

Holographic screens get warm reception at British Council

Visitors to the British Council's Pall Mall offices can now take a tour of the world while waiting in the reception area.



The council have installed a visual communications system from Visual Planet which uses Holographic screens incorporated into a glass partition to create a dynamic 'information wall' which displays - via film and moving graphics - the work of the Council.

The purpose of the British Council is to build mutually beneficial relationships between people in the UK and other countries and to increase appreciation of the UK's creative ideas and achievements. This ethos was a major driver behind the refurbishment of the reception area which as Steve Ellis Facilities Manager explains, is

multi-functional:

"The work of the British Council is better known overseas, so the reception area has a role in explaining and promoting its activities, not just to visitors but also to our staff. The new reception area features one large screen and two holographic screens on which we display a variety of information.

"The reception area also includes a function room that is used for award ceremonies, VIP visits and other events. Glass sliding doors divide this room from the main entrance but it was important that the areas are visually connected. The use of holographic screens embedded in to the glass door means that the screen is transparent when not in use and even when used for projection you can see out through it."

By recessing the projection systems into the ceiling and using mirrors to project down onto the screens Visual Planet have created images that seems to float in mid air with no obvious source.

Mr Ellis says that the screens have had a good impact on visitors:

"Our role is to influence people and clearly the 'information wall' is an important tool in achieving this. The displays can be themed for particular events. The challenge now is to keep the content fresh and relevant.

"The benefit of a data projector is that a variety of material developed for other purposes can be reused in the displays but this creates an internal debate over who should have responsibility for selecting the content."

Mike Cole Commercial Director, Visual Planet has seen this discussion arise before with other clients, who begin to see new potential in the screens after they are installed. "Frequently we are called in to assist with a display solution. However once we start to explore why the display is needed and how it fits with the marketing or corporate communications strategy then the discussion moves to another level.

"Reception areas are literally an opening to the organisation and provide an opportunity to communicate more than just a welcoming environment. With digital displays and signage an organisation has the ability to control content displayed at all of its offices remotely. New projects, news items, promotions can be changed instantly and tailored for local audiences by the corporate communications department that could be in a different country."

Visual Planet's screens can be built into glass partitions, doors, furniture, external windows and street signage.

Steve sees seasonal potential for the screens: "It would be great to have a Christmas theme for the staff

party" he smiles.

- ENDS -

About Visual Planet

Visual Planet develops, designs and implements dynamic interactive visual solutions. It is based at St John's Innovation Centre, Cambridge.

Technical Director Vernon Spencer was part of the original team behind Pipex, the UK's first commercial Internet Service Provider. He believes the world is becoming more visual and sees opportunities for interactive displays in reception areas, airport lounges, universities, car showrooms, at retail points-of-sale and at conference centres.

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