



# DIGITAL SIGNAGE IN 2026:

Redefining the Future of  
QSR Communication and  
Performance

WHITE PAPER



LSquared.com

This white paper examines how digital signage is evolving into a core operational system for quick-service restaurants. As QSRs face pressure to improve speed, accuracy, and consistency across locations, intelligent display networks are enabling faster execution, centralized control, and real-time adaptability.

# Table of Contents

<b>1. Executive Overview.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. The Core Challenge Communication That Cannot Keep Up.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Market Momentum Outpacing Infrastructure.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. The Forces Reshaping QSR Communication.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. Connected Communication: From Isolated Displays to Intelligent Ecosystems .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6. Rethinking Performance Through Smart Displays.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7. Data-Driven Design: The Intelligence Behind the Screens.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>8. Operational Intelligence: The Impact Behind the Counter.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>9. Looking Ahead To 2026 And Beyond.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>10. From Visual Layer to Performance Engine.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>How L Squared Helps Quick Service Brands.....</b>	<b>13</b>



# 1. Digital Signage as QSR Infrastructure

As brands work to improve speed, accuracy, and consistency across every location, intelligent display networks are emerging as a reliable way to move faster, reduce errors, and keep experiences aligned. What used to be a static menu board is now a real-time communication system that helps teams execute with more confidence.

This paper looks at the operational pressure points facing quick service restaurants today and how modern signage platforms address them through centralized control, dynamic scheduling, automated content changes, and tighter coordination between guest facing and staff facing screens.

We also explore emerging trends such as predictive content delivery, adaptive pricing, and sustainability tracking, and how these will shape digital communication strategies in 2026 and beyond.

Finally, we share how L Squared helps quick service brands manage screen content at scale with precision, speed, and security, so communication simply works in the background while teams stay focused on guests.

## The Facts

QSR Market valued at

**\$447 BILLION**

IN 2025

Expected to reach

**\$731 BILLION**

BY 2030

Compound Actual Growth

**10.35%**

Digital Signage Market

**\$3.3 BILLION**

IN 2024

Expected to reach

**\$12.8 BILLION**

BY 2034

Compound Actual Growth

**14.5%**



## 2. The Core Challenge: Communication That Cannot Keep Up

Quick service restaurant success depends on four fundamentals: speed, accuracy, consistency, and the ability to move guests quickly without sacrificing service quality. Yet many brands still rely on disjointed tools and manual processes for one of their most important assets: their digital displays.

Every menu board, promotion, and limited time offer shapes how quickly guests decide and how smoothly operations run. When those displays are out of sync, disconnected from real time data, or too complex to update reliably, the results are predictable: slower lines, more order errors, and a fractured brand experience.

### The Operational Reality

Quick service brands are managing a chain of connected challenges:

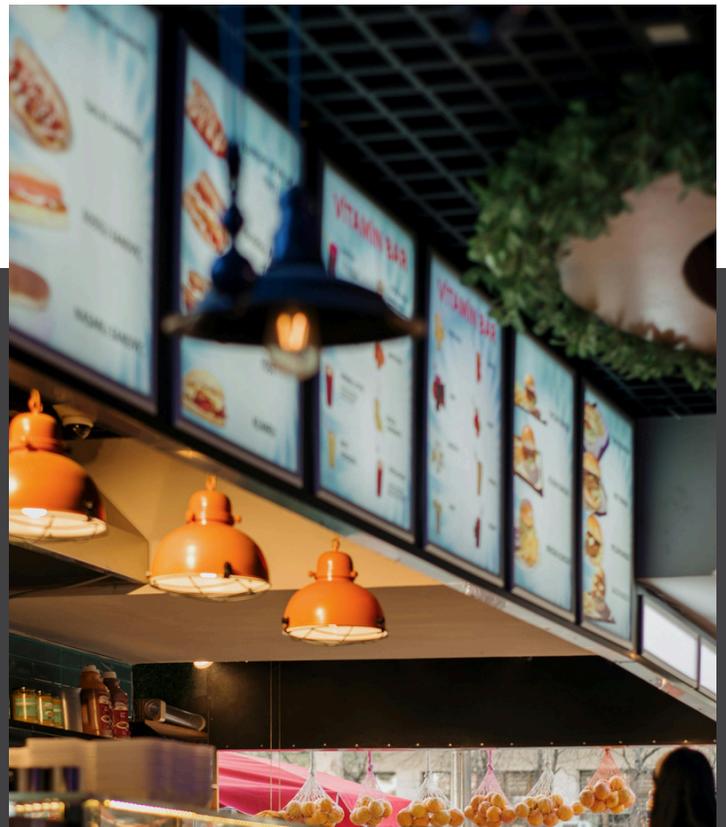
- Long wait times that reduce throughput and frustrate guests
- Cluttered static menus that cause hesitation and ordering mistakes
- Inconsistent updates that create pricing mismatches between locations
- Manual workflows that add labor, print, and rush shipping costs
- Static displays that cannot respond to inventory levels or daypart changes

