



A Modern Upgrade: dvLED Technology Redefines The Ampersand's Atrium

Background

Aspen Properties, a boutique real estate company that owns and manages 3.8 million square feet of commercial office space in downtown Calgary and Edmonton, focuses on creating welcoming workspaces where people feel connected, get inspired, and know they belong. In 2018, Aspen Properties purchased The Ampersand, an A-class office complex comprised of three identical towers offering over 1.1 million square feet of space between them. The three office towers are connected by a spectacular 20,000 square foot glass covered atrium. As these towers were originally constructed in the 1980s, Aspen looked to renovate and modernize its key spaces, with the atrium as a top priority. The goal for The Ampersand was to offer the type of amenity-rich and positive office environment that is in high demand by today's workforce.

Bringing The Ampersand into the 21st Century

Upon purchasing The Ampersand in December of 2018, Aspen immediately began to redevelop and renovate the property. The renovations added 57,000 square feet of amenities, including a library, conference center, and tenant lounge. The renovation also included adding an oversized, tiered seating area called the "social staircase". While generally this social staircase would be used as built-in seating for occupants to enjoy a morning coffee or quick lunch, Aspen also wanted the staircase to allow people to congregate in the new plaza to see a live performance or watch a presentation on a theatre-style screen.

The Challenge:

In 2018, boutique real estate company Aspen Properties purchased The Ampersand near downtown Calgary in Alberta. Comprised of three identical office towers joined together by a glass-covered atrium, The Ampersand featured original design elements from the 1980s that hadn't been updated since its inception. In order to bring the building into alignment with the company's commitment to be more than just an office space and provide an elevated experience for building tenants, Aspen's newest property needed a complete renovation. With the help of Matrix Video Communications, Aspen worked to redesign and modernize the space with digital signage technology.

Solution:

- Four LED-FE038i2 modules of varying sizes, each with a 3.8 mm pixel pitch, were installed in four sections along the ribbon wall, providing a seamless image that doesn't stop on the corner and optimal viewing no matter the distance
- One 220-inch LED-FE025i2 module was hung in front of the windows at the south end of the lobby for local presentations and videos
- Three LED-FE025i2 modules with a 2.5 mm pixel pitch were installed vertically on three other walls which run alongside tower elevator banks

Result:

Matrix Video Communications transformed The Ampersand's natural light-filled atrium with vibrant and seamless digital signage. Now a sensational modern space with state-of-the-art, crystal clear dvLED technology, The Ampersand atrium provides tenants from all three of its towers with relevant building information and visual art in a striking and visually impactful way.



Aspen's management team looked to Matrix Video Communications to liven and brighten the atrium space with digital signage technology. The idea was to employ digital signage for communicating building messages, tenant announcements, theatre-style presentations, and visual art. In turn, this would elevate the design and technological capabilities to align with Aspen's commitment to be more than just an office space.

