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Pfister Hotel Adds New Immersive Dimensions to Boardroom Experience

🕐 December 8, 2014

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👤 Michael Mascioni   💬 Leave a comment

[Boardroom presentations](#) can often be staid, one dimensional affairs. The historic Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee has embarked on an effort to break that mold with a high-tech executive boardroom using immersive technologies on the twenty third floor of its hotel that affords greater engagement, interactivity, content exploration, and collaboration.

The boardroom, dubbed Twenty 3, is designed to enhance and add new dimensions to business meetings and events using such [immersive and interactive technologies](#) as 3D, gesture-based technology, iPads, an iMac Lab, crestron interactive controls, and mapping technology. It accommodates meetings of up to 24 people for periods from two hours to multiple days. The boardroom has drawn "over 50 groups from

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such sectors as financial, pharmaceuticals, automobiles, manufacturing, and marketing," reports Chris Anderson, SVP of Sales, Marketing, and Brand Development for Marcus Hotels and Resorts.

The room is particularly targeted at "millennial or technology-forward" business travelers "looking to impress during a presentation or meeting," he notes. The Pfister hotel began testing its high-tech boardroom in May, 2013, and has been "continually evolving" the room's capabilities and features based on feedback from participants regarding their likes and dislikes in the room, says Anderson.

The boardroom is designed to expand the scope of standard Powerpoint presentations, videos, graphs, and Keynote files by adding a "razzle dazzle" element to those presentation materials using immersive technologies. Presentation material is displayed on two 65" side by side video monitors in the room.

One of the more popular technology features in the boardoom is the gesture-based interface, which allows users to control presentations using their hands- as such, they can "swipe the air to switch slides and use finger motions to play videos and move objects on screen ." Anderson notes that this feature is "very easy to use and understand."

At the moment, augmented reality isn't being used in the boardroom though it's used in the lobby and 2nd floor area of the hotel, reports Anderson.

The hotel has enlisted American Audiovisual to examine the potential application of virtual reality in their high-tech boardroom as he believes "that is the next phase of usage."

The Pfister Hotel's boardroom is serving as an "incubator" for testing new concepts in meetings technologies, according to Anderson. Marcus Hotels and Resorts has plans to "replicate the room's capabilities in other locations" after the current boardroom test ends at the Pfister in December.

In an effort to dispel any initial skepticism and concern about the value of their room, the hotel provide an online demo of the room to prospective participants. To insure meeting participants in the room effectively utilize the equipment in the room, the hotel assigns a "content manager, not just an A/V person," points out Anderson. He stresses the importance of "teaching participants" how to use the technology in their boardroom to make the boardroom experience truly effective.
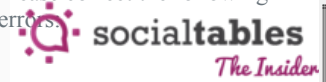
To make use of the room more user friendly, the room allows participants to manipulate multimedia material with iPad controls. Anderson contends that the

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equipment in the room "isn't very difficult to use" and is akin to that found in "home theater" systems.

Anderson notes that the "next level" of interactive presentations in the boardroom will be enabled by gamification, which will allow participants to effectively play games tied to those presentations by answering questions" and participating in other exercises during those presentations. He believes gamification will play a key role in "holding participant interest" in their high-tech boardrooms.

The cost of the Pfister boardroom isn't much different from standard boardrooms- typically costs for the room "run from $600 for 2 hours rental to $2,400 a day," says Anderson.

The Pfister Hotel is also leveraging its boardroom as a "demand generator" to attract more groups to have their meetings at the hotel, notes Anderson.

About Our Guest:

This blog was written for Social Tables by Michael Mascioni. Mr. Mascioni writes freelance for such publications as Innovation & Tech Today, Internet Evolution, and Innovation Leader. He also has extensive conference planning experience, currently serving as Conference Director of Hybrid Energy Innovations 2015, and in 2014 served as the program planning consultant for Hospitality Technology Europe.

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