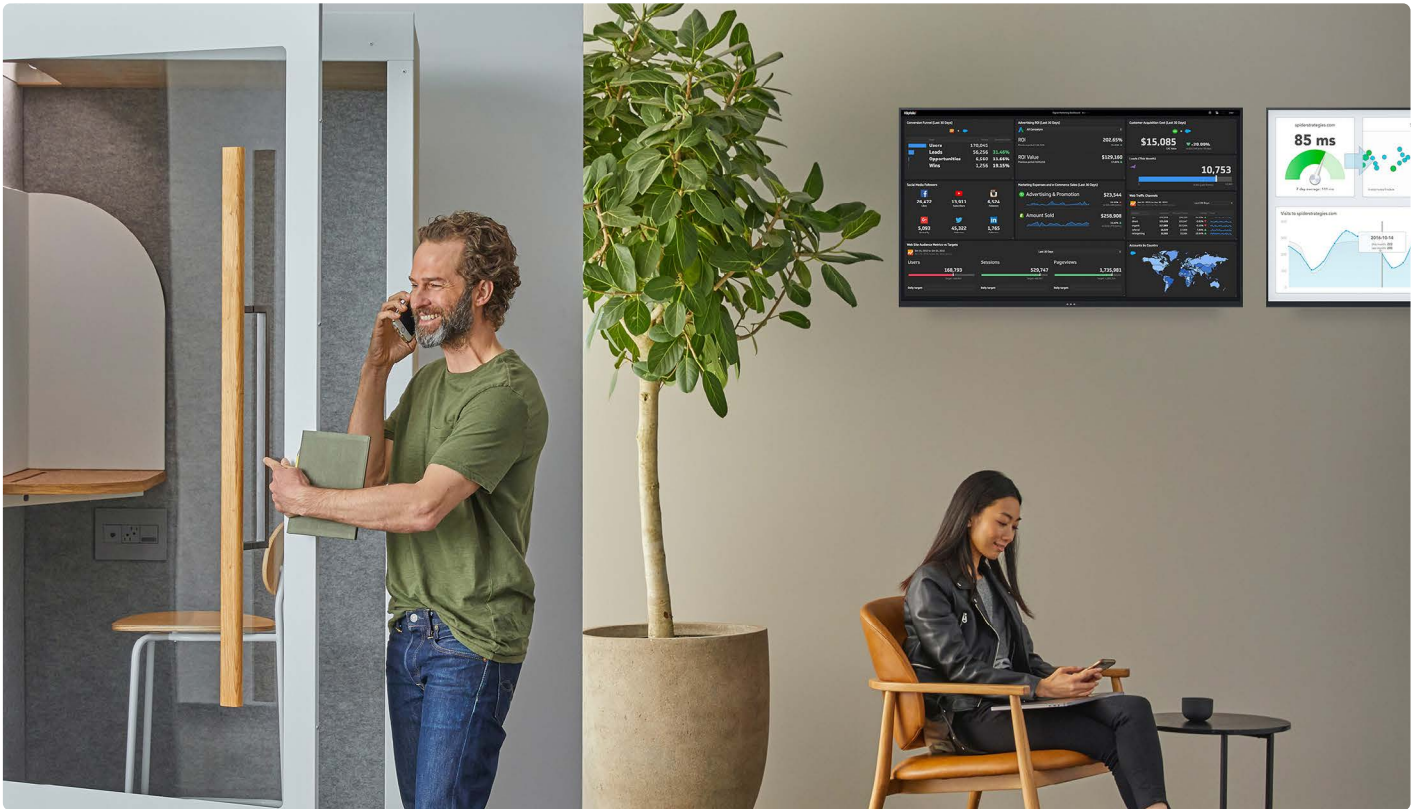
3. Content automation

How will you update content?

It is our belief that great digital signage strategies ensure that around 75% of content is automated, which means that someone doesn't have to remember to change the content in order for it to stay relevant.

This isn't as technical as you may think. One example is using data dashboards which pull metrics from other systems that already update on a daily basis. By connecting these dashboards to ScreenCloud, you can show a live data feed that updates automatically.

Another might be using the Instagram Gallery app to sync your Instagram content with your retail store's screens. This way, each time you post a new image on social media, your screens get fresh content too.

