



TOYOTA BRINGS NEW DIGITAL RETAIL CONCEPT TO SHOWROOMS WITH THE HELP OF PANASONIC DISPLAYS

OVER 4000 PANASONIC DISPLAYS DELIVERED ACROSS MORE THAN 2000 TOYOTA SHOWROOMS ALL OVER EUROPE





The process of buying a car has changed over the last decade and with this the role of the showroom itself.

With the internet, customers are more informed than ever and nowadays, customers arrive at the showroom already fully informed, often just seeking the final details from an expert before making their decision. This is the case with Toyota.

"For a long time Toyota were considered to have a market-leading showroom concept and strong customer service. While much of this is still true, we felt that our physical retail environment was in need of a renewal to come in to the digital age, that our customers were living in," Kirsten Raman, Network Development Manager at Toyota Motor Europe explains. "With that, an assessment was needed as how to engage with digitalisation and a consideration of the most appropriate role for our showroom staff. If we wish to build and enable more immersive retail experiences for our clients, following them through the entire customer journey, the Physical, Human and Digital touchpoints must be considered as a whole in our showrooms."

Immersive digital experience

To create this showroom experience, Toyota integrated digital aspects. First of all, digital product specification stands have been put next to the eye catchers of the showroom, often being the newly launched models. These stands allow customers to navigate at their own pace around the showroom. Secondly, salespeople received a specific application on their tablets on which they can configure the ideal car with the customer and consult relevant product and technology videos. It has been set up in a way that when relevant in the discussion with the customer the content of the tablet can be mirrored at any time to one of several totem TV stations that are available in the showroom.

"These Totem TVs together with the app our salespeople have on their tablets are the main elements in our digital concept," Kirsten Raman continues. "If the displays are not being used by the salespeople, they are used for digital signage, streaming video content from centrally set up playlists on Toyota's range and services."

High brightness and strong local networks

For the displays in these totem TVs, Toyota chose to utilise the 32- 42- 43- and 65-inch displays from Panasonic's LFE-series for higher brightness. One of the main reasons Toyota chose the Panasonic display range was its quality, mainly regarding the high resolution and brightness levels of the screens, which were able to offer a vivid image to customers.

"In addition, we knew that Panasonic had a strong distributor network in all countries that we were going to install the new showroom concept," Kirsten Raman explains. "They had the logistical knowledge and local people present to be able to deliver everything on schedule. Especially in large scale projects such as these, this is an advantage as we are talking about around 2,100 showrooms in 28 countries around Europe. This service component was vital for us as it gave us certain assurances that the rollout would be completed on schedule and without any problems."

The European rollout started in 2015 and is expected to be completed by 2017 covering all major markets like Italy, France but also up to Kazakhstan and Israel. The rollout itself is taking place in two big waves. A first wave, consisting of 2,200 Panasonic displays, started in 2014 and was completed at the end of 2015.

"The main reason for launching in two waves was the release of the new Toyota Aygo," Kirsten Raman explains. "As this was a car offering a lot of customisation opportunities, the network had to be ready to present it in a digital, immersive way. As we wanted to launch the new showroom concept simultaneously across Europe, we were happy that Panasonic was able to provide and deliver the necessary displays in a short time to aid in this launch in the different countries and local showrooms in time for the launch of the Aygo. The other displays are now being rolled out and will be completed by 2017."

Enhancing the customer experience

With the implementation of these new displays, the Toyota showroom concept is ready for the digital age, and, more importantly, Toyota can take customers on a journey when they arrive at the showroom. This also creates further engagement with the clients as now they have the feeling that they themselves are creating their customised car.

"Once they have chosen a model, the salesperson is able to push the content from his tablet application to the displays and further customise the car together with the client with regard to colour, interior upholstery and accessories, informing them along the way," Raman continues. "The important aspect with the Panasonic displays is that there is a crystal clear picture regarding the colour of the car. In comparison to a brochure, the chosen model with the colour of preference is being displayed in high quality on a big screen, allowing a much more engaging experience for the customer. We want to give the client a real view of what his or her car will eventually look like when it arrives."

"On the whole - the new digital concept, together with the Panasonic displays, have brought a new dynamic into our showrooms," Raman explains. "We do not need to use the classic paper brochures anymore to inform the customer, but can offer them a tool that is up to date with the modern times. In addition, the customer is more engaged during this journey, feeling that they are buying a car that they have created according to their specifications."