Together, these issues slow service, increase operating costs, and erode the consistency guests expect from well-known brands. The gap is no longer just about visual design. It is about operational communication that cannot move at the speed of the business.

## 3. Market Momentum Outpacing Infrastructure

A category as large and as fast moving as quick service cannot afford slow communication.

**The United States quick service restaurant market was valued at 447.20 billion dollars in 2025 and is expected to reach 731.60 billion dollars by 2030, growing at a compound annual growth rate of approximately 10.35 percent. At the same time, the quick service digital signage market is projected to grow from 3.3 billion dollars in 2024 to 12.78 billion dollars by 2034, a compound annual growth rate of about 14.5 percent.**



As this growth accelerates, digital signage has matured from a promotional medium into a core operational channel. Modern menu displays have three primary jobs:

- Guide ordering decisions with clarity and confidence
- Streamline guest flow across drive-thru, kiosk, and counter service
- Maintain visual and pricing consistency across a growing footprint

They now carry a significant portion of the brand's daily workload, including:

- Daypart transitions
- Promotional governance
- Alignment with pricing and product availability

This paper examines the operational challenges at the center of this shift, including wait time management, menu clarity, pricing consistency, and daypart execution. It also shows where traditional display practices fall short and why intelligent display networks are becoming essential to maintaining accuracy, alignment, and performance at scale.

## 4. The Forces Reshaping QSR Communication

### Operational Volatility and Capacity

Quick service brands are managing more complexity with fewer hands. Fluctuating labor availability, inconsistent staffing levels, and rising wage and input costs continue to stretch in store operations.

Each location is expected to coordinate digital orders, kiosk flows, third party delivery pickups, and counter service at the same time, all while maintaining brand accuracy and pace. Under these conditions, traditional, locally managed displays become operational bottlenecks. Intelligent display systems reduce this friction by shifting menu, promo, and time sensitive updates into a centralized environment. Instead of asking local staff to manage complex visual changes, operators can enforce brand and operational consistency across every channel.



### Key challenges that drive the need for centralized display infrastructure:

- Staff capacity that is already at its limit and cannot absorb manual menu changes
- Manual updates that increase the risk of visual mismatches and delayed rollouts
- In store messaging that must adapt faster than traditional workflows allow

## Guest Experience Fatigue

Guests want fast, confident decisions. Unclear menus get in the way. Static or overcrowded layouts increase hesitation, especially during peak periods. According to Intouch Insight, **74 percent** of quick service guests said an easy-to-read menu board was their top priority. Yet many displays still fall short, especially when stretched across multiple drive-thru lanes, self-order kiosks, and complex daypart transitions.

Where visual systems should guide speed and precision, they often introduce friction instead.

The impact of inconsistent display experiences includes:

- Slower ordering and longer wait times
- Higher risk of mis orders and drive thru bottlenecks
- Fragmented brand perception across locations and channels

As guest-facing screens absorb more operational responsibility, visual clarity is now a frontline variable in service performance, not just a design consideration.



