



DISPLAYLED: IN PROFILE

PRIDING ITSELF AS BEING A COMPREHENSIVE AND SUCCESSFUL LED VIDEO SCREEN COMPANY, DISPLAYLED HAS DEVELOPED A STRONG REPUTATION IN THE INDUSTRY, OFFERING MULTIPLE PRODUCTS INCLUDING ITS OWN DIGILED BRAND, CHINA SOURCING SERVICE AND ENGINEERING EXPERTISE TO SUIT ANY PROJECT. IT IS ALSO ONE OF THE LARGEST BUYERS OF LED EQUIPMENT IN THE WORLD. TPI'S ZOE MUTTER SPOKE TO COMPANY FOUNDER, GRAHAM BURGESS, ABOUT DISPLAYLED'S SUCCESS SECRET AND THE FUTURE FOR THE LED SCREEN PRODUCT INDUSTRY.

Founded a decade ago by Graham Burgess, formerly General Manager of Sony Jumbotron and Director and shareholder of Lighthouse Technologies, displayLED was initially a broker of used large screen displays, CRT and LED. The company listed equipment to be sold on a specialist website and remarketed it to potential users around the world - a business model that continues to this day as displayLED has evolved to become a successful LED supplier. The company is proud to have designed and manufactured innovative LED products under its award-winning digiLED brand, alongside other business areas including maintenance contracts and turnkey installations.

With no electronics experience in his early years, Burgess originally worked in the tool manufacturing industry, until - at the age of 21 - he was offered a job at the Rank Organisation, selling early video projectors to working men's clubs, discos and businesses. When he

demonstrated the products people were excited to learn more about the totally new concept. "As the technology developed," he said, "I realised I understood it better than many of my professional colleagues as I had witnessed the changes first hand."

Burgess joined Sony in the mid '80s, after working at Rank Video Systems and Barco. This move later saw him become General Manager of Sony's JumboTron, overseeing sales to many high-profile clients. "The CRT technology this was based on was superseded by LED, initially developed by SACO Technologies in Canada, Invision in the UK and Chromatek in Japan," he said. "Where there were once four or five major video brands, there were soon several hundred making LED. I established Pixelite [part of the Avesco Group and owners of Creative Technology] in 1998 to provide a high-end LED service aiming for big rental companies and high profile installations. That company was soon bought by Hong Kong-based Lighthouse Technologies, where I became Sales and

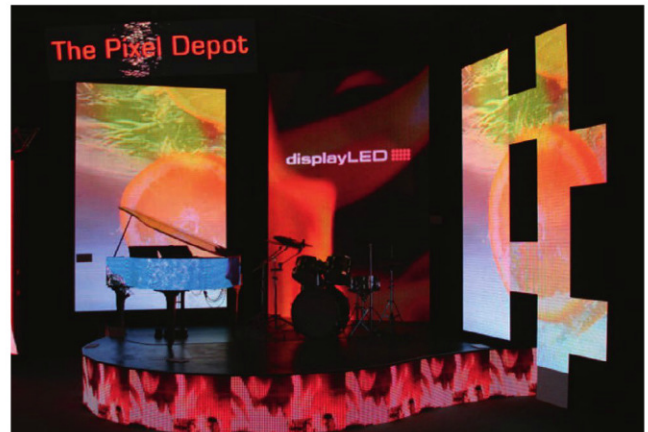
Marketing Director and European MD."

THE PERFECT BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Burgess was later inspired to launch displayLED after realising rental companies were looking for LED panels that matched current inventories. He spotted a business opportunity in matching used kit requirements with availability and moving second hand equipment about to meet clients' needs. In 2003 - and with the support of the network of contacts he had built up - Burgess decided to launch the business in an office at his home, initially brokering deals between rental companies.

Although in its infancy the company sold used screens, clients increasingly asked for advice on the best equipment available, the service evolved to include sales of new equipment with displayLED acting as an independent Broker. One of the company's early successes was its involvement in the Piccadilly Circus display for Coca-Cola, a long-time client. displayLED has gone from strength to strength

Opposite: The digiLED MC range has been deployed on high profile global productions including Bruce Springsteen's world tour. Below: The company was responsible for the installation and maintenance of the Coca Cola display at Piccadilly Circus; The company launched its inaugural showroom, The Pixel Depot, last September; displayLED is also proud to have been involved in P!nk's touring production; The displayLED team.



since and - with offices on four continents and customers in five - produces screens of a high quality that are also practical and affordable, for multiple uses, including retail, exhibition, venue and touring.

