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Shaw Communications Installs Interactive Multi-Display Retail Signage Powered by Matrox M-Series

Matrox M9148 and M9188 graphics cards power multiple sets of displays in six different stores, letting shoppers interactively preview Shaw internet, telephone, and television offerings

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Images courtesy of Trapeze

Shaw Communications' "innovation pods," powered by Matrox M9148 quad-monitor graphics cards, consist of 1x4 video walls that run at a total resolution of 1366x3072.

Matrox M9148 card

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Ian Langdon
Digital Signage Expert,
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Through the internet, telephone, and television, Shaw Communications brings the outside world to customers, while Matrox M-Series multi-display graphics cards help immerse them in an interactive, virtual one. Powering 30 total setups at the telecom firm's new retail stores, M-Series cards digitally showcase available Shaw services in stunning fashion.

Customer-Immersive Service

Opening up six stores in Western Canada, Shaw decided to take a novel approach to retail through a series of next-gen multi-monitor installations, Shaw aimed to primarily educate customers on available services. With that goal in mind, Shaw teamed up Breakhouse, who would design the stores, with Trapeze, a full-service marketing agency entrusted with integrating 20-monitor social media bands and five four-monitor innovation pods at each location. Trapeze then selected Matrox M-Series graphics cards to make the firms' collective vision an on-screen reality.

"To have a retail location where the main products are services is a hard sell. So, creating an environment where you immerse the user is what was needed," said Trapeze digital signage expert Ian Langdon.

To help create this environment, Trapeze searched the web for graphics cards offering total user control. Finding a lot of multi-display digital signage and control room setups powered by Matrox cards, Langdon was intrigued. He made the final decision based on the complementary and robust Matrox PowerDesk software suite to configure on-screen layouts. Asked how easy M-Series cards were to set up in practice, Langdon replied, "Extremely."

Look…as Well as Touch

Matrox M-Series graphics cards were picked with high-performance Hewlett Packard systems to drive five different setups per store, each ultimately controlled by custom web-delivered software running under Microsoft® Windows® 7.
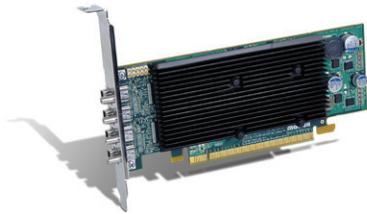
At each location, Matrox M9188 cards were used to drive two overhead rows of 10 monitors that display social media information mirrored on opposite sides of the store.

At each store, Matrox M9188 octal-monitor graphics cards drive Shaw-specific social media content automatically collected off Facebook and Twitter on an overhead band of 20 total Samsung displays. Five of eight of the cards' outputs power two displays each, linked together in the monitors' video wall mode. The 10 displays run horizontally at a resolution of 6830x768 across one side of the store. Mirrored on the other side using distribution amplifiers, they form a "social media band" that sets the technological tone of the store nicely, especially for the four "innovation pods" that stand directly underneath.

Powered by Matrox M9148 quad-monitor cards, the pods—four-monitor, 1366x3072 video walls complete with a touch-screen user interface driven by a separate system—let customers intuitively browse through Shaw's different services. Langdon said going with the Matrox M9148 was an easy decision.

"The challenge was that traditional gamer video cards would not allow us to create an arbitrary screen configuration," he said. "The M9148 card, through PowerDesk, let us define a single virtual display in any configuration we could imagine and provided fanless, high-reliability service. Matrox provided us with a worry-free way of interfacing the displays with the operating systems."

"The Future of High Tech"

With Matrox-powered displays front and center (and all around) each store, the "visually and technologically eye-catching" locations have exceeded all expectations, according to Langdon. Shaw has even won an Excellence in Retailing Award for the store design from the Retail Council of Canada.

"Walking into a Shaw retail store is like entering the future of high tech," said Langdon, who has had the privilege of "lighting up" all six stores up to now. "Delivering this impact without saturating the customer with information is an art. The designs softly immerse the users in the experience. Matrox made that subtle but important feature possible."

Matrox Graphics Solutions for Digital Signage

Matrox Graphics is a leading manufacturer of graphics solutions for the ProAV and digital signage markets, offering a comprehensive product line including TripleHead2Go external multi-monitor adapters, Maevex video over IP solutions, and Mura MPX video wall controller boards. Matrox hardware solutions allow professional AV installers and system integrators to confidently meet the most demanding multi-monitor requirements for any digital signage installation. Matrox recommends that integrators contact their local sales representative or Matrox Graphics directly to appropriately match the right solution for a given project.

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