



High Point University Sales Labs Use StudioStation to Build Student Sales Presentation Skills

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Laurence J. Quinn
Chair, Marketing Department and Director, Professional Sales Program
High Point University

High Point University, HPU, located in North Carolina, is a thriving private liberal arts institution with 5,200 students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees in business, communication, education, health, engineering, and art. Professor Laurence J. Quinn, Chair of the Marketing Department and Director of the Professional Sales Program at HPU’s Earl N. Phillips School of Business spearheaded creation of the Sales Labs in Cottrell Hall to help students improve their presentations.

Practice Builds Sales Skills and Confidence

The Sales Labs provide settings for students pursuing sales majors to practice presentation techniques under real-world role-playing conditions. The Labs are equipped with Extron StudioStation systems to record the sessions so that students can review and hone their pitching skills. With successive sessions, students correct previous miscues, building confidence and poise. According to Quinn, “Student self confidence improves dramatically after the Sales Lab role-play sessions, and it’s the AV system that makes it possible.”

Challenge

Initially, Sales Lab sessions were recorded using wall mounted conference cameras connected to PCs running teleconferencing software. According

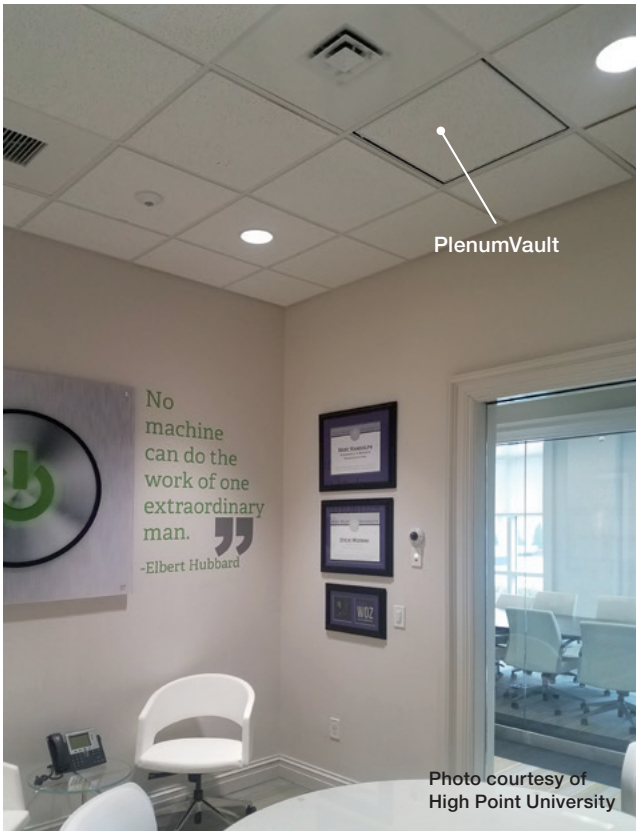


Photo courtesy of High Point University

To save space and prevent tampering, key AV components are discreetly housed above the ceiling in the Extron PlenumVault mount.



Photo courtesy of High Point University

Each Sales Lab has a user-friendly StudioStation Remote Control Panel mounted right below the wide-angle camera.

to HPU's AV Systems Analyst Jacob Nienow, the system was cumbersome and time consuming. Each session required login, software setup, rendering, and saving, taking about 20 minutes to reset. In addition, the camera location made it prone to bumps and damage.

Solution

The AV team upgraded the Sales Labs with Extron's StudioStation, providing one-touch session capture which eliminated setup time and the need for AV team support. The conference cameras were replaced with domed security cameras to mitigate damage.

In each Sales Lab, the camera is wall mounted next to the StudioStation Remote Control Panel to capture a wide-angle view of participants. Audio is picked-up by a ceiling mounted microphone. AV signals are routed to an Extron SMP 111 Streaming Media Processor hidden above the ceiling in an Extron PlenumVault Mounting Kit.

To begin a session, the faculty member posing as the sales prospect inserts a USB memory stick into the remote control panel and presses the Record button. The student then gives the sales presentation. Session recording is ended by pressing the Stop button on the remote control panel and removing the USB memory stick. Pause and Mark buttons on the panel allow recording to be temporarily stopped or sections of recordings to be flagged for easy searching.

The recorded session is stored on the memory stick as MP4 video files compatible with most media players. Recordings are reviewed by the instructor and student to identify strengths as well as areas for improvement. For competitions and group exercises, the presentations are live-streamed to a judges' room or classroom simultaneous with recording.

Result

For HPU's AV support staff and instructors, the upgrade to Extron StudioStation has made the Sales Labs easier to use, allows them to operate more efficiently, and requires less technical support. For HPU's students, the feedback they get from the videos recorded by StudioStation helps them sell their most important product: themselves. Many students incorporate the video clips of their Sales Lab sessions into their resumes. Reflecting on how StudioStation helps HPU succeed in molding future sales professionals, "I could not be prouder of what we've done together," says Professor Quinn. "It's a life changer for some of these college seniors, because just about all of them land great jobs when they graduate."

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