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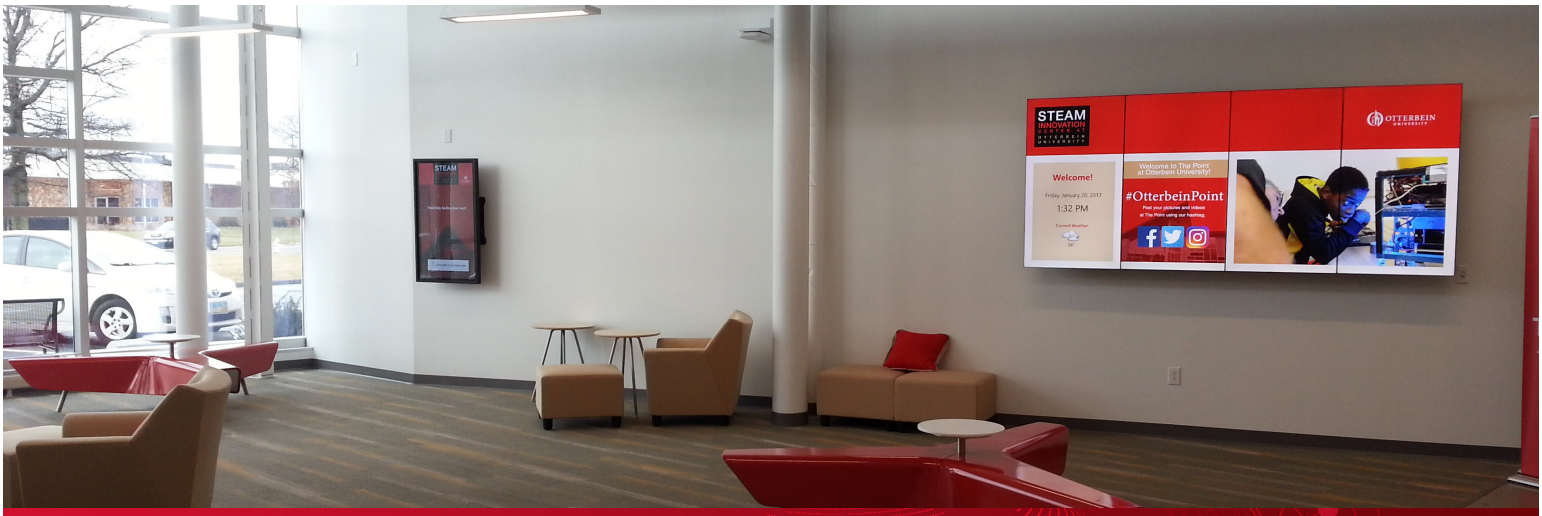

Staying Ahead of the Curve: Adding Transformational Technology with Abundant Natural Light

Background

Founded in 1847, Otterbein University is a private university in Westerville, Ohio that serves about 3,000 students. It offers 74 majors and 44 minors as well as eight graduate programs. Otterbein has a rich legacy of educating generations of learners, but recently found a stumbling block that, unless corrected, could hinder its track record of excellence. The problem was that the professors and faculty would expend great effort to create visually engaging content to support and augment their lessons and lectures, but the visual technology, such as projectors and large screen displays, were falling short in a number of ways. Architecturally, Otterbein's buildings were designed to enhance natural light features. In many classrooms and lecture halls, though, this natural light was preventing the content from being clearly visible to students. This was a mission-critical issue and one that was pervasive around campus. Not only that, the projectors and displays were outdated and becoming difficult to manage—requiring frequent helpdesk support and prone to breakdowns and costly repairs.

Enabling Educational Excellence

Willie Franklin, Senior Technology Specialist for Otterbein University, Information and Technology Services, led the effort of upgrading the visual technology across the campus to meet the evolving needs of today's students. He took a scientific approach by requesting and setting up pilot deployments of various products and solutions from different companies to test how they functioned in the real world in terms of future-proof tech, ease-of-use, visual clarity and quality/reliability. Sharp

The Challenge:

Otterbein University was facing an impasse between an architectural need for abundant natural light and the ability for students to clearly see the information on displays and projector screens in classrooms and digital signage around campus.

Solution:

A plethora of products used as monitors within classrooms and throughout campus, including over 75 P525UL laser projectors, 55-inch 2x2 video walls and V series displays in 40-inches and larger used for presentations, wayfinding and signage across the campus

Result:

An aesthetically inspiring solution that transformed 125 learning spaces, theaters and walkways with state-of-the-art, energy efficient, reliable and crystal clear display technology that went beyond satisfying all the wants and needs of the architects, technologists, professors and students

Imaging and Information Company of America came out on top and made it through his rigorous pilot program with flying colors and was selected as the technology provider.

Working Together

Franklin worked to create a dream team comprised of experts in classroom and event support, faculty staff, facilities management professionals, technologists, architects, and local integrators, to design learning spaces that seamlessly integrate and maximize the NEC technology.

Franklin and team ended up outfitting more than 125 learning spaces with NEC projectors and displays that will serve the University for many years to come.

Budgeting for Innovation

Not only are NEC projectors and displays designed to be future-proof, in order to enable flexibility in integrating new approaches to teaching and learning, their efficiencies align with Otterbein University's approach to conservation. Visitors will see solar panels on the roofs and electric golf carts zipping around campus. Green initiatives are part of the big picture and long-term plans for the school.

Franklin chose to integrate more LED displays which not only brought more energy savings and reliability, but also an improvement leap in image quality. He implemented laser projectors, which require little to no maintenance, and manage energy consumption much more effectively. Since installation, Franklin has calculated a notable drop in Kwh hours used and is pleased with the reduction of energy consumed across campus.

Ease of Use

No two faculty have the same teaching style, and with countless apps and programs, mobile devices and computers, professors can use during their lectures. NEC products are designed to be both extremely easy and intuitive to use, but also platform agnostic with powerful networking capabilities. This includes the ability to enable various presentation programs, collaborative video conferencing systems—which became vital during the COVID-19 shutdowns-- as well as centrally-managed, campus wide digital signage and more.

The products are so easy to use that Franklin reported an immediate and significant reduction in help desk and troubleshooting calls and requests.

At the end of the day, Franklin is extremely satisfied with the implementation. "We brought in NEC hardware to integrate visual technology into new spaces but also to replace existing, smaller and less reliable displays throughout the campus," he said. "All things considered, the buy-in was low and the benefits were enormous."

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