

Professional Association Gains Meeting Room Efficiency and Much More with ViewSonic® Digital Billboards



The Alberta Teachers' Association



Challenge

- ▶ Deploy efficient, easy-to-use meeting room signage system
- ▶ Support customization and communication department media campaigns

Solution

- ▶ ViewSonic EP1032r-T 10" all-in-one interactive mini billboard ePosters delivered an easy-to-use room sign system plus customizability

Results

- ▶ Association visitors more easily locate their destinations, for improved efficiency and customer service
- ▶ Intuitive software lets users take control of content – freeing IT from content management
- ▶ The communications department easily runs, modifies and updates campaigns
- ▶ Association facilities are enhanced by the modern look of the dynamic signage
- ▶ Plans are in place to extend use of the ePosters in the cafeteria and other areas

CUSTOMER PROFILE

The Alberta Teachers' Association is the professional organization of teachers in Alberta, Canada, charged with promoting and advancing public education, safeguarding standards of professional practice, and serving as an advocate for its members. The Association's Edmonton headquarters houses meeting facilities for groups ranging in size from 10 to 400 people, available for rental when not in use by Association members.

THE CHALLENGE

Supporting over 40,000 teachers from 12 geographic districts, the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) Provincial Headquarters can be a busy place when meetings are in session. When they're not, its 13 meeting rooms are equally in demand for rental by the general public. To keep track of these meetings, the ATA maintained a database of the schedule, but beyond that, the system had become time-consuming and cumbersome.

"When the rooms aren't in use by the Association, we rent them out to the public, and they end up being booked much of the time," said ATA Enterprise Infrastructure Architect, Team Lead Chris Stogowski. "We typically have multiple groups on any given day, and things could get messy."

Far too often, Stogowski said, after inquiring about their meeting location visitors would end up knocking on closed doors to determine whether they were in the correct place. To address the situation, the ATA building manager charged the IT team with finding a digital solution that would help visitors more efficiently locate their correct meeting space. An added requirement was the ability to include public relations messaging.

THE SOLUTION

The IT team wanted a digital system that could pull information from their existing database and display it on signs posted at each meeting room. Ease of use was another consideration: the IT group had limited staff time to spare for management of the system.

Having used ViewSonic desktop monitors and projectors throughout their facilities for well over a decade, Stogowski was eager to review the ViewSonic EP1032r-T 10" ePoster suggested by their reseller, PC Corp.

"We did end up looking at other products that would pull from the database, but they were very specific to that purpose and didn't let us customize anything," Stogowski said. "We liked that the ViewSonic ePosters are very customizable."

Another major selling point, said Stogowski, was the ePoster's integrated Signage Express content management software, which meant IT would be spared from managing content – leaving them more time to focus on systems and hardware.

Stogowski recommended the ViewSonic EP1032r-T 10" all-in-one interactive mini billboard, and the ATA IT group purchased 20 for deployment at each of the meeting room doorways.

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— Chris Stogowski, Enterprise Infrastructure Architect, Team Lead



THE RESULTS

Generic plastic placards with room numbers have been replaced by dynamic ePosters, rendering the previously bland meeting room hallways both more high tech and more functional.

“Before, there was nothing to identify the individual meetings in each room. The ePosters have removed a lot of confusion about where people are supposed to be,” said Stogowski. “We’ve also gotten a lot of positive feedback about the look – it’s very modern and refreshing to see. People really enjoy it.”

The IT team is enjoying not only having fulfilled the building manager’s requirements, but having done so in such an efficient manner – relieving them of ongoing content management responsibilities and enabling flexibility for future adaptations.

“The people in charge of the meetings have full control of the content, and they love it,” said Stogowski. “Once they became familiar with the software it was very, very simple for them to go in and make updates. For example, they change the media campaigns monthly, and meetings change all the time.”

The IT team was similarly pleased with the ease of set up and other benefits offered by the ePoster’s easy LAN connectivity and Power over Ethernet capabilities.

“The PoE was a welcome feature as we did not need an electrician to provide power,” said Stogowski, adding that they explicitly chose LAN connectivity for three reasons: first, for the PoE; second for the security of not streaming content over the Internet via their wireless network; and third for reliability, to eliminate the risk of the ePosters going down in the event the WiFi network became oversubscribed.

“And although we don’t use the touchscreen for interactive content,” he said, “it did make setup of the device a breeze.”

All told, Stogowski said, the ATA has realized a great deal of value from the ePosters, thanks to their ease and adaptability.

“We’re delivering better customer service – people can easily find where they’re going – and we also have the ability to put ads or any other content on the screens, which is a great help to the communications department,” he said. “Whatever we can imagine we can put on the screens – that provides a ton of value.”

All this, says Stogowski, has just been phase one in terms of his organization’s use of the adaptable ePosters.

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ePoster Uses In a Corporate Environment

- ▶ Meeting room identification
- ▶ Branding & corporate communications
- ▶ Cafeteria menus
- ▶ Break room communications
- ▶ Wayfinding
- ▶ Emergency notification

“We’re already looking to the future, to putting more signs in,” he said. “We want to use them in the cafeteria to display menu content, using the timing feature to let us set up different menus for breakfast, lunch, and snacks – and once it’s scheduled it’s very hands off.”

Having seen the transformation in the meeting room halls, the organization is looking forward to the more modern look the ePosters will bring to the cafeteria. In time, Stogowski said, the menu boards will also offer some nice cost savings.

“Not only will we have cost savings on tangibles like not having to print menu signs,” he said. “We’ll also be able to more easily run daily specials, without someone having to spend half an hour writing them on a chalkboard. And the building manager is excited to gain exposure for the cafeteria by putting promotions on the meeting room signs.”

This flexibility of use points to one of the IT team’s favorite things about the new ePosters: they’re not just a meeting room sign system.

“We really love that you can just about do anything you can imagine with these; they’re not just for this one thing like others we saw,” said Stogowski. “We’ve found we get a lot of bang for our buck with these ViewSonic signs.”



ViewSonic EP1032r-T 10" Multimedia All-In-One Interactive Electronic Mini Billboard

- ▶ 10.1" viewable area with 1280 x 800 native resolution
- ▶ Multi-touch function for interactive messaging
- ▶ Built-in wireless network and Ethernet for easy content loading
- ▶ SMIL and HTML5 support for interactive message creation
- ▶ Integrated media player for video, photo and music playback
- ▶ Supports power-over-Ethernet for easy, one-wire installation

For more information, contact ViewSonic Sales at SalesInfo@ViewSonic.com or visit www.ViewSonic.com