



# SELF-SERVICE KIOSK BEST PRACTICES



A recent report from Markets and Markets confirms that the global interactive kiosk market is expected to continue its rapid growth through 2023. This growth is being driven primarily by customers' interest in self-service kiosks and their desire to be in more control of their transactions. This is especially true for Millennials, who have become accustomed to personalized experiences whether shopping, getting directions, paying a bill or banking. It is therefore imperative that companies across multiple industries understand self-service kiosk technology and the best practices for their design and deployment. As Millennials become more of an economic force, the importance of self-service technology will only continue to grow.

**What follows are the most important factors to consider when designing and deploying a digital kiosk program.**

## DEFINE THE OBJECTIVES CLEARLY

First and foremost, it's important to define the end-users that the company hopes will interact with the kiosk based on the business' objectives. If the intended user does not interact with the kiosk in a way that allows the business objectives to be met, then the kiosk program will likely fail. If there are multiple types of users, it can help to create marketing personas to better understand the users' needs and ensure that potential challenges can be accounted for during the design phase. Additionally, the kiosk's objectives and potential users will likely influence the hardware design and component selection at that time. For instance, if you are considering rolling out a telemedicine kiosk, then the kiosk design should address privacy. In general, younger people are more open to using digital kiosks, and Baby Boomers are more likely to be intimidated by the technology and shy away from using it. Make sure the user and objective are considered together.

**Business objectives should be precise and targeted.** For instance, if you are designing a vending kiosk, you might consider the following questions: how many items do you need to sell per day in order for the kiosk to be



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profitable? Are there ongoing revenue opportunities after the initial sale? If you are a fast-food restaurant owner, by what percentage do you expect to increase overall profit with kiosks? Will you do this via automatic upselling by decreasing the cost of human labor, or both?

## KIOSK DESIGN

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to kiosk design. Keeping in mind the specific business objectives and user base needs, along with the environment in which the kiosk will reside, helps to inform decisions made in this area.

As an example, retail is a size-centric industry. Each square foot is accounted for, and there is a charge associated with each square foot of floor space and shelf space. Thus, kiosks for retail should likely be built with a sensitivity to size.

Alternatively, with a healthcare kiosk, an ADA compliant solution is often required, which means that all kiosk components are required to be accessible to all users. Additionally, privacy may play an important role, so adding a privacy filter or side panels to the kiosk may affect design also.

**Consideration of display size is a big factor in design.** Small displays (up to 20") are great for data collection, self-check-in, ticketing or point-of-sale kiosks, especially if they are placed close to where people are waiting or gathering. Medium displays (up to 50") are best for directory, wayfinding and other applications that require a more engaging experience. Large displays (up to 100") are generally best for non-touch, non-interactive uses, such as digital signage or advertising. An exception would be for Smart City kiosks or mall directories, where 50"-60" displays are common and often interactive.

Other components such as computer, credit card payment, bill payment and scanners integrations must be reviewed with all stakeholders to align with the software application being used and the security

protocols in place. There may be "off the shelf" software solutions that already integrate with certain components - knowing these peripherals in advance of design could positively affect budget and timeline of kiosk deployment.

Lastly and possibly the most important design factor for kiosks, is **ease of use**. Even the most perfectly placed kiosk with the best-intended business objectives will run into problems if the selected components and user interface are not intuitive. Creating a user experience that is not difficult, confusing, or frustrating for the end-user is imperative, and this is achieved through careful design and planning.



## DIGITAL KIOSK CONTENT

Once the kiosk enclosure has been designed and components selected based on its intended use, the questions become all about the content to be displayed and the type of user interface needed to make the content easy to navigate. Much like enclosure design, there's no one right way to develop content, but there are guidelines that have been developed over the years that are more likely to result in a better user experience and more kiosk traffic.

First, **content displayed on the welcome screen should be dynamic**; people want to see movement to capture their attention, and the best way to do that is via animation or video. At the same time, switching back and forth from one set of content to the next should not be so fast that users can't read it, nor so slow that they get bored and move on. Too much dynamic content on the kiosk will make potential users stay away because it can be distracting and confusing. Therefore, part of the screen should always remain static -- usually the static content contains words that explain the kiosk's purpose or the most important content.

Best practices for content also include making buttons and headlines large, and being sure that clickable areas are clearly defined, obvious, and easy to use. Navigational "breadcrumbs" or other simple and intuitive aids are helpful for showing users how to quickly backup, start over or exit if needed. Iconography in place of words declutters screen space as does keeping copy short and concise.

If there's a way to completely avoid the user having to type, use it. Integrate a "search box" option only if absolutely necessary as it creates the need to type. Most people simply do not like typing on a kiosk and it

can serve to dissuade them from using it. If this isn't possible, limit typing as much as you are able, and make autocomplete part of the user interface. Many impaired users, in particular, may have difficulty with typing.



