



Happy 20th Anniversary. YCD Multimedia!

It's not often that we see companies in our industry having been around for 20 years, but that's the case with YCD Multimedia, a major sponsor of 2019 New York Digital Signage Week.

We asked Sam Losar, CEO, why he thinks the company has not only lasted so long, but is constantly growing with an ever-bigger list of international and national clients.

"The main reason for our success and longevity over the years is our amazing team and our corporate culture," says Losar. "This helped us to be innovative, stay focused and address challenges and market changes efficiently and expeditiously.

"Our business philosophy and practices are based on long term partnerships with customers and business partners and the flexibility to adjust to changing customer's business needs. The key is not only providing the best technology and solutions, but also providing the best service and support over time.

"Some of our customers are key leading multinational corporations with whom we have been working and supporting for many years."

YCD's headquarters in Shefayim

Commercial Center, about 10 miles north of Tel Aviv, Israel, is the site for its R&D, technology development, and marketing. It opened its New York office in 2010 to handle sales for North and South America, and it established an office in Shanghai with a local partner in 2018 to handle sales in the Asia-Pacific region.

While the U.S. is currently YCD's biggest growth market, "The Asia Pacific market - especially China - is growing rapidly and we would like to capitalize on our success in other territories and increase our footprint in China," Losar says. "We have very strong sales in both the U.S. and the European markets," says Losar. "We also sell in the Israeli market, a small market but with many innovative customers."

"One main difference between the U.S. and European markets is that the U.S. is a large and homogenous market with well-established system integrators and other partners that cover large geographical territories and can reach a large number of customers. In Europe, from a sales perspective, you may need to operate differently in different countries with

different cultures and operations. The basics between the US and the European markets are the same but in actuality, the implementation is different."

Originally majority owned by a group of Venture Capitalists, YCD's majority ownership was acquired in 2016 by a group of private investors who saw its growth potential. YCD had acquired Cnario in 2011 where Losar had been general manager. He was president of YCD N.A. prior to being named CEO in 2014.

"The acquisition of Cnario had a synergistic effect at YCD," says Losar. "It helped accelerate growth by increasing market share with a wider product offering and customer base. It also resulted in operational efficiency."

Today, Cnario digital signage suite is one of YCD's four main products. It's a digital signage playback, distribution and content management platform - a full end-to-end digital signage →



solution. Cnario enables creation, management, monitoring and control of digital signage networks through easy-to-follow workflows that provide low total cost of ownership.

Other products include:

- . YCD Player, a SaaS platform, geared for the retail market and ideal for standalone screening;

- . YCD RAMP, a web-based platform for in-store campaign management;

- . YCD Insight, a real time analytics tool that provides demographic statistics on the number of in-store visitors and provides anonymous data on shopper age, gender and viewing angle.

“Cnario software suite is our flagship product,” says Losar. “It’s used to create and manage DOOH networks

and connect retailers, brands, corporations and transportation facilities to shoppers, consumers, employees, visitors and travelers. It contains a powerful combination of tools used to create immersive and engaging customer/user experiences that uniquely fit the corporation’s objectives. Any display element (single screen, video wall, LED, collage) becomes a single homogenous canvas of pixels allowing for massive flexibility in the creation of experiences. In many cases, we are working with high profile experiential creative agencies that are using Cnario’s tools to implement the experiences that they created for the customer. The Cnario solution is easily scalable to multiple locations and is designed as an open architecture,

allowing simple integration with third party applications and systems.

YCD recently announces the full compatibility of its CPMs with BrightSign players. With this new capability, using YCD RAMP digital signage management system, any retail customer can play and control its content on any screen powered by a BrightSign Series 4 XD or XT player.

“Our main focus in the near future is enhancing all our Digital Signage Software product lines with the development of a brand new UI/UX,” says Losar. “This will provide an enhanced user experience for our customers and partners and allow our customers to use all three products under a single UI.

“We are also enhancing the →



Cnario API to allow customers and partners to design their own interface and to customize their workflow and system logic.”

