



# From Sign Company to Visual Solutions Leader: Embracing Digital to Future-Proof Your Business

By Stephen Gottlich, President, Illuminology LLC

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## Executive Summary

The sign industry is in the middle of a major shift.

For decades, sign companies have helped businesses tell their stories with static illuminated and non-illuminated signs. That work still matters, but **digital signage** is changing how the world communicates visually.

Like every big technological change, some companies adapt and thrive. Others get left behind.

This paper explains why now is the time for traditional sign shops to embrace digital, and how doing so can open new doors, new revenue streams, and stronger client relationships.

## 1. Industry Transformation: A Real-World Example

Sixteen years ago, one successful regional sign company took a risk.

Instead of focusing only on fabrication and installs, they reimagined themselves as a **Visual Solutions Company**.

They added digital signage, dynamic environments, and content creation. The results? More opportunities. More recurring revenue. A seat at the table with bigger clients.

That shift didn't happen overnight, but it started with one decision:  
**to stop seeing signs as just products and start seeing them as platforms for stories.**

## 2. Signs Have Always Been About Storytelling

Signs have always done more than mark a location. They tell a story.

The Golden Arches don't just say "restaurant."

The Starbucks Siren doesn't need words to be recognized.

And even "Lucy's Hair Salon" can stop a passerby if the design speaks.

Static signs will always have a place. But today's world moves fast, and businesses need tools that move with it. **Digital signage** turns static messages into living stories that change in real time.

### 3. The Digital Revolution in Signage

Remember when digital meant a time-and-temperature sign on a pylon? That was the start. Today, we have full-color, high-definition LED systems displaying motion graphics, real-time data, and branded content, all updated remotely from a laptop.

**Modern digital signage includes:**

- Outdoor LED displays that look as sharp as a TV
- Indoor displays for retail, hospitality, and corporate spaces
- Ultra-bright window screens visible in full sunlight
- Interactive touchscreens that pull customers in
- Self-service kiosks that combine signage with function

What used to be static is now **dynamic, data-driven, and immersive**.

A single sign can promote breakfast specials in the morning, show hiring messages in the afternoon, and share community events at night, all without a bucket truck or vinyl order.

### 4. Beyond the Roadside: Expanding Opportunities

Digital signage is no longer limited to pylons or storefronts.

The fastest-growing opportunity today is inside with **Retail Media Networks (RMNs)**. These in-store digital ad networks let brands and retailers run targeted promotions right where buying decisions happen.

That opens doors for sign companies to offer:

- **Digital menu boards** for restaurants and QSRs
- **Video walls and in-store displays** for retail and corporate spaces
- **Electronic shelf labels (ESLs)** with real-time pricing
- **Interactive kiosks** and wayfinding systems for campuses and healthcare

For sign shops, this means expanding from fabrication and installation to **complete communication programs** that blend static and digital.

**The payoff:**

- New recurring revenue through software and content services
- Deeper client relationships

- A stronger position as a strategic partner, not just a vendor

## 5. Why Change Matters

Every industry hits a crossroads.

Print shops faced it with desktop publishing.

Retailers faced it with e-commerce.

Now it's signage's turn.

Sticking to static alone means:

- Losing bids to competitors who offer digital solutions
- Missing steady revenue from content and service contracts
- Risking the "old-school" label

But embracing digital means growth. It turns your shop from a vendor into a **solutions partner** who helps clients communicate smarter, faster, and better.

"It's not about replacing static, it's about expanding what your signs can do."

## 6. Illuminology: A Partner for the Journey

Switching to digital doesn't have to be overwhelming.

At **Illuminology**, we help traditional sign companies make the shift with confidence, step by step.

With decades of experience in consulting, sourcing, software, and installation, we provide:

- Access to world-class digital technology
- Competitive pricing on displays and software
- Hands-on training and marketing support
- Real-world guidance from people who have done it before

We have been where you are, and we have helped companies make this transition successfully.

## **Conclusion: Lead the Future of Signage**

The sign industry is evolving. It is no longer just about fabricating and installing signs. It is about creating **visual communication ecosystems** that blend craftsmanship, creativity, and technology.

Those who embrace digital now will define the next generation of the sign industry.

To help our partners make that leap, Illuminology offers tools, training, and real-world expertise through two key resources:

### **Illuminology University**

An 8–10 week live training series that covers LED vs. LCD, content management, and installation best practices.

### **The Illuminology Experience Center**

Our Kansas City showroom, where partners can see and test digital signage solutions in action before taking them to clients.

Digital signage is not just a new product line. It is a new way to serve your customers, grow your business, and future-proof your shop.

The future of signs is visual communication. The next step is yours.

## **About Illuminology**

Illuminology is a boutique digital signage distribution company based in Kansas City, Missouri, specializing in providing curated display solutions for resellers, integrators, and traditional sign companies. Founded by industry veterans Jacob Horwitz and Stephen Gottlich, the company focuses on helping partners transition into the digital signage space through tailored products and hands-on support.

## **What Illuminology Offers**

Illuminology distributes a wide range of digital signage technologies, including LED displays, LCD panels, kiosks, shelf-edge displays, and E Ink solutions. Their offerings are designed to meet diverse needs across industries such as retail, hospitality, transportation, and healthcare. The company emphasizes a consultative approach, providing training and marketing resources to help partners effectively integrate digital signage into their services.