ScreenCloud also has a GraphQL API which lets you build apps that trigger takeovers, for example when your company wins a new client, or on a new joiner's first day.
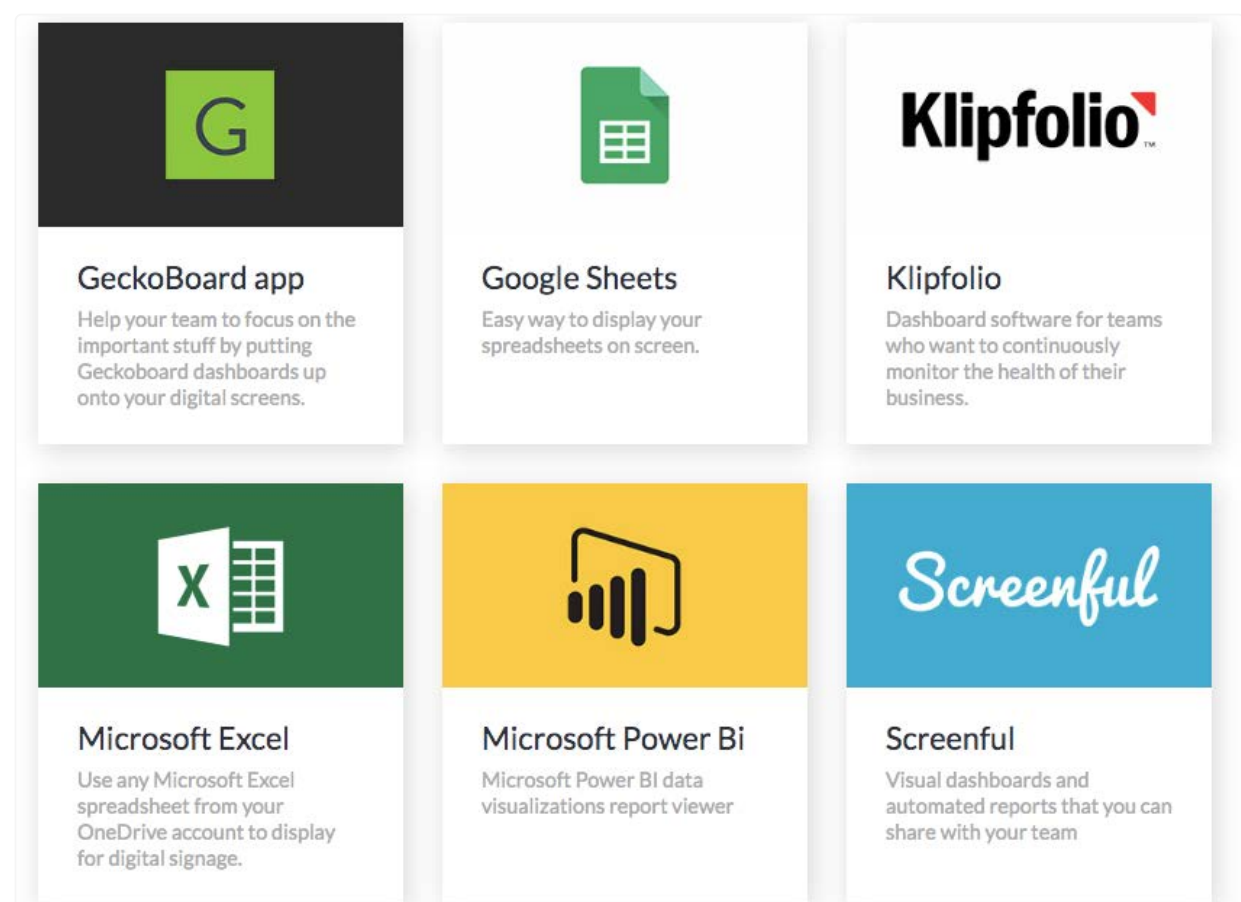
Choosing your content

Once you've uncovered the three pillars you now have a plethora of options in terms of the content you wish to show.

ScreenCloud allows you to upload files from wherever they're saved - your computer, Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive and so on, so it's easy to manage your brand content.

ScreenCloud also supports the majority of file types including jpeg, gif, png, and svg, Powerpoints, PDFs and Office/iWorks formats to make uploading your content easier.

At the same time, the ScreenCloud App Store lets you connect to 80+ other systems to syndicate content like news, weather, social media feeds and systems like Gsuite.

GeckoBoard app

Help your team to focus on the important stuff by putting Geckoboard dashboards up onto your digital screens.

Google Sheets

Easy way to display your spreadsheets on screen.

Klipfolio

Dashboard software for teams who want to continuously monitor the health of their business.

Microsoft Excel

Use any Microsoft Excel spreadsheet from your OneDrive account to display for digital signage.

Microsoft Power Bi

Microsoft Power BI data visualizations report viewer

Screenful

Visual dashboards and automated reports that you can share with your team

Organizing your content for success

Of course, great content also needs great organization.

ScreenCloud has Channels, Playlists and Smart Scheduling to help you organize your content and make it most relevant for your audience, whilst minimizing the amount of heavy lifting needed.

