55 Water Street

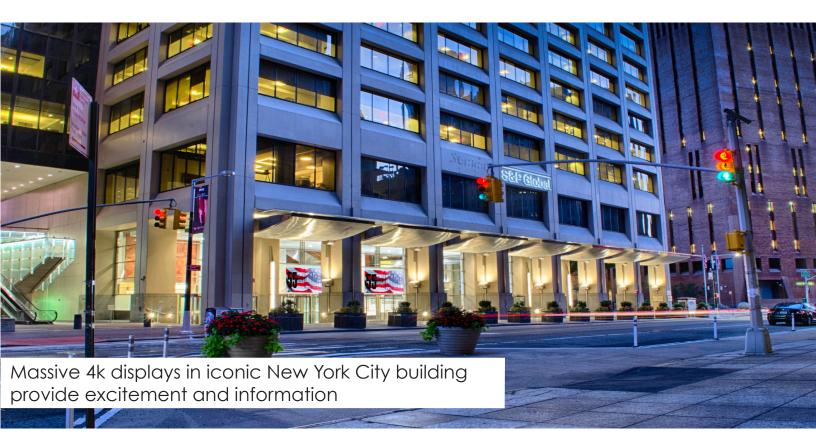Massive 4k displays in iconic New York City building provide excitement and information

BACKGROUND

The building known as 55 Water Street is located in one of New York City's most desirable neighborhoods. Its location near the Hudson and East Rivers gives a spectacular view of New York City in every direction. The building recently completed an upgrade of its infrastructure and was awarded a 2016 Energy Project of the Year Award by New York Association of Energy Engineers for its innovative energy management systems. As part of that upgrade the building's owners wanted to increase the building's visibility by including something that would embody the innovative technologies utilized in the renovation.

As the starting point for every journey through the building, the lobby was designated as the place to make a bold statement about the space. The decision was made to include a video display system that would be used to showcase the location as well as provide the tenants a way to highlight their organization. The design team designed an integrated system built around two massive Christie 4K LED displays, comprised of (140) 1.9 mm LED tiles that make up the 42 foot wide by 8 foot high wall with an RGB Spectrum video processor handling all the head-end chores. An RP Visual Solutions structural mount holds it all perfectly in place.

THE PROJECT

Since the building is home to a diverse group of tenants, ranging from venerable financial institutions to government offices, the lobby display system needed to be capable of displaying a variety of information, graphics, photos and news. All of this content needed to be quickly accessible, fluid and easily repositioned by operators with minimal technical backgrounds.

Another issue that the team had to deal with was the physical logistics of locating the head-end control room within the building. Since its physical location was not crucial because the control and signal lines could be run nearly anywhere in the building, it was decided that a location near other building communications systems would be ideal for maintenance and service. The sheer size of the building, the largest privately owned in NYC in rentable square feet, second only to Willis Tower nationally, made determining cable

pathways quite a challenge for the team, who was looking to keep lengths as short as possible while also secure and electronically isolated.

Remote access to the content server and video wall processor was desired so that updates and revisions could be executed by different people within the building management organization, some of whom would be located off-premises.

An additional major challenge to the design team was determining installation methods for the two 21 foot wide walls that would maintain and complement the beautiful interior of the lobby. The displays needed to add dynamic flare to the space while not overwhelming the classic look of marble and rich wood.

By locating the head-end room one level below the lobby, the equipment racks are housed in an area adjacent to the building's communications systems, making it easier for technicians to access them together. Cables were run through existing pathways, where feasible, and new paths were created as required, always ensuring that signal cables were well isolated from power lines and obstructions.

Nearly all equipment in the AV system can be remotely accessed for monitoring and updating through a simple web portal. Presets can be remotely configured and called up, and content can also be edited and changed remotely. All this is done through a separate network completely isolated from that of the building and its tenants.

The video displays have become the focal point of the lobby and provide valuable information to visitors, tenants and even pedestrians outside the building. The bright, high-resolution displays are easily visible in bright afternoon sun and are especially appealing at night. Presets that contain prearranged content have been configured and can easily be called up as well as rearranged remotely or through the system . Adding to the space's utility and attractiveness is a high-quality audio system with speakers that can be used to supplement the video on the displays or independently for music and speech reinforcement.

The new video display systems have had the desired effect, transforming the building's lobby into a functional yet beautiful space. Tenants and visitors alike enjoy the beautiful imagery of bucolic natural settings, the New York City skyline and other soothing images that provide respite from the hustle and bustle of Lower Manhattan, just outside the doors. Yet the displays also provide valuable information such as weather reports, train schedules, emergency announcements and news. All this has been accomplished while maintaining the classic ambiance of the lobby's original design.

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