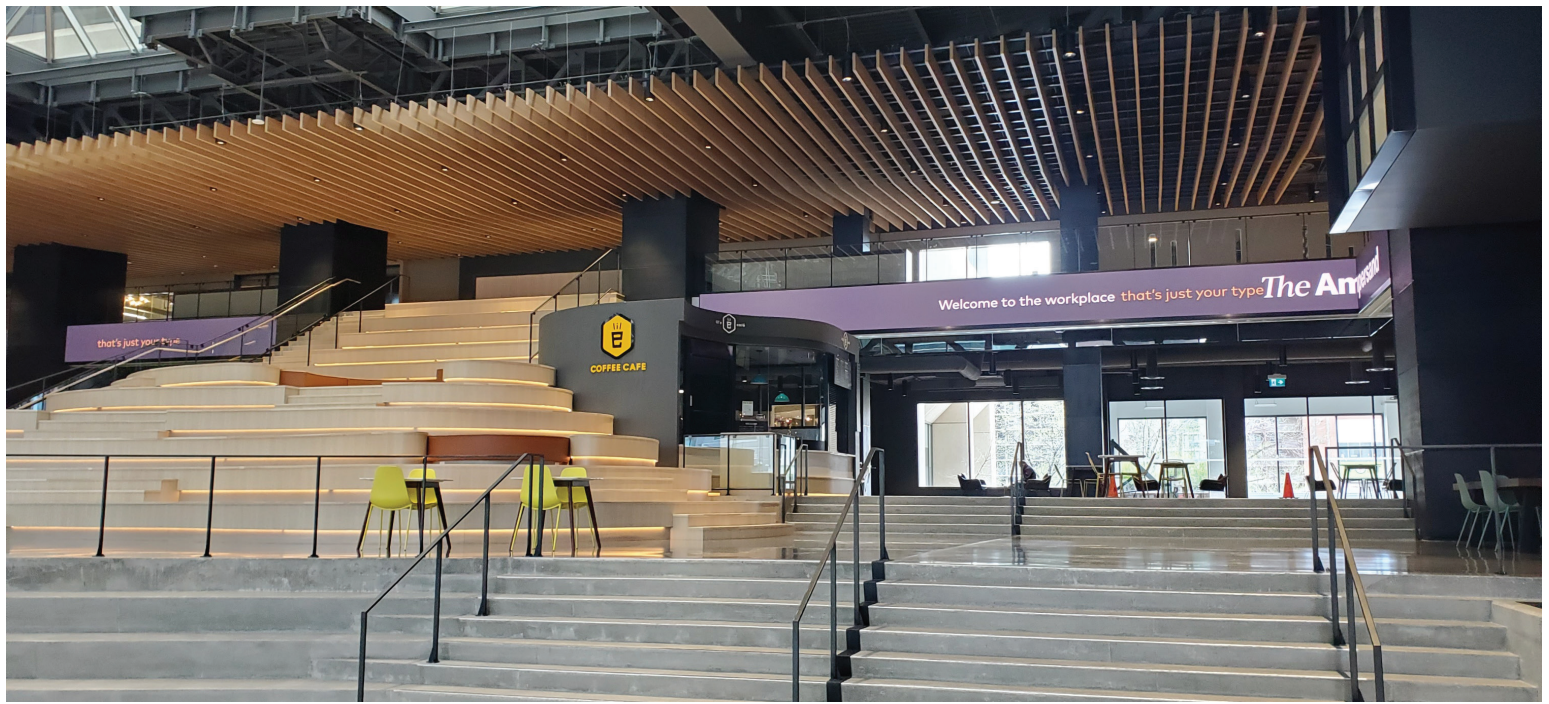
Beginning in December 2020, Dave Crisanti, Account Manager at Matrix Video Communications, led the efforts in selecting the technology to upgrade the atrium. Dave and his integration team had utilized NEC's projection products and large format displays in the past and was impressed by the price point and quality. Additionally, the Sharp team had provided outstanding customer service support from start to finish. They helped determine which technology solutions would best fit The Ampersand's needs and assisted with the installation and post-installation process, which was a major benefit to Matrix.

Choosing direct view LED

When determining which display technology would equip their updated lobby most effectively, Aspen Properties prioritized cost-efficiency, product longevity, and striking imagery – and a dvLED wall fit the bill. NEC's dvLED panels are extremely cost-effective, and when considering product longevity, dvLED modules outshine large format displays. With a typical lifetime range from 70,000 to 100,000 hours before they reach a brightness output 50 percent below the original value, a dvLED is hard to beat.

Moreover, The Ampersand's lobby is flooded with natural light – this means that a typical image would be easily washed out during the peak workday hours. Because dvLED delivers a brighter image than LCD display and projection technologies, it works well in bright environments like this building's atrium. NEC's dvLED panels offer large, crisp, and bright images ranging from 600 cd/m² to 1,000 cd/m² with a tight pixel pitch from as low as 1.2 mm, making them ideal for indoor use and accommodating the need for a variety of pixel pitch sizes. The design flexibility of dvLED panels also allowed Matrix to work through a 90 degree inside corner, customizing the size and ensuring a seamless image that doesn't stop on the corner ribbon wall.





"We implemented NEC technology to not only refresh an outdated space, but to provide tenants with a convenient and quick way to stay up-to-date on relevant building information," said Crisanti.

"The result is a modern, aesthetically pleasing space that utilizes energy- and cost-efficient technology. NEC's dvLED panels were the easiest dvLED products to install, and the most seamless dvLED we had ever worked with. Even the packaging and mounting structure was top notch. NEC's dvLED panels will be our number one, go-to LED products moving forward."

An Impactful Workplace for All

Upon completion of the installation in January 2021, the atrium became a space that inspires those it serves. Digital displays now wrap around the second floor mezzanine. And a large theatre-style screen is suspended from the exposed steel beams at the southern end of the lobby, all of which are viewable from the social staircase. Additionally, each tower has a dedicated video wall to further modernize the space and showcase the uniqueness of each of the three towers. The dvLED walls also added much-needed color to the lobby, taking it from an industrial, cold space to an area where people can comfortably gather and unwind for work or play. As more and more employees return to the workspace, they will find a home away from home that suits their needs in every way.



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