Channels

Channels are primarily used to organize content and add it to a screen. Think of how you might have a Channel for your marketing team that contains content from HQ, alongside marketing-specific dashboards and social media profiles the marketing team will want to monitor.

> *Similarly, you can use Channels to group content. For example having a store display Channel that contains a playlist of regular brand content, alongside seasonal promotions.*

Playlists

Playlists can be used to organize content within a Channel. This helps you to determine in which order your content plays, and how long for. Playlists can also be added to multiple Channels, giving you a way to control a section of content that needs to be shown.

> *You can also set how long you want each piece of content to show for which will change depending on how long your audience is viewing the screen. In most cases, it is best to have announcements repeating more often at short intervals, than to leave them on display for long periods of time.*
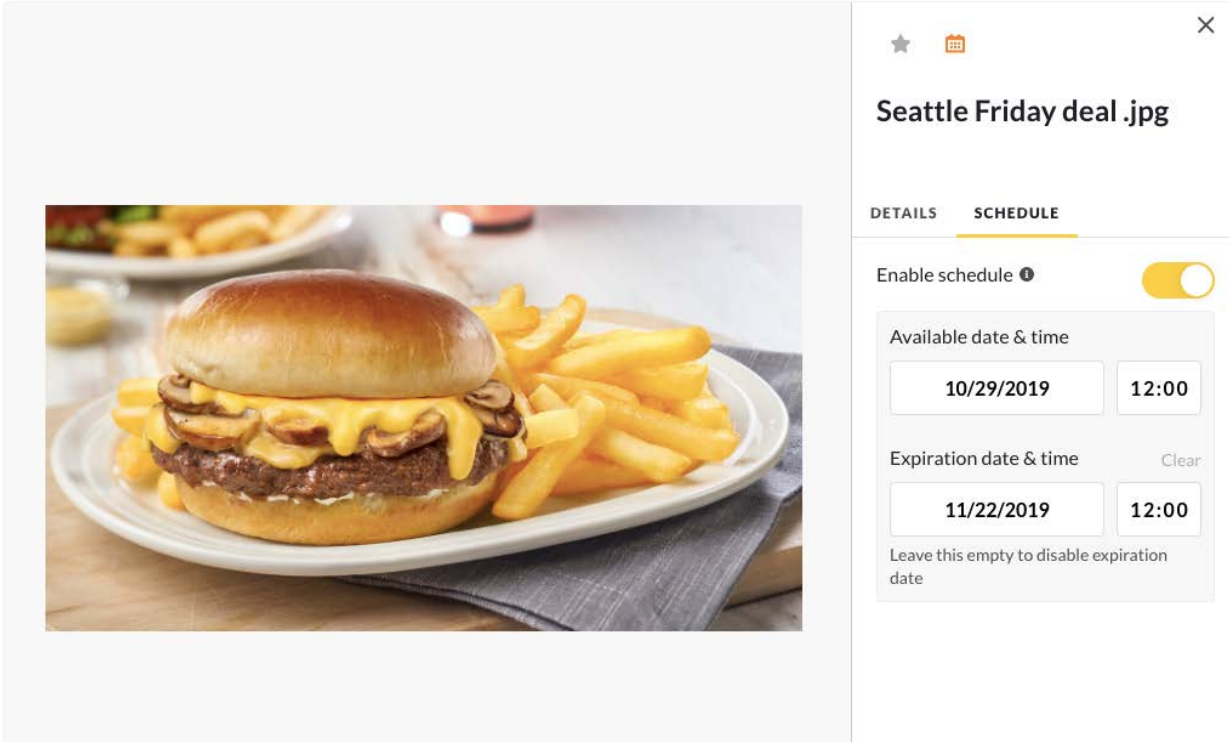
Schedules

ScreenCloud's advanced scheduling feature has been designed to make it intuitive for you to schedule timely content. This includes the ability to upload content but only have it available to users from a specific date, to schedule content in advance and to choose a date to expire content.

> *This is very useful if you have seasonal content for promotions and want to ensure they're removed from the screen after promotion-end. It also ensures you can upload and schedule content, like birthday notices or anniversaries, in advance without having to worry on the day itself.*

Digital signage use cases

Enterprise TV

Within organizations digital signage is increasingly being used to create an internal TV channel, also known as "Enterprise TV". This allows the corporate or HR teams to communicate more frequently with offices and employees around the world. Unlike emails and intranets, where great content is often lost in the noise, Enterprise TV ensures that content is surfaced and seen in a timely manner.

