

Conference Centers Going High-Tech

Technology having taken giant steps in the last few years has made it nearly impossible to do business without hi-tech devices. There has been a speedy creation and evolution of incredibly smart devices and systems like cloud computing and Wi-Fi. It has fueled the strong requirement for conference centers that not just offer the latest technological support but also are ready to incorporate the upcoming technologies seamlessly.



Founder of WA-based Corbin Ball Associates, Corbin Ball observes that a fully equipped conference center of tomorrow is the one that provides all those technological facilities that are normally available at home. The list of such facilities includes fabulous network connectivity, excellent audio-video systems, flat screen TVs and so on.

He adds that in the recent future, people will expect greater improvements in the features of the meeting space. They will demand greater flexibility, will prefer activities that entail working in smaller groups and provide a more interactive environment. In short, they will like to collaborate in a flexible setting and will need compatible technological support to make it a success.

Meeting experts endorse Ball's observation. According to the managing director of Interactive Meeting Technology (Minneapolis), Samuel J. Smith, the demand for interactive meeting spaces is overwhelming today. Since a plethora of latest technologies facilitates effortless interactive learning amongst the meeting attendees, high-tech conference centers can emerge as exceptional in comparison to other types of meeting locations.

Hence, building of collaborative learning setup has become one of the topmost priorities of the conference centers today. Below given is a list of technologies on which the conference centers with futuristic leanings should concentrate today:



- Pay attention to bandwidth

AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center's director of sales and marketing, Keith Purcell, highlights the fundamental role played by bandwidth in delivering a successful meeting.

He says that for any evolved conference center, offering excellent network connectivity is impossible without a substantial bandwidth; and without sufficient bandwidth, the possibilities of having a flexible meeting space become very stifled.

A report published by PhoCus Wright Market Research in January 2012 reveals that out of 4 business travelers, three use tablets. Then, Pew Research Center anticipates that by 2016, as many as 10 billion mobile devices will be functional in the world.

Keeping in view these trends, larger bandwidth is not a luxury but a necessity if a business has to be carried on in the digital world.

Cedric Fasbender of Dolce Hayes Mansion (CA) informs that a technologically supportive conference center should definitely have at least 100 Mbit/s for providing satisfactory connectivity to its clients.

Additionally, the conference center should also focus on the methods for routing a bandwidth and multiple access points. It should also provide the facility to offer secure networks to its clients so that they can hold confidential meetings.

- Technology in personal access

The infiltration of Smartphones, laptops, and tablets in daily life has changed the way in which meetings are held today. Jessica Levin of Seven Degrees Communications observes that instead of having the proceedings of the meeting on a big screen, the trend is to provide information personally to each attendee through handheld devices.

Mobile apps extend greater control to the attendees of a meeting. They can control the lighting in the room and the projector through their personal devices. Several conference centers have developed their own apps that allow their clients to customize the technological aspect of their meetings.

- The power of touch

According to Michael C Magnani, CEO of nVision, touchscreens enhance the interactive environment of the meetings and the conference centers are fast acknowledging this fact. Multi-touch, high-definition large digital screens let the attendees interact on a personal level that they do not enjoy through their handheld devices.



Surface technology is another option that allows the creation of video walls. They let the attendees get the information on their own. Whiteboards enable the attendees to draw with a stylus or finger and download the writings for future reference.

- Goals to meet

One of the challenges that the conference centers with the latest technology face today is cost. Evolving technology comes at a price, which is not easy to handle. Then, many clients are not very comfortable with the idea of new technology. Lack of the latest education in IT of the clients proves disappointing for the hi-tech meeting spaces.

Jeff Loether, president of the electro-media company called Gaithersberg, says that despite the challenges of affordability and education, the conference centers can easily move further with strong infrastructure and a high quality environment.

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