**Font selection** -- both size and style -- is also important. Best practice is that written content is legible from both halfway across the room and up close, which is not always an easy balance. Some recommended fonts include boldface Sans-Serif fonts, or Serif fonts such as Helvetica, Arial and Verdana in either white or black with the reverse-colored background.

**Overall, keep it simple** -- less is more; interactions should be able to be completed as quickly as possible. Many users shy away from using kiosks in public out of fear that they are being observed by others, especially when it comes

to displaying or inputting potentially sensitive financial information. Keep transactions moving along; this includes providing rapid feedback to the user at every click or other interaction. Other factors to consider include multiple-language integration and ADA compliance for impaired users (including the consideration of color-blindness).

## KIOSK PLACEMENT & LOCATION

Once the kiosk has been designed, where should it be located? Much of this decision depends on the type of kiosk being deployed. Like with real estate, one of the most important factors for a successful kiosk program is “location, location, location.”

One of the most complicated balances to achieve is the right combination of high traffic and unobtrusive placement. The kiosk should be easily noticed, but not in the way. It should be convenient to use for the intended audience, but not create traffic bottlenecks when being used.

**Natural waiting areas** can be a good choice for directional or advertising kiosks. For retail kiosks or product-dispensing/vending kiosks, it is often best to locate the kiosk near the current check-out areas so that customers with questions may easily receive help from in-person POS or customer service agents. Informational kiosks in retail settings may be better placed in popular aisles that receive the most foot traffic from customers.

Physical environment is another factor. An outdoor kiosk must be weather ruggedized and designed to withstand elements like direct sunlight (glare), extreme heat, freezing temperatures, rain, wind and snow.