" *At 3M we have lots of updates happening internally all of the time and it's very difficult for us to conduct a meeting every time to announce something. Every 3Mer has a high workload and we want to make sure that internal updates are well heard. With ScreenCloud we can publish a message and everyone at the same time can see that message. ScreenCloud software is very easy to use and everyone can use it.*

Ranim Amin
Digital Marketing Leader at 3M

Dynamic digital menu boards

Digital menu boards are fast replacing static menus in QSR and commercial settings, allowing restaurant chains to predictability and reliably share restaurant information with patrons. This includes the ability to schedule dynamic menu board changes, that update all digital menu boards without manual and repetitive admin required.

> *We are running digital signage in three locations, each with five screens (15 screens total). Each location uses menu boards where we can list popular items and feature new or often-overlooked menu items and be nimble in swapping out items that are seasonally appropriate or are part of our marketing strategy.*
>
> *The customers are now engaged and we are seeing sales results in items which may have been overlooked in the previous menu board setup, as well as measurable sales in new initiatives.*

Matthew Kalamidas of StoneHouse Creative
Managing creative and marketing for Mario's Pizzeria

Franchise digital signage management

Digital signage has been used within franchises as a way of communicating important information with customers. From digital menu boards, to gym schedules and salon price lists, digital signs are a reliable and cost-effective way to communicate with customers. Digital signage also helps Franchise owners to regain control over the branding and deployment of information in individual locations.

" *We have screens in 10 different branches. Because the class timetable and other activities vary from branch to branch, I created individual playlists for each location and each screen.*

ScreenCloud has saved us the time and effort of having to visit all our gyms just to manage the many screens we have. It's allowed us to broadcast information relevant to each gym but from the comfort of our central office.

Rik Nicholson
Director of Creative Services at YMCA Silicon Valley

Get started

Best practices in hand, it's time to launch the digital signage strategy that will make management of it easy.

Create beautiful, relevant and timely screen content that makes employees, or customers, look up. Engage voices from within the organization and create processes that make managing your digital signage strategy easy.

We look forward to seeing you fly.
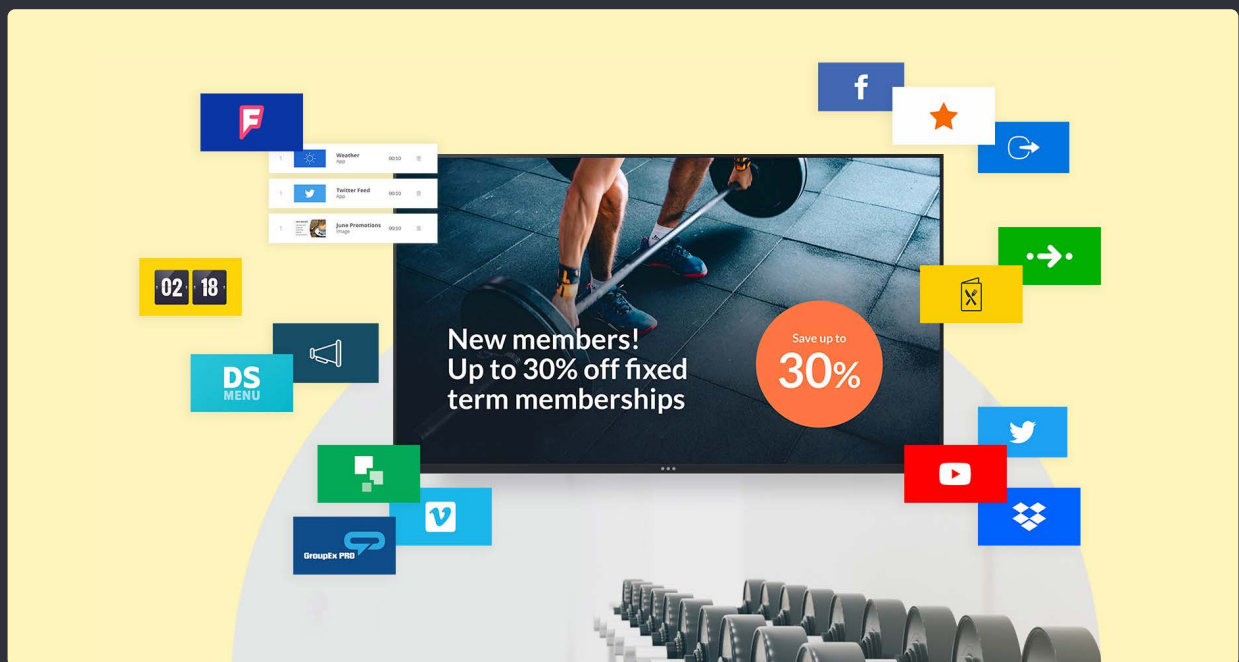
To try our digital signage content management system, get your 14-day free trial at **screencloud.com/freetrial**