

AV MAGAZINE

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Online giant's new hi-tech home

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Already a global powerhouse in the digital marketplace, eBay has thrown up a stunning bit of brick and mortar in the middle of its campus

ALL PHOTOS: EBAY

Making a big impression

eBay has recently opened Main Street, a state-of-the-art facility at its headquarters campus in San Jose, California. *Clive Couldwell* found out how a huge project with many different elements kept its overarching conception and final execution on track.



» After 225 days constructing it, eBay has opened a state-of-the-art facility at its headquarters campus in San Jose. 'Main Street' is a 20,000 sq ft addition to the campus that includes three conference rooms, a coffee bar, Entrance Gallery (which serves as the entrance lobby/reception for the entire eBay campus), an eBay store, an assembly area that can seat 850+ people, as well as an outdoor patio area with shaded seating.

Main Street has become eBay's new front door

— a space designed to welcome visitors, host employee gatherings, and 'showcase the pulse and energy of commerce'.

"When we were presented with the outline for Main Street, eBay's Media Services team was excited about having a blank canvas to create an entirely new environment for eBay," recalls Matt Anders, eBay's media services manager who worked on the Main Street development project with lead deployment engineer, Chris White.

"ESI had the scope and created the vision which

was passed down from our president and eBay ceo, Devin Wenig. We all contributed and worked together to bring in the latest technology and design to achieve it. The timeframe we were issued was very tight. We had full backing from our cio to do what it took to accomplish the schedule. We needed to start work on day one."

"With a mixed use space, you can never assume you know every type of event that will take place, so you have to design the technology and the system platform to be as flexible as possible," adds »



The company's CEO Devin Wenig conducts a "digital ribbon cutting" ceremony for the new facility

Emily Webster, senior designer, Creative Technology at experience design firm, ESI Design which conceived the design and oversaw full AV production at Main Street.

Creating an experiential environment

eBay's corporate communications content team headed up by director of corporate digital experience Lars Kongshem worked with ESI to determine how best to tell the eBay story through a digital experience using data, animations, video, and other content to create a dynamic, experiential environment for employees and visitors.

2.5mm Leyard LED was used for the 55ft-wide 'iconic display' (a combination of one large central 16:9 screen, two smaller 16:9s and two flanking irregular aspect ratios in this large room). "The goal here was to have a seamless surface that could create a large media canvas," says Webster.

This combination of screens provides a degree of flexibility, allowing eBay to use showcase presentations "straight out of the box" that already



The Entrance Gallery serves as the entrance lobby/reception for the entire eBay campus

are in a typical aspect ratio. The irregular regions of the screen were never black, ESI produced presentation backgrounds that could be triggered from the control system and used to fill the remainder of the screen regions with appropriate content.

eBay is also able to update text and imagery



dynamically through the CMS (content management system) so that presenter names/info are visible on screen for the length of the presentation. In a larger presentation/event, custom content could be created for the iconic display.

RealMotion servers and software were used to create a massive interactive digital experience on a »



“We wanted this building to reflect the pulse and energy of our company,” Devin Wenig told hundreds of employees gathered in the sleek, glass-panelled conference hall. “This is all about the future, all about our next chapter.” Main Street will be a wonderful showcase for all that eBay represents

165in Planar multi-touch wall (3x3 array of 55in monitors with touch overlay). “The display works in conjunction with a camera to respond to visitors’ presence, enticing them to interact with the touch screen wall. The custom-built software allows visitors to explore data about eBay’s buyers and sellers with up-to-the-minute accuracy on the data shown,” adds Webster.

The wall is flanked by six, 10ft tall floor-to-ceiling columns - 1.9mm Leyard LED – which form a single, dynamic digital canvas that welcomes visitors. The content on the LED columns is coordinated with the multi-touch wall, displaying live commerce stats as well as curated headlines that highlight eBay’s data.

“We wanted the media to feel like it was growing out of the architecture, and LED technology was

really the best way to do this in a room with high light levels,” says Webster. “The pixel pitch was selected because it was appropriate for the type of content we designed for this surface which includes a lot of text and imagery. Anything lower resolution than this would have fallen flat in terms of being able to deliver the eBay story we wanted to tell here.”

Innovative digital experiences

A number of other technologies and systems were used in the Main Hall to provide flexibility. “We created a series of floor boxes that ran through the space and the exterior so people could plug into the system,” says Webster.

This allows third party AV vendors to add

elements into the system that can be routed to display on any of the screens in Main Street. This is done to provide the appropriate infrastructure in the space to help facilitate the wide variety of meetings that take place there. Hackathons, social events, company-wide meetings - all of these require different AV elements. Main Street can be used as a flexible AV platform to accommodate a wide variety of events and meetings.

Freestanding mobile displays support additional screens throughout the space which can be configured to receive content from the main system routed to them, or have content from the displays routed into the system and displayed through the building. Dante Audio was also used throughout the space with Prysm screen tech in the boardroom.

“It is a large and impressive display and also the »

only technology that allows plugging a laptop into the boardroom table while enabling you to interact with your desktop on the touch surface to control your device,” says Webster.

eBay’s existing enterprise Content Management System from Signet was customised so it could handle a range of ‘innovative digital experiences’. eBay content managers manipulate these experiences by uploading new content per event, changing data sources, modifying scheduling configurations, and altering various interface and stylistic elements.

“This centre is a great example of pushing the envelope, dreaming big, and then coming back and figuring out how to connect everything in a supportable manner,” says Bryan Nunes, Signet’s vice-president of client solutions.

Other highlights of Main Street include:

» Three executive conference rooms equipped with teleconferencing and collaborative work technologies – “We wanted this space to be the most advanced the business had ever seen. Working hand-in-hand with our peers in Workplace resources, we wanted the building to work around the technology,” adds Anders. “We produced a brand new video conferencing stack that is now used globally for our VC rooms. We built this from the ground up and also created a complete, customised AMX code to control the whole space.”

» An outside deck for breaks during meetings and an exterior patio for lunches and informal meetings.

» A coffee bar and other informal spaces where employees can gather for small, impromptu meetings.

» The Gallery, a small shop where employees and visitors can browse and purchase merchandise.

“At eBay we want our visitors to get the wow factor when it comes to technology. Main Street is exactly that. It is a space that when you walk into it you know ‘this is eBay’. Our vision was a home where employees and visitors could come to collaborate, socialise and create. We have achieved our vision for the future of collaboration at eBay,” says Dan Morales, eBay’s cio. ■

PARTNERS

ESI acted as the experience design lead for the Main Street building and conceived of the overarching programme for the space as well as the technical platform and media experiences within.

It outlined system functionality requirements and oversaw these were maintained through the full construction process. It also defined areas where technology was appropriate and suggested and selected the specification for the major display equipment. ESI designed the technical platform and oversaw AV system engineering to ensure the desired/designed functionality was upheld through production, providing final design intent sign-off on architecture, technical AV systems, software systems and media. It also interviewed and vetted all partners to provide final suggestions for eBay’s production team.

» **Diversified Systems** led the systems design and engineers, provided detailed systems drawings during the design and engineering phases, facilitated mock-ups and managed AV vendors. It also procured, installed and commissioned the systems platform.

» **Float4** developed the customised interactive on the LED columns and 3x3 touch screen in Main Street’s lobby and provided CPUs for various areas of Main Street.

» **Signet** developed the customised CMS and interactives for the two touch screens in the entrance that display eBay videos and Shop pages that allow visitors to purchase eBay products directly from the touch screen.

» **Gensler** acted as architect.



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