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PROFILE

Name: Warner Music Group

Location: New York

CHALLENGE

How to effectively hold productive virtual meetings to connect stakeholders from around the world.

SOLUTION

Create a virtual conference set-up leveraging the Epson BrightLink Pro as the catalyst to project shared and editable images.

Disruptive Technology Reshapes Interactive Meetings

Senior Vice President and Chief Process Officer Chooses Epson BrightLink Pro for Collaborative Video Conferences

Disruptive new technologies are coming to collaborative meeting rooms.

Where it once took $150,000 or more in video conferencing and content sharing gear to run a truly interactive meeting, IT thought leaders are now building conference room systems for less than $10,000.
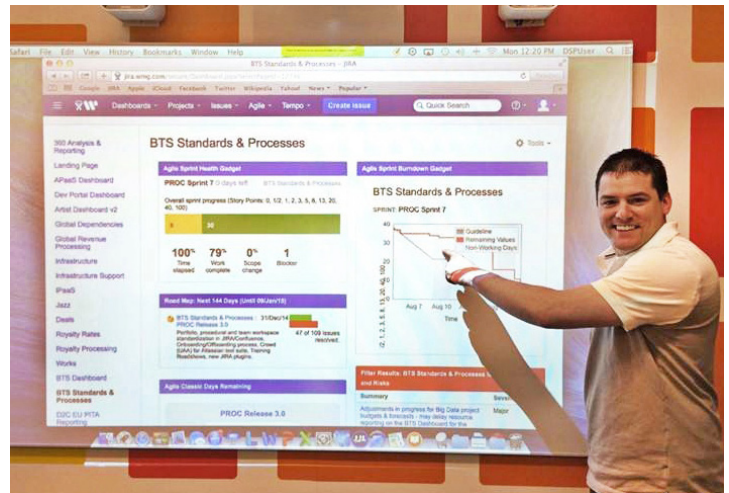
At least that's the case for author and technology guru Tristan Boutros, who has based a cutting edge collaborative system on the Epson® Brightlink® Pro interactive display and popular web conferencing software.

The BrightLink Pro is a collaborative whiteboarding display that consolidates the utility of a whiteboard, projector and interactive display in one device and connects easily to a wide range of video and web conference equipment. In addition it brings computer control, screen annotation and note taking to local and long-distance interactive meetings.

Systems like this are great news for meeting planners, who can now afford to install conference room-based collaborative systems for teams at every level, rather than limiting them to C-level executives.

Team Meetings Using Interactive Technology

Boutros, co-author of *The Process Improvement Handbook: A Blueprint for Managing Change & Increasing Organizational Performance*, which was published last year by McGraw-Hill, is Senior Vice President and Chief Process Officer for Warner Music Group (WMG) one of the world's largest media and

entertainment firms. He oversees a staff of nearly 300 people working in Program Management, Process Improvement, and Enterprise Architecture, and he holds over 10 professional designations including his Lean Six Sigma Black Belt (LSSBB), Project Management Professional (PMP), Certified Scrum Professional (CSP), and his Master Project Manager (MPM) certification.

An IT group he supervises creates custom software using Agile development and Scrum project management methods, where requirements and solutions are built using iterative, incremental processes by self-managed teams. Boutros' teams hold daily 'standup' meetings where they discuss their progress and assign tasks. Since the teams are spread out literally around the world, they must hold their meetings using electronic connections.

"We wanted to spur creativity in real time," Boutros explains, "to take a full project team, allow them to huddle around an

> *IT thought leaders are now building conference room systems for less than $10,000.*

interactive whiteboard or digital space, and work collaboratively at the drop of a hat." After he purchased his first BrightLink Pro, he began experimenting with various components to maximize the ability of these teams to interact over a network connection, including working with video conferencing platforms, whether with traditional video codecs, cloud or web-based systems including WebEx®, Microsoft® Lync® or Fuze™ Meeting. His idea was that Fuze Meeting could carry the video and audio signals and provide a means for team members working from individual PCs or tablets to view the visual materials and participate in discussions.

"For example, we have done workshops where we presented our software frontend designs to the customer in one of the company's business groups. Rather than trying to explain what we're doing using paper pads and markers to illustrate the workflows, we could now project mockups of the designs on a whiteboard, then annotate those images with customer comments and ideas. We then saved PDF copies of the markups and sent them to the development or design teams to make the changes. That's a big deal."

For the various Scrum meetings, team members could project changes to functionality or features they've made to the software they were working on, while at the same time projecting dashboards measuring their progress and the 'swim lanes' on workboards showing how individual tasks fit into the overall project. "All of our teams are on two-week 'sprints,' where they plan and re-plan their projects," Boutros explains. "They can plan, meet, demo, and conduct retrospectives with multiple offshore groups participating on their own big pen-enabled boards."

Because the user experience is so crucial to the software Boutros' teams develop, the creativity gains from the new setups directly impact the value of the software they develop, speeding up the process while helping them provide better a better product.

More than 40 project teams continue to use this setup, most based in New York, where the group has five Epson BrightLink Pro-based rooms in place. He says they plan to add several more rooms this year, bringing nearly all of the company's worldwide IT group into the picture.

> *BrightLink Pro changes the tone of the meetings—the productivity is better and team members' buy-in to shared goals is much higher.*

The IT Conference Rooms

The setup Boutros and his people created is relatively simple. The development teams use a Mac Mini computer to access applications and Scrum management tools, projecting them on a 96-inch diagonal whiteboard via the BrightLink Pro. A DisplayPort connection brings the video images from the Mac; a wireless to USB connection allows an Epson interactive pen to act as a computer mouse and even as a keyboard, controlling the Mac as well as marking up the images projected from it. Team members at distant offices who have BrightLink Pro setups can annotate on the same images simultaneously or take over control of the Mac at the originating office. Whenever they wish, teams can save an annotated image to a PDF file and email it right from an Epson control panel mounted next to each whiteboard.

To create the video conferencing connections, Boutros' group loaded the web conferencing software onto each Mac Mini, allowing it to take the place of a traditional video conferencing codec. A Logitech HD webcam mounted above each whiteboard to the side of the projector captures video images of the local team, while a Polycom SoundStation picks up their voices. Two Epson external speakers play far-end voices and program audio. Inputs in the Epson control panel make it easy to hook up additional devices as needed, such as a document camera or Blu-ray player. An AppleTV unit allows team members to present from an iPad or iPhone, as well as to play music and videos through the system.

The web conferencing software also allows team members who do not have access to a BrightLink Pro to connect using their laptops or tablets, observe (but not mark up) the shared images and share audio and video. The group also loaded a traditional video conferencing client onto each Mac Mini to allow the system to connect to standard video conferencing rooms, which is useful when team members meet with internal clients in their own conference rooms.

Boutros says using the BrightLink Pro changes the tone of the meetings in a very positive way. Instead of passively sitting and watching a leader present the project and assign tasks, they all stand around the board (or boards), taking turns sharing ideas and adding notes and markups, even self-organizing to select tasks and stories to work on. The productivity of the meetings is better and team members' buy-in to shared goals is much higher.

"We like to think we're pretty bleeding edge with the technology we're building," Boutros notes, "and we were looking for the bleeding edge in the tools we're using to build it."

"We are thrilled with the Epson BrightLink Pro," he adds.