



Tom Nix



# The Wow Factor

Las Vegas expos offer companies world-class showcases to exhibit their products

**S**CALA INC. CEO TOM NIX has had a long-term love affair with Las Vegas, which is not surprising. Scala is a leader in digital signage and display software, and Las Vegas is arguably the digital signage capital of the world. “There’s a wow factor when you walk down the street in Vegas,” says Nix, “and it’s all about how people receive and interact with visual information.”

Scala has a lot to do with making Las Vegas sparkle, and vice versa. The software maker counts on Las Vegas trade shows and meetings to promote its wares and focus attention on digital media’s vast and growing potential. Scala’s 2,500-square-foot exhibit at Las Vegas’ giant Digital Signage Expo, held each March, showcases cutting-edge communications for such varied industries as retail, transportation and hospitality.

At next spring’s DSE, Scala will emphasize the growing interaction between large digital screens and handheld mobile devices. The company will show, for example, how a smartphone can find a sign on a casino wall that locates a nearby Italian restaurant, then download the directions along with a menu.

Nix also sees Las Vegas as the ideal place to get customers and colleagues thinking about digital communication solutions to the challenge of information overload. “Casinos like Harrah’s leverage their data to deliver a very personalized customer experience—through membership clubs and customer relationship programs,” he says.

“That’s part of Scala’s DNA—personalizing data on a screen, whether for a shopper in a store or for people in a corporate environment. We can take existing data from a platform like Salesforce.com and display it with broadcast quality.”

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That capability, Nix argues, enables companies to cut through the info clutter and keep employees focused on key performance goals in sales, customer relationship management, production or other areas.

### A PLACE FOR BONDING

Scala software powers digital signs worldwide, but the company sees Las Vegas as a uniquely effective showplace because of its electric atmosphere. “Las Vegas is great fun,” Nix says, “and that’s significant. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve gone to Las Vegas expecting to meet with business acquaintances, only to leave there realizing that those people have become real friends.”

To Nix, Las Vegas is a place where people tend to bond with one another—over great meals, great golf and entertainment, or maybe a great hike in nearby Red Rock Canyon.

Thousands of trade show organizers and participants share his enthusiasm. Las Vegas has reigned as North America’s leading meeting and convention site for 17 straight years. With more than 150,000 hotel rooms and more than 10.6 million square feet of exhibit space, the city hosts more of the largest trade shows than the two runners-up combined. More than 18,000 meetings, conventions and incentive programs will come to town this year, ranging in size from 10 to well over 100,000 attendees.

Research shows that Las Vegas attracts people like no other venue. On average, meeting attendance increases by 13% when meetings and trade shows are held there. Hotel rooms, whether budget or five-star luxury, are the most affordable of any major destination, says a recent Hotels.com survey, and Las Vegas’ McCarran International Airport, with more than 900 flights daily, offers nonstop service to 120+ U.S. cities.

Scale and cost-effective marketing are only part of what Las Vegas has to offer. As Nix puts it, “The city’s vibrancy and energy are unique. Las Vegas and the Digital Signage Expo have been instrumental in helping us secure any number of meaningful client relationships.” Little wonder that business leaders leave Las Vegas feeling wowed. ●

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