“We display content on 120,000 screens in 70 countries around the globe, to over 250 million eyeballs and playing a trillion hours of content,” says Revital Alcalay, vice-president marketing. “And we have 95% repeat customers.”

Alcalay, who joined YCD two years ago, works out of the Israel offices. She has worked in both London and Israel during her career, including as vice-president marketing and business development at SpaceLL, and held several positions in the art world,

including as editor-in-chief of Israel Art Now book.

Among its clients, YCD has supported Microsoft since the inception of Microsoft retail in 2009. Its Flagship stores in Sydney, New York and now, its newest one in London, are, in a word, ‘mind-blowing’.

“Microsoft’s implementation of in-store digital experiences is unique and very sophisticated in several aspects,” says Losar. “It’s a network of 84 locations that each has a very large video wall(s) and LEDs (London and NY). We collectively call video walls, LEDs and collages ‘canvases’. What makes the Microsoft in-store digital media implementation unique is the

way these large ‘canvases’ are used to create the customer experiences - specifically, through the complexity of the templates and logic, the magnitude and sophistication of the content, and the scalability to 84 locations with a large video wall in each location.

In terms of experiences, Microsoft’s three floor London Flagship store has laid out everything it has to offer, including surface devices on every floor, HoloLens headsets, a big Xbox gaming lounge, and, get this: a real-life McLaren Senna sports car that’s hooked up to Forza, a series of semi-sim racing video games for Xbox consoles and Microsoft Windows published by Xbox Game Studios. →



The Oxford Circus store, located in a heritage building, has giant colourful 4K video walls everywhere that rotate through Minecraft, Surface and other promotions. There's everything you'd expect and more, including an AR experience. Visitors can actually jump into the McLaren Senna sports car and virtually race around the Silverstone track. This McLaren has been modified, so it moves, vibrates and even has Xbox buttons integrated onto the gas tank.

The three floors have everything you'd expect and more: an Answer Desk; a Surface Design Lab where customers choose from several UK-themed designs and have them etched onto a Surface Type Cover; large gaming areas; a workspace area, which will host classes for local school students and teachers to get them up to speed on using Minecraft: Education Edition and more. The third floor has meeting rooms and event spaces, and is less of a retail space than the rest of the store and more of a sales pitch to big businesses operating in London and across Europe. YCD screens are everywhere.

With the digital signage industry continuing to grow at a fast pace, Losar sees that growth happening in several directions.

"In the retail market, there is a strong focus on enhanced brand experiences," says Losar. "As competition among retailers is growing, they must find ways to differentiate and create a brand loyalty. This includes 'smart', interactive content to engage customers and achieve maximum impact. Rather than just a physical place to buy products, stores are becoming more of experience centres to deliver cohesive brand value messages and to educate



customers about products and other offerings.

"Another trend I see is related to displays. There is a strong trend toward multi-display arrangements such as video walls and collages as well as a very strong trend toward using LED displays for outdoor and indoor implementations. This allows customers to better fit the displays to their physical spaces. We call these collectively, 'display canvases' where customers and creative agencies have much more flexibility to address those canvases with enticing content.

"Scalability is another important growth factor - not in the sense of adding displays and locations, but in the ability to create the digital experiences as mentioned above and to scale them to many locations. This requires strong capabilities in content management and content deployment.

"The above trends are not only relevant for the retail market. We see them also in the transportation market in addition to the advertisement selling displays. Other strong trends are measurement and analytics to enhance the engagement with customers, delivering a better focused measurement and increased ROI.

"In the corporate communications and education markets, we see trends toward more dynamic content. In

addition to the 'traditional' simple basic messages on screen, many organizations are looking to utilize the digital displays for more dynamic messages, to deliver messages more frequently and engage employees. Some companies have established local media development departments in order to implement this."

Losar, who travels to Israel several times a year to meet with the team there, says, "From the vertical markets point of view, we will continue YCD's main focus on the retail, corporate and transportation markets."



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