

# A Flash of Inspiration: Manhattan AV Super Store Adds NEC Video Wall to Demo Aerial Imagery from Drones

## Facility:

- B&H Photo

## Location:

- New York, NY

## Challenges:

- Create an interactive experience for a drones display in a retail store

## Solution:

- Four [NEC X464UNS TMX4P](#) in a 2x2 configuration

## Result:

- A high-tech video wall showing aerial footage from drones to support sales staff and help customers choose the right product for their needs



It's the stuff of science fiction: miniature unmanned aircraft that are small enough to fly almost anywhere, yet technologically complex enough to take high-quality aerial imagery, capturing breath-taking photos and video previously impossible to obtain without a helicopter or plane.

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs, or more commonly, drones) have captivated tech audiences in consumer and commercial spaces because they can fly high, swoop low, turn fast and act as eyes in the sky for a number of applications and industries – or just for fun.

Because interest in drones is spreading into so many new user categories, retail stores are naturally jumping at the chance to be a part of the buzz – and for a New York City photo and video equipment super store, offering its customers drones that could take high-quality aerial photos and videos was the perfect way to expand its offerings.

Deciding to sell drones was the easy part. Figuring out how to market and sell the new technology was a different story.

## The Challenge

B&H is the country's largest non-chain photography, audio and videography equipment store, selling products both online to customers around the globe as well as in its 70,000-square-foot retail location in New York City. The brick-and-mortar store keeps an average of 10,000 demo products on the shelves and sees daily foot traffic of more than 5,000 people per day.

The 44-year-old brand prides itself on supporting customers around the world with the best photo, video and audio solutions for their equipment needs. And in recent years, that's meant drones.

"A lot of photographers and videographers wanted the ability to put a camera in the air and get high-quality aerial photography and videography," said Yitzie Schwartz, training manager at B&H.

Because of overwhelming customer demand, B&H now offers a wide variety of drones ranging from beginner to professional models, some with built-in cameras and others that allow professional cameras to be attached.

"The drone area isn't a big part of the store, but it gets a lot of traffic because of the excitement around the technology," Schwartz said. "People hear a drone being flown and they gravitate toward the area."

The in-store UAV department previously consisted of only a roped-off "cage" where sales people could fly the drones securely and demonstrate their different capabilities to customers. The cage was not an ideal way to show professional photographers and videographers what the drones could do, however. Drones used for aerial imaging are made to capture images from outside and from up high, as well as landscape and action shots – not from a small cage inside a store, where UAVs couldn't fly as high or as fast as they can in the great outdoors.

The store was faced with the challenge of how to properly showcase the drones' capabilities given their physical limitations. To better show the quality of the photos and video their drones could take, B&H originally planned to display static graphics like large posters of aerial images taken by the drones, but Schwartz thought they could do better.

"We needed to be able to open our customers' eyes to these drones' capabilities and show them the larger-than-life aerial footage," Schwartz said. "That's when we had the idea: Why don't we gather footage of what these drones can do, and put it on a big screen in the store?"

Digital signage was the natural answer to the store's need. Not only is it more attention-grabbing than static signs or posters, but it also is an ideal way to show real-life aerial imagery the way it should be watched: in large format, on high-quality displays.

"There is so much more we can do with a video wall – between showing actual video from the drones and ways to customize content and make it interactive," Schwartz added. "We wanted a way to let customers view different footage based on what kind of drone they are looking to purchase to help them choose the right one."

With that decision made, B&H needed to find a solutions provider.

## The Solution

B&H considered two different vendors when selecting a video wall – both digital signage vendors with existing partnerships with the store. After exploring its options, the store chose NEC Display Solutions for a few critical reasons.

"NEC has an entire plug-and-play video wall kit, and that was a big part of the decision for us," Schwartz said. "The package comes with everything in it, including mounts, cables and the monitors."

B&H chose a video wall in a 2x2 configuration using four NEC X464UNS-2s bundled together (with the bundle referred to as the [NEC X464UNS TMX4P](#)), with this display model specifically chosen because of its high brightness and very thin bezel, Schwartz said. Other factors included the panels' quality.

"They're professional-grade monitors that are very reliable and rated for 24/7 use, even though we don't use them to that extent," Schwartz said. "The 1920-by-1080 resolution is excellent, and the brightness is amazing. Even standing a few feet back, the images pop. I was really impressed with what the video wall looks like in real life."

## The Results

Due to the plug-and-play nature of the kit, installation was a simple process.

"Everything was pretty straightforward, despite this being our first time setting up a display of this sort," said Scott Jolson, senior merchandiser for B&H, whose team handled the installation. Schwartz added that the calibration helped ensure the displays looked good when the team flipped the switch after the physical installation.



"Part of the NEC kit helps us calibrate easily, so when we set up the video wall to show one big video, for example, we can calibrate it so that the colors look sharp and the bezels line up correctly," he said.

The UAV department was reorganized after the video wall was installed. The department now grabs shoppers' attention immediately with the prominently displayed video wall, which shows off stunning landscape imagery, action shots taken by drones whizzing through the air, high-quality aerial videos and more. Shoppers can pick up and examine the physical products – the drones themselves – mounted on a nearby wall, then select the model on an interactive touchscreen kiosk linked to the video wall, and see for themselves what the drone's camera can do.

"The sales person can pull up footage of scenes shot using a specific drone and play it on the video wall," Schwartz said

The video wall is helping customers considering UAVs for aerial imaging narrow down their options, according to Schwartz.

"Customers can better understand each drone's capabilities to make a more intelligent purchase decision," Schwartz said. "That's why we chose a video wall. We knew we couldn't do it any other way."

Sales staff also is happy with the wall as a new sales tool, he added.

"Before, we were training sales staff to just talk about products, but now they can talk about it and also show it," he said. "It's been very engaging for the sales staff to use this type of installation as another resource in the department. In fact, it's inspired them to fly their own drones and contribute their own footage, so it's been a morale boost as well."

## NEC Display Solutions of America

866-NEC-MORE

[www.necdisplay.com](http://www.necdisplay.com)