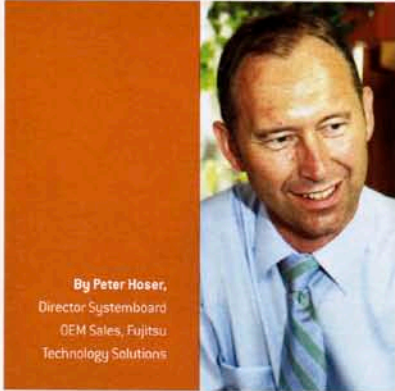


DIGITAL SIGNAGE | RETAIL



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# Supermarket Signage

## Introduction

Supermarket chain Rewe has broken ranks with the mainstream of German retailers to implement digital signage in-store. Peter Hoser tells us more about his company's experience working alongside Rewe.

## Background

In German-speaking countries, digital signage solutions in shops are still less common than in Britain. Even big supermarkets are still focussing on the classic ways of advertising, such as public address announcements in shops and promotional posters. The food chain Rewe, which has traditionally been a leading player with respect to digital signage, has now decided to supplement static advertising media in North Rhine-Westphalia with digital signage. The fresh food counters of 45 markets in the area of Rewe Dortmund have been equipped with four to five screens for each counter.

## The Client

Rewe Group is one of the leading German and European food and tourism companies, with a staff of 319,000 in 16 European countries. Rewe Dortmund Großhandels is an independent part of Rewe Group that operates regionally. It's a cooperative of more than 300 independent retailers and supplier to 540 markets in North Rhine-Westphalia. They are particularly interested in marketing products of the region.

## The Requirements

Thomas Middendorf from Rewe Dortmund's advertising department explains:

"For us, it is important to specifically address customers in the region with dynamic, up-to-date advertising content via a unified communication platform, throughout the entire opening time. Now, the advertisements for the whole week are created in a coordinated effort by our in-house advertising department, enhanced by product pictures, information about specialities and additional offers like cookery videos. After the completion of the current testing period, retailers can make individual modifications. Thus, clients get further purchase incitements and we are able to react swiftly."

The fresh food counters are an ideal place for the digital signage application. It helps customers pass the time while queuing up, and the retailer can create further incentives for costumers to buy. This means that everybody benefits from the installation.

## The Solution

The solution is based on a closed network with a central server system, installed at

Rewe Dortmund's head office. The branches have access to this internal network in which the PC systems and displays are integrated.

According to Nordland Systems, which specialises in developing and implementing digital signage solutions for the POS/POI, it usually takes six to twelve months from a company's initial decision for implementing digital signage to roll out. At Rewe Dortmund, the trial period took four months. The actual installation in the markets was done within one day and the initial contract period concerning service and maintenance is three years. Although the system runs smoothly, there were some teething problems in the first place, caused by operating errors on site. The problem was quickly solved.

Setting up a hotline helped avoid such problems during the rest of the project. Thomas Middendorf at Rewe concluded that "all in all, we are very satisfied with the solution, and we also receive positive feedback from customers."

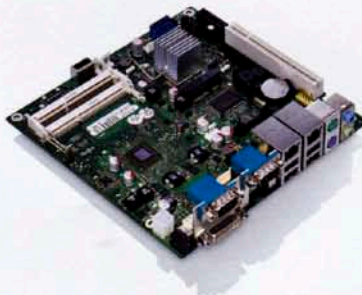
Many have contributed to the realisation of the project. At the heart of the digital signage player is the industrial mainboard D3003-S2, which was made in Germany by Fujitsu, as was the IPC housing. The embedded building block based on AMD's Embedded G-Series was assembled and configured by Extra Computer, who also installed its basic software load. The finished application PC was equipped with a 42-inch LG display by Nordland, the company that also installed the system at Rewe and integrated it into the retailer's enterprise network. The digital signage software used is CMS Prestigeenterprise by Online Software AG.

## Things that Matter

In addition to their price-performance ratio, the performance of digital signage solutions at the POS plays a decisive role. When it comes to solutions used for advertising, users make particularly high demands on graphics despite their desire for minimising costs. Another key issue is system ruggedness. After all, the instore TV devices are in continuous service during opening hours, and climatic conditions behind refrigerated display cases in supermarkets are more extreme than in office spaces, a fact that can affect the lifetime of components.

Many other suppliers try to fulfil these requirements using standard PCs. This may only appear justified as long as the processor's performance is treated as an isolated parameter, because office PC systems are designed for 8/5 service (8 hours per day on 5 days per week). Advertising screens, on the other hand, have to perform 12 hours per day or more, if one assumes that shops are usually open from 7 am to 8 pm, for 6 days per week.

This is why Nordland use industrial or semi-industrial PCs designed for 24/7 operation in an extended temperature



## Major German retailer adopts digital signage

range with a high degree of system stability. "We have decided to use the Fujitsu kit because it combines reliability and flexibility with the required performance and a good price-performance ratio," explained Andreas Pankow, General Manager of Nordland. "Thanks to the kit solution, we were presented with a complete system in no time, including all the necessary drivers. Services such as providing sample hardware for testing the pilot version were also very helpful."

The Mini-ITX board D3003-S2 fits the requirement profile as it was designed for continuous operation in industrial applications and because it provides high computing power in spite of its small size, the form factor being an important aspect when it comes to installing machines in the narrow spaces behind counters. AMD's Embedded G-Series with its integrated GPU supports DirectX 11 and makes it possible to use HD content while retaining a low level of power consumption.

### Managing Costs

In addition to the cost of designing and installing an application of this type, it is always important to consider follow-up costs as well. Reliability is an important aspect in this context because a failed PC not only makes an unfavourable impression on shoppers, but also causes financial losses in three different ways. Not only does the service technician need to be paid, but the decrease of buying incentives also causes a loss in earnings. Furthermore, such systems are often funded by integrating paid content from external advertising partners, so any downtime means fewer receipts from this channel as well.

A particularly big problem with regards to follow-up costs is the availability of components. Almost every PC system requires at least some minor sort of adaptation of the software. Over the whole project, Rewe were able to keep to the budget, although the company decided not to use paid

content by external advertisers in favour of presenting their own content, which makes cost-efficiency even more important. The only additional costs were caused by the need to train employees in the advertising and IT departments to use the new software.

### Further perspectives

In the future, Rewe Dortmund is planning to equip all new branches with the instore TV system. But the system also allows for further expansion beyond that. It could handle all POS communication of prices and advertising content. The system supports cross-media operations such as printing price tags and posters or integrating scales.

