

# NEWS

## Screenvolution - Living Canvas

The new AI era makes agents the most important partners

20 April 2026, Tobias Engl



There are technological moments in history that can only be properly categorized in retrospect. For the world of digital signage, that moment is happening right now, quietly but with the force of a fundamental paradigm shift. What we recently referred to as an "AI feature" - often little more than a somewhat clever algorithm for playlist rotations - has evolved into something completely new in 2026: systems that analyze, decide, interact and act autonomously. When you walk through a modern hotel lobby or a smart department store today, you are no longer staring at a digital poster; you are encountering a digital counterpart.

The figures are clear: according to the latest *State of Digital Signage Report* the AI adoption rate has skyrocketed from a modest 12% two years ago to an impressive 41%. This is no longer an evolution in small steps, this is a quantum leap. At ScreenWay, we see this change on three levels that are redefining the playing field. On the first level, we have classic automation, where the AI takes care of the "paperwork". Scheduling and reporting run by magic as long as humans set the rules. At the second level, real intelligence moves in: The screens analyze the context, recognize the weather or the demographics of the viewers and adapt the content. But the real revolution is taking place on the third level, "agentic AI".

Here, the screen mutates into an autonomous agent that communicates across system boundaries with databases, merchandise management systems and building technology; ultimately, it interacts. Here, the human only defines the goal, the AI chooses the path to get there independently.

A look at our day-to-day work shows how concretely this magic is already working. Probably the most visible change in the last 18 months is the end of the "blank screen". Thanks to AI suites, as perfected by providers such as Revel Digital in early 2026, complex multi-zone layouts are now created with a simple voice command. Anyone who uploads a photo of a desired design receives it back seconds later as a functioning template. This is not a technical toy, but a real business turbo. When a hotel's kitchen team types the new dishes into the system in the morning, the AI uses them to create a finished menu board without going through the graphics department - perfectly tailored to the time of day, the current occupancy rate and the corporate design.

But AI can do more than just look pretty; it has eyes in its head. Modern signage systems use camera or sensor-based analyses to understand the audience in real time. This is of course fully GDPR-compliant thanks to anonymized data streams. The screen "sees" when predominantly international guests are in the lobby and changes the language or adjusts the font size for an older travel group. Leading providers such as Navori Labs are already linking these insights with programmatic advertising: the right content for the right target group, broadcast in milliseconds with measurable success.

The topic of AI avatars is particularly lively. The term sounded like science fiction for a long time, but by 2026 these digital employees will be an integral part of the service mix. Whether as an interactive stele at reception or as a holographic consultant in the store - avatars have real conversations. They understand nuances, respond empathetically and are fluent in over 100 languages. Gartner is already predicting that by 2029, a whopping 80% of all standard service requests will be resolved by such AI systems. In economic terms, this is a stroke of genius: while a human employee in 24/7 service incurs high fixed costs, the avatar takes over first-level support for a fraction of the budget and frees up the team for the really complex, important cases.

The crowning glory of this development, however, is the AI agent that takes the initiative itself. Thanks to new standards such as the Model Context Protocol (MCP), AI now acts like a "USB port for intelligence". It connects seamlessly to enterprise systems such as ServiceNow or Salesforce. An agent that reads the hotel management system knows immediately when a VIP guest checks in and automatically adjusts the welcome screen on all relevant screens. It recognizes hardware problems before the display goes black and automatically creates a maintenance ticket.

And what will the next wave bring? We're looking at emotion recognition that recognizes when queues are getting restless and lets avatars almost physically enter the room on 3D displays. We are moving towards a world where agents negotiate with other agents (A2A) to create the best possible experience for the customer.

For ScreenWay customers, all this means one thing above all: digital signage is no longer a static communication tool. It is an active, thinking participant in the company's success. The screen sees, thinks and acts. It relieves staff, increases sales through precise personalization and delivers measurable KPIs for every single pixel. The question in 2026 is no longer whether to integrate AI - but who will build the infrastructure today so as not to be left behind tomorrow. ScreenWay accompanies you on this journey - from the first smart template to the fully autonomous, interactive screen network. The future is already wireless today - you just have to look.