

ComQi Gives Hardware to Kramer in License-Only Deal

Written by Bob Snyder
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Make up your mind, really... should hardware and software be bundled under a single brand to create more effective digital solutions-- or not?

Most software developers and most hardware companies form alliances with one another to build a strategic network of complementary suppliers to chase the Holy Grail of digital signage: a seamless end-to-end solution instead of today's mishmash.

When, last June, EnQii Holdings and Minicom Digital Signage (MDS) merged their respective software and hardware companies to create **ComQi**, the aim was "to provide integrators with an end-to-end solution encompassing media distribution, network management, content management and proof-of-performance." While reducing their individual capital and operational costs, of course.

Their vision, "to create a seamless platform to allow targeted consumer messages to be delivered with pinpoint accuracy to digital signage, mobile and computer screens," sounded worthy and achievable.

But somewhere along the path, in less than a year, something went astray.

Announced at ISE, ComQi just signed an agreement that provides **Kramer Electronics** with exclusive manufacturing, sales and marketing rights for ComQi's (former Minicom Digital

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Signage) Media Distribution products-- and for rights for ComQi to market and distribute Kramer's products to its customer base.

For Kramer, it's a sweet deal as **no cash was paid**. For ComQi, they get out of the hardware-making business but get another Israeli factory producing hardware they can resell. That smacks of hardware-shyness, yet ComQi is touting its intention to sell even an even wider assortment of Kramer hardware to its client base. Let's see if that works out by next year this time.

"Once a software company, always a software company" goes the saying. Hardware and software corporate cultures differ as much as Greek and German society...so is ComQi ducking out on hardware or can it really sell more full signage solutions by acting as a Kramer sales rep?

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