## 5. Connected Communication: From Isolated Displays to Intelligent Ecosystems

Modern quick service signage networks function as centralized communication hubs rather than isolated screens. Cloud based content management and integration with core systems give operators real time visibility and control.

When menu boards and kiosks are linked to point of sale data, pricing, inventory, and targeted promotions can update automatically. Every location sees the same accurate information, without local edits or manual intervention. This connected framework:

- Keeps content, pricing, and offers aligned
- Reduces local workload and human error
- Protects brand consistency chain wide





High resolution displays and interactive kiosks also improve perceived wait times and free staff from routine menu maintenance. **According to QSR magazine, more than 80 percent of restaurants that adopted digital signage saw higher order volumes, and nearly 30 percent of customer ordering decisions are influenced by on screen content.**

By responding instantly to menu trends or inventory changes, these networks keep promotions, compliance, and information in sync.

### **Key capabilities of intelligent signage systems include:**

#### **Dynamic scheduling and personalization**

Cloud based content platforms allow teams to create playlists and time specific campaigns. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner can rotate automatically, while promotional content adjusts based on real time data such as time of day, weather, or location.

#### **Automated menu and pricing updates**

Integration with point of sale, customer relationship management, and inventory systems keeps menu items, prices, and stock levels current. When teams make a change in the back end, screens update across every affected location, eliminating manual edits and reducing the risk of inconsistency.

#### **Centralized multi location control**

From a single dashboard, brands can push new content, compliance messages, or emergency alerts to every outlet at once. Headquarters gains real time insight into display status and performance, tying drive-thru, kiosk, and in store updates into one coordinated ecosystem.

## 6. Rethinking Performance Through Smart Displays

As digital signage evolves from static display to strategic infrastructure, quick service brands are redefining its role as a performance engine. Smart displays are not passive menu boards. They are operational systems that shape consistency, speed, and guest engagement in real time.

**Three performance levels stand out.**

### **Reliability: Always On, Field Proven Infrastructure**

Modern signage networks are engineered for consistent uptime. Real time cloud updates, robust hardware suited for outdoor and all weather deployment, and proactive monitoring work together to minimize disruption. When communication cannot go dark, reliability is not a feature. It is the foundation.

### **Consistency: Centrally Guided, System Wide Execution**

For operators managing hundreds or thousands of stores, maintaining consistency across menus, pricing, and offers is a constant challenge.

### **Smart signage platforms address this by centralizing control:**

- Teams can push updates, launch specials, or respond to operational needs from one dashboard
- Headquarters can enforce global menu consistency while supporting localized adjustments by daypart, region, or regulatory requirement

The result is fewer manual errors, faster execution, and a more unified guest experience.

### **Personalization: Adaptive Content at Scale**

Dynamic signage makes it possible to deliver context aware content without adding operational complexity.

- Screens can adjust based on time of day, promote hot beverages on colder days, or highlight high margin items when traffic peaks
- Localized offers can respond to regional preferences or events

This level of personalization increases relevance and response rates while keeping workflows centralized and manageable.



## 7. Data Driven Design: Intelligence Behind the Screens

As quick service signage networks become more connected, they move away from static playlists and toward responsive optimization. Operators are increasingly using data from customer behavior, sales velocity, and traffic patterns to decide what appears on screen, when it appears, and where.

### Smarter Layouts For Faster Decisions

Drive thru bottlenecks remain a key barrier to performance. According to the two thousand twenty-five Intouch Insight Emerging Experiences Study, the **average benchmark service time was 5 minutes and 29 seconds**. That number reflects the combined impact of operational delays, menu clutter, and decision fatigue on throughput.

