

Productive collaboration across distance

Weetwood Hall Conference Centre and Hotel provides flexibility for clients



“We’ve harnessed a way for people to effectively communicate, share presentations and data, and collaborate together on projects without having to be in the same space.”

Michael Longstaff, Deputy General Manager, Weetwood Hall Conference Centre and Hotel

The award-winning Weetwood Hall Conference Centre and Hotel in Leeds, located in England’s West Yorkshire County, recently unveiled an innovative data conferencing suite that uses SMART business solutions. Weetwood Hall is the largest and most flexible conference center and hotel in northern England, offering clients the space for training, presentations, collaboration projects and sustainable meetings.

“In planning the data conferencing suite, we wanted to offer our clients more than video conferencing,” says Michael Longstaff, Deputy General Manager at Weetwood Hall. “We wanted to give them the opportunity to collaborate and share information, presentations and data on a local and global scale. We also wanted to make sure their experience was seamless – the technology needed to be easy to use.”

“We didn’t want to install something that could cause clients to become embarrassed in front of people because they couldn’t use the technology,” says Longstaff. After the implementation team received a number of hands-on product demonstrations from their audiovisual supplier, they were confident that SMART business solutions were the right choice for the new data conferencing suite.

Working with their supplier, they implemented a SMART Board 600i interactive whiteboard system™ fully integrated with a SMART UF55™ short-throw projector, SMART Bridgit™ conferencing software and a SMART Hub SE collaboration platform. This configuration enables computer-free digital whiteboarding and data conferencing, and allows Weetwood Hall’s clients to easily connect their own laptops or access stored data from a memory stick.

“We decided to go with the SMART Hub SE so that everything could be locked down and secure,” says Longstaff. This collaboration appliance enables users to create, share and distribute digital notes without the need for a computer. He adds, “The idea is that you come into the environment, you use the equipment and you leave no trace. When clients leave their data on their laptop or a memory stick, there’s no data trail.”

“Most of our clients also want to share data with somebody overseas. In the data conferencing suite, using SMART Bridgit conferencing software, everyone can work and make notes on the same documents simultaneously – regardless of where they are located,” says Martin Włodarczyk, Operations Manager for Weetwood Hall.

Weetwood Hall discovered SMART solutions because of its close connection

to the academic community – the conference center is wholly owned by the University of Leeds, which frequently holds academic conferences and training events there.

“We were hosting training events for teachers who were learning how to use the SMART Board interactive whiteboard, and we became very curious,” says Longstaff. Weetwood Hall quickly discovered that SMART business solutions could be used to increase meeting productivity for corporate clients.

Since most students in the United Kingdom use interactive whiteboards, Longstaff recognizes that as the next generation enters the workforce, this technology will become an expected standard in conference rooms. “We’re happy and proud to say that Weetwood Hall is already at the forefront of technology,” he adds.

“Our clients are very enthused about the data conferencing suite,” says Longstaff. “We’re an independent business, and we need to keep thinking of ideas, innovations and technical advances that maintain the high standards we have imposed amongst ourselves.”

With SMART business solutions integrated into the data conferencing suite, Weetwood Hall is helping clients increase their cost efficiencies by giving them the tools to increase meeting productivity and the ability to effectively collaborate with local and remote participants.

SMART Technologies

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