

COLLABORATE WITH ELECTRONIC PROJECTION



3M Meeting Network

If you spotted an overhead or multimedia projector on a conference room table, you'd probably assume that someone would soon be giving a sales pitch, earnings report or another type of presentation. After all, that's what projectors have always been used for. But did you know that projection technology is also a terrific tool for brainstorming, managing projects and collaborating long-distance on new solutions?

A modern liquid crystal display panel or multimedia projector, also known as an electronic projection system or EPS, when harnessed to your PC becomes a real-time collaborative tool. Here are several ways in which EPS technology can make your meetings much more productive and a lot more interactive.

Brainstorming. With EPS, you can capture all the ideas that mushroom from a brainstorming session by capturing them in a word processor or spreadsheet and projecting them onto a screen for everyone to see. Once all those ideas are visible, you can sort them, combine them and edit them until a plan for action takes shape. Brainstorming is far more powerful if you don't have to wait to have ideas typed, transcribed and distributed for a second or even a third meeting.

Managing projects. With an EPS, you can capture the team's action items and open issues electronically during a status meeting. When you meet next time to review and update the status of the project, that online data becomes a living document that can be displayed with the EPS, discussed and updated in real time for everyone involved. This way, your team can review and monitor each project more efficiently and even cut down on the number of meetings!

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Bringing business software into your meeting.

The word processor, e-mail, presentation and financial programs you use every day on your desktop can give your meeting teammates a more dynamic, shared collaborative space when you display them through an EPS. For example, instead of staring at static printouts during your next financial planning meeting, your team can play out countless "what if" scenarios on the big screen with powerful spreadsheets. You can use those programs to create as many graphs and charts as your team needs to get the job done. Plus, information created with those applications becomes instantly available when you tap into your network during the meeting.

Team-based research via the Internet.

Connected to the Internet, a panel or projector can boost collaborative creativity and productivity and save time as well. Especially useful for marketing planning and competitive analysis, an EPS and your favorite web browser will

allow your team to collaboratively surf the world wide web, reviewing relevant industry information while creating new sales tactics.

Remote collaboration. Your EPS can also be hooked up to personal or group video-conferencing products. The result is a virtual, remote meeting room. Thanks to the big, sharp images delivered by a multimedia projector, your team members at distant offices can interact with you as though they were in the room. This enables collaboration that is much more powerful and natural than what you get by simply adding another person to a conference call.

Like its overhead-projector cousin, an EPS puts good ideas where they belong — on large screens for everyone to share. However, EPS technology adds a whole new dimension: the ability to shape and re-shape those ideas on the spot.

Make the meeting.

Related Reading
Cyber Meeting: How to Link People and Technology in Your Organization, James L. Creighton and James W. R. Adams, AMACOM, New York, 1998.

How To Make Meetings Work, Michael Doyle and David Straus, The Berkley Publishing Group, New York, NY 10016.

Helpful Hints

For optimum performance, keep the projector as close as possible to the level of the screen. Otherwise, images may be distorted and harder to focus.

Lighting control is a plus. Choose meeting rooms with dimmable incandescent lighting.

If you're using an LCD panel, make sure your overhead projector is very bright. Overhead projectors with 10,000+ lumen capabilities will allow you to work with the lights on in the room.

Try before you buy. Color, contrast and overall image quality can vary greatly between EPS products. Dealers are typically happy to demonstrate multimedia projectors on-site, using your computer and software.

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