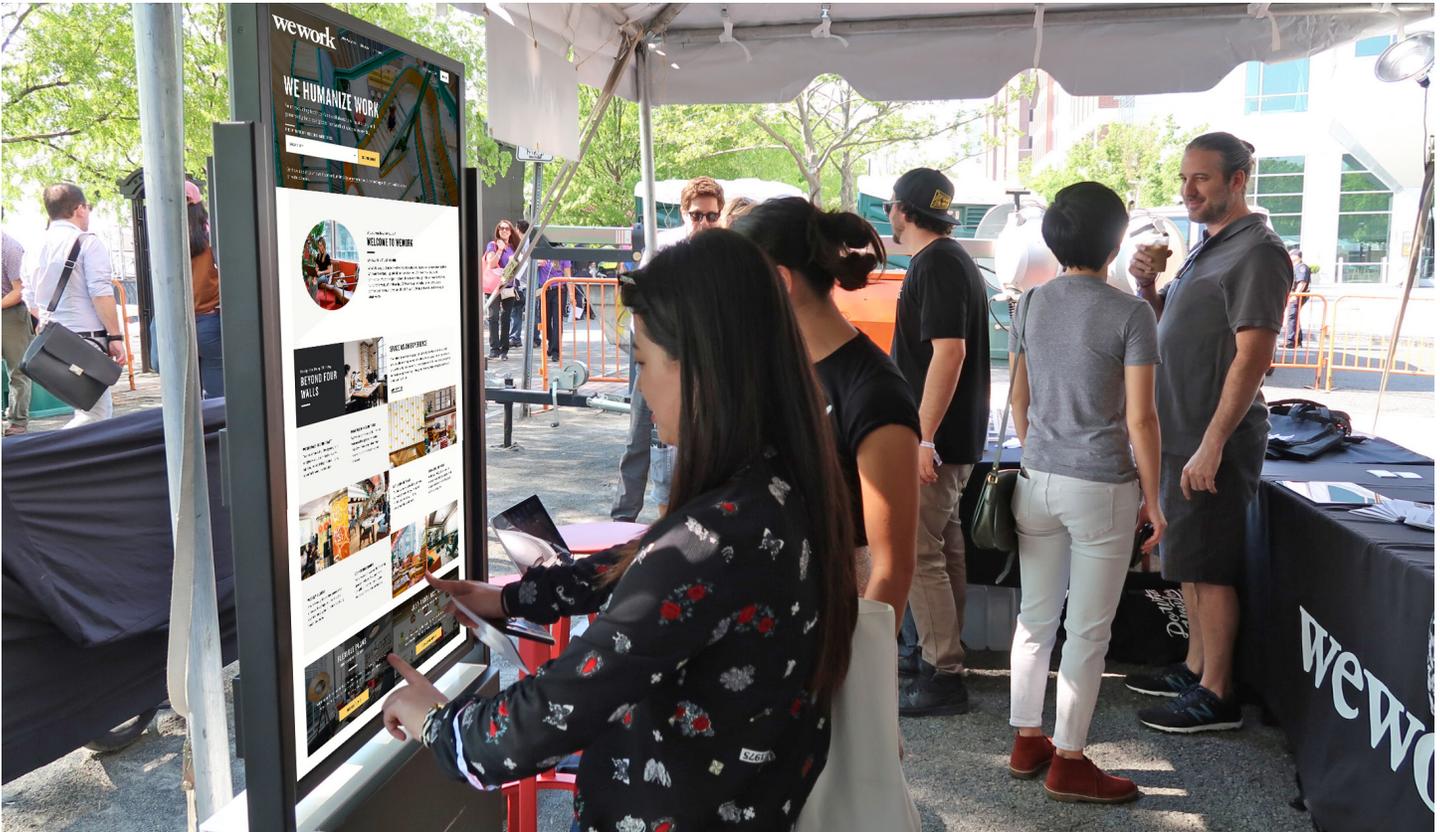
## KIOSK ENGAGEMENT

**Now that the kiosk has been deployed, it's time to encourage or incent users to interact with it. But how?**

First, it's important that potential users know it exists. While they may run into it in their daily life, they are more likely to develop a comfort level with a new kiosk with additional marketing exposure. Use store signage to announce the arrival of the kiosks alongside a succinct explanation of what they do and why customers should want to use them. Make sure to mention their locations, too, and any incentives available to those who use them to complete their transactions. Be sure the kiosk signage and branding itself captures the attention of customers, is easy to read, makes it obvious what the kiosk does, and explains how it can be used.

To bridge the gap for those who are not entirely comfortable with self-service technology, use customer service agents as kiosk ambassadors to help introduce the kiosk to users already in the vicinity. Be sure to





have ambassadors reemphasize any incentives, discounts or contests in place for new kiosk users. Customer service agents can also lead users with questions over to the kiosks to get answers, teaching them how to utilize the different kiosk features at the same time.

**Kiosks are also an excellent way to interact with customers in ways that are unique to interactive technology** – examples include “edutainment” videos, games, interactive contests, trivia and quizzes. These types of interactions also help companies learn more about their customers when responses are recorded, even when data remains anonymized.

It’s also important to remember the potential positive impact of integrating with social media, whether on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat or Facebook. Encouraging customers to actively engage with a brand, product or company on social media, and enabling the interaction via the use of special hashtags or integrated kiosk cameras, can increase both awareness of and comfort level with the kiosk itself. Some businesses will even display the photos taken at the kiosks on large monitors throughout the store, or on their websites, when they are attached to specific hashtags.

Other ways to engage and entice potential kiosk users are via trivia (but keep it short!), LED lighting, projection technology, illuminated signage, real-time 2-way interaction, collaboration or assistance via video “concierge,” and mobile phone beacons.

## MEASURING OUTCOMES

### Now that the kiosk has been deployed, what's next?

Measurement, data and analytics. All of these should be reviewed with a close eye to the business objectives outlined at the start of the project.

Kiosks should be integrated with software that measures at least the basics of user interaction:

- *The number of users (per day [and day part], week, month)*
- *The session duration*
- *The number of screens viewed*
- *Duration of time on each screen*
- *Abandonment rate*
- *Abandonment page*
- *Daily, weekly and monthly revenue if it is a retail or dispensing kiosk*
- *Goals completed (sales, interactions, accounts created, etc.)*

Once a baseline of metrics has been determined, many companies will choose to split or A/B-test their kiosks. This may mean testing different locations within a store setting or using offers such as discounts for retail kiosks. For quick-service restaurant settings, optimizing ROI by testing upselling or cross-selling offers are another common way to split-test. While not every company chooses to engage in A/B testing post-deployment, for most, it is the best way to ensure the kiosks are offering the best return, especially in expensive environments where space is at a premium like retail and food service.

## KIOSK SUPPORT SERVICES

### Last but not least, now that your kiosks are up and running, optimized, engaging, and providing the intended ROI, how do you ensure that customers keep coming back?

An important consideration is kiosk uptime. If the kiosk is perceived as being unreliable, “buggy,” or is often “out of order,” it could be a swift end to your kiosk program. However, these potential risks can be mitigated with careful planning.

First, be sure to take advantage of remote management or monitoring when offered, and/or cloud-based software and storage. Issues that can be addressed remotely by the company that deployed it are likely to be mitigated quickly, leading to less downtime. It's also important that managers are trained in the kiosk's operation so they are able to monitor it from the immediate area. This means having a support plan in place and ready to go that they are able to enact. This way, if something does go awry, there is someone on standby who can fix it quickly.

## IN SUMMARY....

Self-service kiosks offer companies and brands new and ever-evolving ways to drive consumer awareness and reach, as well as increase ROI and engagement. As digital kiosks continue to gain in popularity with consumers for multiple uses, they will also continue to provide value to businesses who choose to thoughtfully develop and deploy them. The bottom line is that as long as a kiosk is engaging, easy to navigate, reliable and meets the needs of its intended audience, its deployment has an excellent chance of success.