As testament to the adaptability of displayLED; its products have featured on the tours of many a high-profile artist and a variety of other applications, including an interactive exhibition display for Google.

Back when the company was founded, CRT (Cathode Ray Tube) and FDT (Fluorescent Discharge Tube) technologies were becoming obsolete, having been superseded by LED. However, all three technologies were sold by displayLED. "The industry was small and unstructured back then," said Burgess. "And the used screen business model was welcomed, particularly by rental companies and finance houses who were struggling to make sense of resale values and after market opportunities."

From this point on, the business developed rapidly, winning contracts with Coca Cola, Arsenal and the RFU, as well as supplying equipment to major rental companies - Creative Technology, Mediatec (formerly Massteknik) and PSL. "The speed of growth was reflected by moves to increasingly bigger West London offices and a customised warehouse and technical facility on a farm in Surrey,

displayLED's HQ to this day," continued Burgess. Offices in Helsinki, Croatia, South Africa and Germany followed as the digiLED branded range of products were introduced in 2005.

A CHANGE IN THE INDUSTRY

In 2003 fewer than 200 companies owned LED equipment around the world in the rental and staging market - a massive increase from the mid '90s when there were fewer than ten with large scale outdoor displays. "Today almost 50 rental companies in the UK alone operate LED displays and worldwide operators run into the thousands. Now any self-respecting Production Manager will specify significant quantities of high resolution LED in his shows, an event without LED is a rarity in 2013," commented Burgess.

"In the early 2000's a 10mm indoor display sold for the same price as sub 2mm pitch displays are selling for today. To give some perspective on the affordability of the technology, on a cost per pixel basis this means LED costs 1/25th of the price it sold for at the turn of the century!"

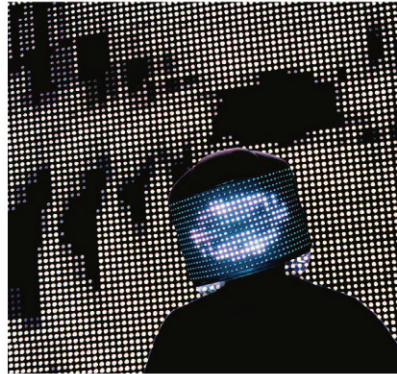
The company's approach to the live events business is very simple, explained the company founder. The company asks customers what product they need and either find it or build it for them depending upon the volume required.

"On a daily basis, displayLED is contacted by event companies around the world looking for standard or bespoke products for their events," said Burgess. The Display LED Group subsidiary displayLED (HK), based in Hong Kong and Shenzhen, has a team of logistics and QC specialists who spend their lives in LED factories, looking for new products, monitoring production and arranging shipments for displayLED clients around the world. The China sourcing service operates chiefly in China, Japan, Taiwan and Korea - negotiating pricing and terms that surpass anything a westerner could hope to achieve. The technical team is headed by Steven de Keukeleire, an ex Barco designer, who brings a western understanding to the standards required by displayLED customers. Cherry Tsai, a Chinese national who has worked at three LED manufacturers, also brings her expertise. Between them and the extended team, they have specifying, building and logistics all covered.

The company works closely with Chinese manufacturers and modifies products to meet customers' requirements, while still ensuring they remain affordable. These relationships enabled the development of the digiLED brand and products such as the T series and award winning digiFLEX, which were produced with in-house expertise supplemented by support from

COMPANY PROFILE: displayLED

Below: displayLED Founder, Graham Burgess; digiFLEX was chosen by musician Squarepusher for the helmet he wore on tour; displayLED can bring to life the screen in situ, with its ability to produce renderings for large projects.



the chosen manufacturer.

Part of the digiLED range's development involved the launch of MC / MK series, the first batch of which was delivered four months after the initial design consultation. This summer, the company reached 10,000 modules of MC / MK digiLED range in the marketplace and its new IT tile - featuring remote diagnostics and an IP67 rating - has also been well received.