As demand grows and guest expectations tighten, trimming seconds becomes a competitive advantage. Many brands now use data from digital menu boards and confirmation screens to:

- Identify points of hesitation in the ordering sequence
- Reorganize menu layouts to surface top sellers and build items more intuitively
- Simplify choices during peak traffic to keep lines moving

### Testing And Iteration At Scale

Smart digital signage systems allow quick service brands to test promotions across regions, dayparts, or screen formats. Teams can identify which messages perform best, then roll out the winner's system wide without manual intervention. When display performance data is paired with point of sale and operational metrics, marketing and operations teams can understand:

- Which content lifts average ticket size?
- Which layouts reduce dwell time?
- Which combinations of offers and visuals convert better during peaks?

### Screens That Respond

Once signage is connected to point of sale, customer relationship, and inventory systems, it becomes part of a continuous feedback loop. Operators can answer questions such as:

- Which menu layout reduces hesitation during the busiest part of the day?
- Did digital upsell prompts increase ticket size?
- Are region specific promotions converting more effectively than national creative?



By closing the loop between what is shown and what sells, quick service brands are shifting from static scheduling to adaptive strategy. Each screen becomes a node in a real-time performance network rather than a fixed display.

## 8. Operational Intelligence: The Impact Behind the Counter

Guest facing content is only half the story. Internal applications of digital signage are just as important for performance.

### Training That Sticks

Employee turnover continues to challenge the quick service industry, and onboarding is often rushed and inconsistent. Intouch Insight reports that **62 percent of quick service leaders now cite labor as their most pressing challenge**, which makes training and retention solutions even more critical.

### Digital signage offers a scalable way to:

- Deliver training content right where work happens
- Reinforce procedures with short, visual reminders
- Standardize onboarding across locations

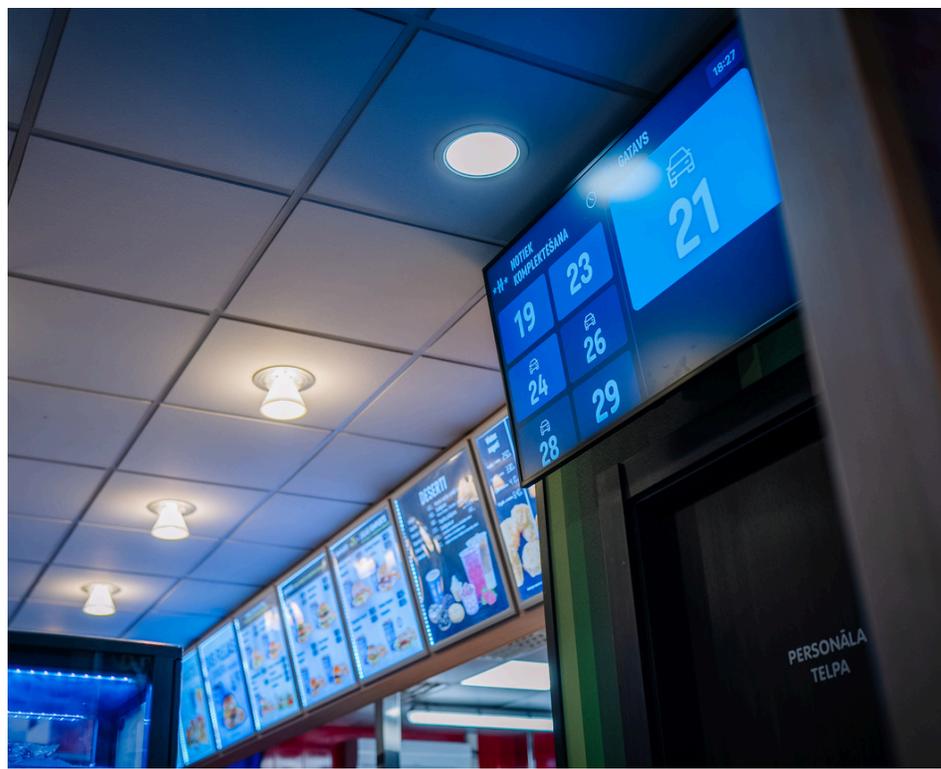
Instead of relying entirely on verbal instruction or printed manuals, brands can deploy training modules, standard operating procedure walkthroughs, or shift reminders directly to kitchen and prep area displays. This speeds time to productivity and strengthens long term consistency.

