



JB&B Headquarters, New York, NY



Leading Engineering Firm Updates NYC HQ

BACKGROUND

Jaros, Baum and Bolles (JB&B), one of the leading engineering firms in the world, has maintained its headquarters in New York City since its founding in 1915, and has been located at 80 Pine Street since 1997. The firm needed to address the issue of accommodating a growing number of staff while maintaining inviting communal and amenity spaces as well as more organic collaborative areas within an open office configuration.

Early on in the process, it was decided that audiovisual technology would be showcased in the new space to illustrate the firm's capabilities in that area as well as having a space to show clients some of the latest products. The AV design team began looking at various functional technologies rather than specific manufacturers, then selecting best of breed in each category. Many of the selected products were fully bench-tested in the firm's labs before being selected for inclusion in the project.



THE PROJECT

One of the immediate issues facing the team was how to design systems for users who are intimately familiar with technology but perhaps not with the specific technologies used throughout the space. The users' sophistication and comfort with complex systems necessitated a design approach that allowed those users to customize each experience yet also afforded others who were either unfamiliar or didn't want that level of involvement the ability to simply and easily interact with the systems.

Another, equally daunting challenge was the requirement that each space be equipped to provide maximum capability and customization to accommodate a wide variety of users. JB&B University, an in-house professional development program, utilizes both internal and external instructors each with their own teaching style. The AV systems needed to be flexible in size, shape and technical capability in order to accommodate the widely diverse needs of each instructor. Class sizes also vary widely so spaces needed to be physically adaptable as well.

Additionally, with a diverse work force disbursed over a wide area, communications systems were required that would encourage collaboration among the firm's numerous disciplines. Again, systems needed to be

simple to use yet able to accommodate the highly technical nature of the work the various engineering teams were engaged in.

Many of the individual spaces posed their own set of challenges. A large meeting space was required that could accommodate nearly the entire firm in one meeting while offering an intimate gathering place the majority of the time. The space needed to be bright and open yet able to accommodate large images during meetings.

The new space is a testament to simplicity and comfort in design yet sophistication in capability and adaptability. A wide variety of spaces was created, each with its own style but consistent in operation and use. The "Augie", named in remembrance of the firm's former Managing Partner, is the office's jewel in the crown. An inviting, town hall-type meeting space, it serves as a lunchroom/break space with room for all employees, as well as for firm-wide gatherings, with the physical and audiovisual flexibility to host departmental meetings and presentations. Large-screen projection and multiple zones of sound reinforcement are complemented by the work of the firm's architectural lighting division, LightBox Studios, who created a lighting design for the space with controlled adjustment of color temperature and

intensity values to simulate normal circadian rhythms. The look and feel of the space is one of casual functionality, with the decorative details' palette and materials selected by the employees themselves.

The bright, open nature of the space dictated a projection system that was bright enough to overcome the high ambient light and sharp enough to accurately display engineering drawings as well as provide high contrast for the many architectural renderings that are used in the firm's presentations. After careful evaluation and testing, Christie's laser phosphor GS series projector was selected. Complementing the projection system is a highly flexible control system that provides numerous preset scenarios or the ability to completely customize the AV devices and the room's environment.

The audio systems are also completely customizable yet provide preset configurations and levels throughout the space. Another

unique element of the space is that both Dante and AVB audio protocols are successfully integrated into the system.

The encouragement of collaboration between various groups within JB&B is an important aspect of all the conference spaces. Technologies were selected and rooms were designed to facilitate teams and individuals working together often and effectively. Christie's interactive LCD displays were selected after thorough bench-testing and have been deployed in nearly all the meeting spaces.

The entrance lobby features a video wall made up of three Christie thin bezel 55 inch LCD displays that highlight some of JB&B's work around the world. High-resolution images of finished projects as well as artist renderings of future projects are displayed through a digital signage player that can be remotely accessed to update the images as well as to load pertinent information about the day's activities.



RESULTS

JB&B's new space is a hit with employees, clients, visitors and JB&B University students and instructors. The flexibility, technology and openness are particular favorites. One of the elements that has been particularly well received are the automated functions included in many of the spaces. Users can press a single, often color-coded button, that will set the AV system to the correct configuration, set the lights and start a

program. The ability to schedule conference rooms remotely as well as from the room itself through the wall-mounted room schedulers is also well liked and well utilized. According to Bruce Manning, JB&B's Director of Audiovisual, "The hope was that the rooms and the AV systems would inspire clients to replicate our approach in their facilities. From the feedback we've gotten, all indications are that we've been very successful."



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT AND OTHERS LIKE IT, CONTACT:
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