Burgess is keen to point out that the company is not all about him, the wider team at displayLED also have a vast amount of experience under their belt. Guy Horrigan, Commercial Director, worked at Invision, Blitz Lighthouse, and Paul Hine, General Manager was previously at Lighthouse for a decade. Tom Mudd, who heads up the technical team has worked on screens all over the world, including the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and Robbie Williams' world tour, and he is also responsible for the design of the screen and broadcast systems at The O2 Arena. "The people at displayLED make us stand out from our competitors, they have seen every development in the sector first hand," Burgess stressed.

GLOBAL GROWTH

Amongst the targets the company aims to achieve this year is developing the Hong Kong sourcing team with a larger headcount and wider range of technical skills, possibly into fields beyond LED displays. "The growth of Hong Kong has been faster than anticipated and we have large companies looking for help with procurement, particularly in China," commented Burgess. "The Middle East has been on the radar for some time and as the business grows in the region, so must our presence. However, the big challenge for 2013 is the US. The US economy has recovered rapidly and now accounts for over 50% of the group's turnover. To support the business, displayLED is recruiting sales and technical staff, whilst also looking at acquisitions in America."

The company has three ranges of product - fixed installation products, rental and events and creative LED. The total number of product options is around 100, with displayLED being best known for its MC Series touring products that have featured on the tours of Bruce

Springsteen and P!nk this summer. When designing the MC range, displayLED simply built what the rental companies were asking for. "The number of enquiries received for digiFLEX, (flexible rubber LED tile) is also astonishing," said Burgess. "Chinese copies undermine sales to a high degree, but digiFLEX remains the original and only reliable option."

A new range of fixed installation products - digiLED IT (Intelligent Tile) - was launched to positive industry response and recent installations in challenging climatic environments like Montreal, Orlando and Helsinki have proven it to be incredibly reliable. "Outdoor media companies love the IT as it is IP67, can be installed quickly in large sections and is highly reliable in all environments," he added.

NEW INITIATIVES

The emphasis and focus of displayLED changes constantly, every 18 months the company introduces a new initiative, sometimes something new, sometimes improvements to existing offerings. "displayLED is small enough to move quickly and no external shareholders means decisions can be made fast, but we are big enough to invest in what we believe in," said Burgess.

"Avoiding owning our own factories has been critical; we can keep overheads low, but still innovate with new products."

displayLED prides itself on always going where the market takes it. The company has customers that it has serviced for 20 years in the field through a variety of products and services. "By staying close to our customers we can collectively anticipate and sometimes together develop trends," said Burgess. "During the last 10 years live events have been as little as 20% of what we do, but right now it is probably nearer 60%, but this will change again in the next two years."

STATE-OF-THE-ART SHOWROOM

displayLED launched its inaugural showroom, The Pixel Depot, last September. The Surrey-based state-of-the-art showroom and industry resource is designed to be Europe's most comprehensive collection of LED video displays. Along with some of the company's

product launches, The Depot is one of displayLED's proudest achievements. Offering a comprehensive range of screens and a place for clients to educate their customers in a vast array of LED offerings, the showroom displays a regularly refreshed range of market-leading technology, with 22 different LED screens on show at any one time.

"Just as importantly, we wanted to train and educate specifiers (architects and designers), give rental companies and creative people somewhere to show clients new technologies and provide a space where our customers can test concepts in a low risk environment," said Burgess. "Judging by the daily use it receives I'd say we have met our objectives big time. Our customers love it!"

A HIGHLY VALUED RESOURCE

The company trains all new customers, usually on site when equipment is delivered, and this helps them understand how good their technical people are. displayLED's techs are always at big events, motor shows and sports venues providing support and as they all come from events backgrounds they have a lot of empathy with clients. "We also train resellers and partners and of course The Pixel Depot is a huge training resource that is highly valued," said Burgess.

Looking forward, Burgess concluded, "We are always looking for new opportunities; we are looking at a new range of AV rental products specifically aimed at markets where the current range is coming to the end of its lifecycle. Our growth in the gaming sector has been encouraging; basically, we're listening to our customers and anticipating their needs. That's what we have always aimed to do and will continue to do so."

In the next five years, Burgess expects LED prices to continue to drop and therefore the company is aiming to generate a greater volume of product. He believes that LED will be adopted as standard at an increasing number of live events, as well as for advertising and communication purposes.

TPI

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