### Real Time Operational Messaging

Staff facing displays are also becoming central to in store communication. Integrated with a cloud-based content platform, these screens help managers deliver clear, timely information during every shift.

### Common use cases include:

- Urgent staff alerts such as temporary closures, inventory substitutions, or weather-related instructions
- Shift specific performance reminders and goals
- Scheduled compliance notices and food safety guidelines



By centralizing critical messages, brands reduce the risk of miscommunication and ensure that the right information reaches the right team at the right moment.

### **Consistency That Scales To Every Team**

Just as guest facing signage keeps pricing and promotions aligned, internal displays unify workforce messaging. Coaching prompts, brand standards, and service expectations can be reinforced throughout each day in subtle but powerful ways.

As quick-service brands grow, scaling operations is not only about technology. It is also about execution. Smart displays bridge that gap by making sure people have the information they need to deliver the experience guests expect.

## **9. Looking Ahead To 2026 And Beyond**

In quick service environments, digital signage is increasingly defined not by the screens themselves, but by the intelligence that guides them.

As menus, pricing, and engagement strategies become more dynamic, the platforms that orchestrate content are evolving into full operational layers. What used to be treated as passive display technology now plays an active role in execution and guest behavior.

In the next few years, digital signage will deepen its role as a responsive, data informed layer within the restaurant.





### **Predictive content delivery**

Data from sales trends, location behavior, and external signals will drive content shifts automatically. Instead of relying only on fixed playlists, brands will deploy content that responds to conditions in real time, such as breakfast promotions that respond to cool weather or lunch upsells tied to current point of sale trends.



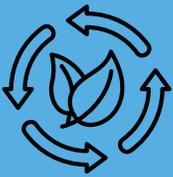
### **Adaptive pricing visibility**

As pricing strategies become more dynamic, digital signage will serve as the real time bridge between what systems decide and what guests see. When inventory runs low or traffic spikes, screens will update immediately with new pricing or promotions, keeping communication accurate and aligned with business goals.



### **Smarter guest interfaces**

Kiosks and drive thru displays will continue to evolve into adaptive interfaces that surface relevant upsells and cross sells based on time, location, and purchase behavior. The screen becomes a responsive part of the guest conversation rather than a static prompt.



### **Sustainability support**

As sustainability becomes a central operational priority, digital signage offers practical benefits. Reducing print waste, using energy efficient displays, and centralizing version control all support both environmental and operational performance. Smart signage can also help visualize progress on sustainability goals through real time dashboards for staff and leadership.



## 10. From Visual Layer to Performance Engine

Digital signage is quickly becoming a core feature of the quick service environment, from national chains to independent operators. When it is done well, it improves more than the look of the space. It improves the pace, clarity, and confidence of the entire ordering experience.

In an industry where timing, consistency, and guest satisfaction intersect at the counter, digital signage delivers more than visual polish. It delivers operational value by helping teams stay aligned, reduce delays, and adapt messaging without added labor or lag.

### How L Squared Helps Quick Service Brands

Coordinating content across hundreds of screens, locations, and moments in the day is not only a technical challenge. It is an operational one. L Squared helps quick service teams manage that complexity without slowing down execution.



From a single, secure platform, brands can:

- Push menu updates across locations with confidence
- Schedule content by daypart, region, or channel
- Keep pricing, promos, and brand standards aligned without store-by-store intervention

Whether the task is updating breakfast menus before doors open or syncing pricing to match a national offer, L Squared makes it easier to act quickly and stay consistent.

For decision makers, this means clear, real-time insight into what is playing, where it is playing, and why. For teams on the ground, it means fewer manual updates and simpler workflows. The result is straightforward: screens that actively support the business instead of simply decorating the space.

## Need support with your digital communication strategy?

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