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**Museums &  
Attractions take a  
byte out of film**

# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

## Digital signage helps bring together a fine restaurant, bowling alley and movie theater in one entertainment location

by Rich Bradford

How do you take three of America's pastimes – fine dining, bowling and movies, and not only combine them together under one roof to create an upscale unique entertainment venue, but also effectively reach out and communicate all of the various entertainment possibilities in a way that compliments, rather than distracts from the upscale and chic feel of the establishment?

That was the issue facing Hamid Hashemi, the founder and Chief Executive Officer of IPic Entertainment. If you're wondering if it's even possible to use the word "bowling" and "luxury" in the same paragraph you're not alone. As one of America's favorite pastimes, bowling conjures up images of musty bars offering cheap beer, snack bars selling soggy nachos and more polyester on the floor than a second hand thrift store – a far cry from even the simplest concept of luxury.

Part of Hashemi's dream was to create a venue where entertainment seekers could come to one location and be offered a variety of choices. From sipping a glass of expensive champagne while watching the latest flick, to enjoying a seared tuna and sesame noodle salad in an upscale restaurant, to tossing a bowling ball down a lane as silky and smooth as the gourmet chocolates offered at the bar.

The result was IPic's new 'Great American Destination' located in the upscale Bayshore Town Center in Glendale, Wisconsin. This 38,000

square foot venue successfully combines an upscale dining experience with a plush bowling alley, and six ultra luxurious movie theatre auditoriums referred to as "screening rooms."

The screening rooms seat between 45-90 people and feature 24-inch risers with a vast 54 inches between rows. The seating is custom designed and includes reclining chairs, 6-foot wide love seats and swivel lounge style chairs toward the front. All rooms are equipped with the latest 2K DLP Cinema Barco installations and two 35mm projectors side by side. The crystal clear picture, combined with the high definition digital sound, creates a larger than life experience.

Hashemi was able to continue the upscale feel found within his cinema area into the bowling alley. The

bowling alley is equipped with 11 competition-sized designer lanes with impressive digital audio and a one of a kind 65-foot video wall. Couches take the place of the usual hardback plastic chairs and a stage is available for live entertainment. "Our space is designed very much like a Las Vegas showroom with all-banquette seating facing a stage," Hashemi said of the area.

Before construction of IPic even began, Hashemi realized that completing his vision of a high-end deluxe entertainment facility required more than lush theatre seating and gourmet dining. He needed a medium to effectively and professionally communicate information to his patrons about available entertainment options, movie times and dining choices. Hashemi knew this communication medium was key and had to be

**Digital works of art in the lobby periodically morph into film previews.**





Typical "now showing" boards are replaced by digital signage at iPic.

consistent and not take away from the high-end theme he wanted to portray. Therefore, traditional, static posters plastered to walls, or bulky 26-inch television monitors were not up to par to satisfy the vision.

To help solve this communication problem, Hashemi contacted Texas Digital Systems, a leading provider of integrated electronic display solutions. Having installed communication and display solutions in many cinema and entertainment venues throughout the world, Texas Digital was no stranger to Hashemi's vision.

The first task assigned to Texas Digital was to help determine exactly where the large LCD and Plasma displays were to be located. Location was of utmost importance as the displays were to be used not only to inform, but to also entertain patrons. Texas Digital worked hand in hand with IPic to review their construction plans

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and schematics to find the most suitable location for each of the displays.

The next task was determining how to deliver content onto the sleek flat-screen displays. Hashemi needed a system that would be user-friendly, yet robust enough to run several displays and versatile enough to allow for custom content. Texas Digital's VitalCAST software solution not only drives content shown on the displays, but also acts as a digital pallet for creating the content. VitalCAST provides company-wide control with real-time information such as movie titles and show times displayed on screen via an interface with the theatre's Point of Sale (POS) ticketing system. The software is powerful, yet extremely easy-to-use. Hashemi liked VitalCAST's scalable platform that gave his team the ability to coordinate and manage all of their displays, on site or remotely.



**IPic's Darryl Leversuch programs the digital signage on location at IPic, though the process is typically done remotely from the company's corporate offices in Florida.**

Hashemi was also intrigued by VitalCAST's ability to allow IPic to customize, change and update the content on each display in near-real-time. The software gives IPic complete control- enabling them to directly upload their information such as movie clips, movie posters, photos, menu and show information and have that information immediately displayed or scheduled to run at a particular time a day, week, or month. This versatility allows IPic to customize the displays' appearance in each area of the facility.

The result is a stunning digital signage communication system that fits perfectly

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trailers and advertisements for the in-house shows.

Along a wall adjacent to the bar is a plush seating area where patrons can sit and mingle in high fashion. IPic uses the VitalCAST system in this location to show high resolution images of fine art on large LCD displays framed in elegant wood. The displays along the wall appear to be actual paintings that alternate between art and movie clips.

into Hashemi's vision of mixing fabulous luxury with accessible entertainment supported by a versatile communications solution. Commenting on the finished product, Dennis Davidson, President and CEO of Texas Digital said "We are proud to be a part of IPic's strategic plans to provide a means of dynamic communication to their customers. The versatility of VitalCAST has led to its success in various industries

and we are excited to see the impact it is now having in the entertainment sector."

For IPic, the digital signs effectively communicate information to the patrons to let them know about each of the entertainment and dining options no matter where they happen to be in the facility. Outside the screening rooms the LCD displays mounted to the walls display movie

IPic's 'Great American Destination' in Glendale Wisconsin stands as an exceptional locale combining modern luxury with numerous choices of affordable entertainment. With the help of Texas Digital's digital signage solution, iPic has been able to enhance their guest's experience and provide a one-of-a-kind destination.

*For more information on Texas Digital, visit [www.txdigital.com](http://www.txdigital.com)  
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