

Look No Further

B&H Photo Video shops itself for networking video displays

by **CRAIG GUILLOT**

A high level of quality in digital displays is table stakes these days. But for a retailer that is in the business of selling home and professional audio and video products, such quality can make or break sales. When B&H Photo Video rearranged its Manhattan retail store in 2013, it needed a robust system that could deliver high-quality feeds to more than 40 TVs and 100 other devices.

B&H is the largest non-chain retailer of photo and video equipment in the United States. While it does a thriving web business, it also serves an estimated 5,000 customers per day in its 70,000-square-foot Manhattan store, and Display Merchandiser Keith Cenname says visual displays are critical.

“For televisions and speakers, it is an extremely important aspect of sales,” he says. “When customers come in and they’re looking at those products, everything is about quality.”

The challenge was that dozens of displays needed to connect to lots of different sources. With 48 TV screens, 17 TV gondolas and a 40-projector demo area, Cenname needed a system that would deliver optimal signals without any quality degradation.

SIGNAL AMPLIFICATION

The retailer didn’t need to go far to find a solution. Having seen the reliability of the Atlona products it sells to its own customers, B&H worked with the audio-video company to create a custom display infrastructure.

The heart of the new system is eight Atlona distribution amplifiers. They are laid in a cascade fashion, each with eight outputs distributing feeds



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from Blu-ray and other media players to receivers on the TVs and gondolas up to 100 feet away. While that would typically result in a loss of quality with standard wiring, Atlona President and CEO Ilya Khayn says the equipment delivers a signal just as if it were right next to the television.

“By using our extension projects and distribution expansion projects, you can send that signal up to 230 feet away,” says Khayn. “It’s the most reliable system you can find.”

Cenname says B&H needed to be sure that the signal, whether it was from a Blu-ray or any other device, went through all the circuitry and televisions necessary without losing any quality. Achieving that optimal quality required an expansive array of equipment, as well as endless amounts of wiring and constant maintenance and oversight from staff.

“It was hard to do when you’re dealing with 70 televisions and

more than 100 devices,” he says. “Having that right was probably one of the most important things you can do in a home entertainment department.”

FLEXIBILITY AND SIMPLICITY

Another benefit is that B&H now has a robust, flexible system that can broadcast resolutions of 720p, 1080p or even 4K if needed. The simplicity of the system also means associates can simply turn it on in the mornings and don’t need to waste valuable time tinkering with equipment.

Atlona handled the entire installation process, which took roughly a month from designing the system and selecting the equipment to having it fully installed and operational. B&H now offers a more immersive experience for customers by delivering the highest quality resolution for all devices in the store, regardless of their size or distance from the source. **STORES**