



Expanding on Cisco functionality

Case Study

Lightware Visual Engineering

Expanding on Cisco functionality

Market	Country
Corporate	UK
Lightware Equipment Used in Project	
MMX4x2-HT200 / MMX8x4-HT420M	

Lightware products were recently used to add video functionality in a high profile installation undertaken at the headquarters of a major London capital investment company.

The installation was managed by systems integrator Display Manager and saw the remodeling of twelve meeting rooms based on eight different designs in the building. These ranged in size from a 30-seat conference room to small break out rooms designed just for a couple of people. Key to the client was that each room would be uniform in both look and in operation despite their differences.

Display Manager was brought in midway through the project in March 2020, just as the lockdown orders regarding the pandemic started to have an impact on businesses around the world. There was already a growing sense that video conferencing was going to rapidly evolve from a nice addition to a must-have feature, and the London investment company was keen to have a good solution up and running.

“They wanted to have unified, one button call-start in all eight different rooms,” explains Display Manager’s Lionel Eales, “but the initial planned for Cisco Webex solution required a third-party system controller for the project, which made that difficult. That’s when we became aware of Lightware and realised that we could take advantage of a more cost-effective and superior integration to the Cisco product.”

“ **We became aware of Lightware and realised that we could take advantage of a more cost-effective and superior integration to the Cisco product.** ”

Most Cisco Webex Devices have only one HDMI input. A Lightware switch can add multiple inputs, and formats such as Display Port, DVI, VGA and USB-C, greatly expanding the functionality with no need for various dongles at the meeting room table or hidden in a local credenza. Lightware switching products work with Cisco Touch 10 room control panels, require zero programming and can be easily configured to directly communicate with Cisco Webex Devices in collaboration rooms. Lightware’s open API environment meanwhile makes it possible for every bit of data to be openly available for higher level management, monitoring, and control applications.

That meant that not only could a much greater range of functionality be added to each room, but that this functionality could be realised via the Cisco Touch 10 control panel.

“That saved money, gave better usability, and the integration into a Cisco product felt more secure, for want of a better word, to the IT department. Everyone knows Cisco and trusts them end to end,” says Eales.

“ Whenever we use Cisco and there’s a requirement to have video switching in there as well then we’ll put Lightware forward as it’s a better solution than anyone else is offering at the moment. ”

With budgetary pressure also being applied to the project due to the pandemic, the cost-effectiveness of the Lightware solution also became a contributing factor and the decision was made to add them to the specification. Components used included the MMX4x2-HT200 matrix switcher with TPS extension and HDMI inputs as well as breakaway analog audio in most of the rooms; a MMX8x4-HT420M standalone matrix switcher specifically designed for conference room environments with eight video inputs (four HDMI and four TPS) and four video outputs (two HDMI outputs and two TPS outputs) for the main conference room; and multiple Lightware HD Base T extenders for video signal extensions to extend connectivity from the meeting table or from another room.

“We had a learning curve on Lightware as it was a product set we hadn’t worked with before, but their technical support was very good through the whole of the process and they also provided us with some on-site support as well,” says Eales.

The result was that the project was completed to the 90% stage by June 2020, but final commissioning could not take place until December 2020 when the offices reopened as local lockdown regulations eased.

Interestingly, the client is already looking at upgrading the systems. Video has become an increasingly integral part of its operations and it is looking to extend the rooms’ capabilities to be able to run Zoom and Microsoft Teams meetings as well as Cisco Webex, which it is looking at doing via Mersive’s collaboration platform.

“Lightware will be pivotal to doing that. It plays well with many other manufacturers, owing to its open API, so integration should all be fairly straightforward.” explains Eales. “Whenever we use Cisco and there’s a requirement to have video switching in there as well then we’ll put Lightware forward as it’s a better solution than anyone else is offering at the moment.”