

Toyo Tires Retail TV Network

Toyo Tires and Dealers Tread Toward Retail TV Network

In 2005, after being offered advertising space on an existing digital signage network, Toyo Tire Canada Inc. realized that operating its own digital signage network presented a powerful opportunity.

Customer loyalty was a strong suit for the tire manufacture, but brand awareness proved to be its biggest stumbling block – especially with its small advertising budget. Digital signage offered a great way to reach potential Toyo Tire customers while they wait for mechanical service work to be completed on their vehicles at dealers. A retail TV network would inform and educate buyers about its tires' features and benefits. And because it could lead to a sale right away, this type of marketing provided an added bonus to Toyo Tire dealers. Dealers could also use the network to inform customers about additional services they offered, including mechanical, and adding an entertainment component would improve the customers' experience in the stores.

Breaking the Mold

At the time, in-store digital signage networks weren't common in Canada, but Toyo Tires was willing to take a risk and develop a network for its dealer base across the country.

"As a manufacturer, it's always important for us to offer incentives for our dealers to carry our tires," said Ron Golab, Advertising and Marketing Coordinator for Toyo Tires. "In the tire industry, this initiative put us in the forefront at that time. While we viewed this as a great way to reach our customers, it was also an almost instantaneous way to 'update' our current messages. We no longer have to worry if our posters are up on the wall in time to advertise the current retail campaign because they are simply programmed to be on the network."

In 2006, Toyo Tire set out on a trial of the network. It turned to O.K. Tire Stores Inc., Canada's largest independent dealer network, to test systems in 12 stores for six months in British Columbia's Lower Mainland before expanding to the rest of its independent franchise stores across Canada. The experiment not only taught everyone the type of content that proved most successful, it also made them realize that the initial software program they were using had too many shortfalls.

"The old program didn't have the features that we needed, and its interface was cumbersome," said Golab. "We looked into several systems and decided on Scala software because we found that it had the programming flexibility and offered the customer service we were looking for. The dealers really pushed to make the needed changes and keep the network going."



Driving Ahead

Toyo Tire moved forward with the network and began installing it in different OK Tire stores across the country.

"Even after a very large learning curve and some mistakes along the way, the dealers still wanted some sort of

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entertainment and educational system for their stores," said Golab.

In 2008, Toyo Tires brought in a new digital signage provider, The Data Works, to take over the Scala network and manage its content. Toyo Tire says it's been a smooth ride ever since.

"Both Toyo Tires and the OK Tire stores have a great opportunity to use digital signage to educate and retain their customers while they are waiting to have their vehicles serviced," said Richard Hyde, President of The Data Works. "When we stepped in, we wanted to make it easy to keep the network up and running, and make sure the right content was being used to attract viewers."

Content runs on a one hour and 30 minute loop, and Toyo Tires currently owns 20 percent of the airtime. The additional 80 percent is comprised of OK Tire's message and some non-competing advertising along with a variety of entertainment pieces and educational programming provided through AutoNetTV.

Fueled by Content

AutoNetTV, a television network focused on content for car owners, provides programming that ranges from helpful tips for selecting a warranty and saving money on gas costs, to larger education topics about auto service such as fuel system cleaning and wiper blade replacement. They also add an entertainment component to the network to keep customers tuned in to the screens, including movie updates, cooking tips and local interest stories.

This content not only educates and entertains customers waiting for their vehicles to be serviced, but often leads to up-selling or future sales of products and services.

Brad Bulycz, owner of an OK Tire store in Vancouver, B.C., experienced the benefits of the network firsthand when it was first installed in his location in 2006.



"We never really focused on selling wiper blades, but we started noticing that when there was a segment about wiper blades playing on the screens, customers would come to us and request them," said Bulycz. "We can pretty much attribute 100 percent of our wiper blade sales to the digital signage network."

Bulycz's Vancouver dealership features one 32-inch screen in its waiting area. He's happy that it cuts down on the use of paper and posters.

"It's a cleaner version of advertising and marketing, and it's green," Bulycz said.

According to Bulycz, OK Tire store owners are happy with the network now because it meets the needs of the different type of stores.

"The programming is a good mixture, so it works for all types of dealers, mechanical and tire. It also offers content for the female viewer, which represents a whole other clientele," said Bulycz.

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The Deal for Dealers

The network is currently in 79 OK Tire stores. Toyo Tire plans to continue expanding the network into new OK Tire franchise locations and perhaps the rest of its dealer base, about 1,600 potential sites across Canada.

"We're making it easy for our dealers to make the decision," said Golab. "We hold ownership of the box, software and installation. All a dealer needs to do is pay for the screen and mount, and supply an Internet connection."

Dealers can select from a 40-inch or 32-inch Samsung screen. While most only opt for one screen, larger dealers have decided to install two in their location. They pay a monthly fee to belong to the network, which is paid in part by a special co-op program with Toyo Tire. The fee covers the monitoring of the network as well as producing and adding new content to the playlist.

"Because we are monitoring the systems, we know the screens are being used," said Golab. "Ever since we made the content more dynamic with AutoNetTV, it really serves as an entertainment package that customers enjoy. Customers are staying tuned to the screens and this makes the dealers very happy."

"We've all learned that content is key and will make or break the success of the network," Bulycz added.

Eventually, individual dealers will be able to work with The Data Works to request store-specific content to play on their screens. This will give them the chance to promote specific products and services or communicate news to their unique customer base.

"We're planning on working with Toyo Tire, OK Tire and its franchise stores to continue offering their customers something good to watch while they are in stores," said Hyde. "The fact that there is an opportunity for sales lift makes the network very valuable."

About The Data Works Inc.

The Data Works Inc., a Scala Certified Partner, is a Vancouver Island-based systems integrator providing one-stop shopping for digital display networks. It combines advanced LCD products and cutting-edge computer and networking technologies with world-class software to deliver total display solutions for a wide range of applications. For more information, please visit www.thedataworks.ca.

About Scala

Driving more than 300,000 screens worldwide, Scala is a leading global provider of digital signage and advertising management solutions. Scala is the world's first connected signage company, offering the leading platform for content creation, management and distribution in digital signage networks and the first unified platform for advertising management of both traditional and digital signage networks. The company's digital signage customers include Rabobank, IKEA, Burger King, T-Mobile, Virgin MegaStore, Warner Brothers, The Life Channel, Rikstoto, Repsol, NorgesGruppen, Audi, ECE Flatmedia, Kaufhof (Metro Group) and thousands more. Advertising management customers include CBS Outdoor, Clear Channel Outdoor and Magic Media, among others. Scala is headquartered near Philadelphia, USA, and has subsidiaries in Canada, The Netherlands, France, Norway, Germany and Japan, as well as more than 450 partners in more than 60 countries. More information is available at www.scala.com.