



The DAVE School

SUCCESS STORY

Completely re-wiring a soundstage on Universal Orlando's back lot is a big undertaking, especially when technology is essential to your livelihood. The DAVE School knew communication and accountability were keys to their success; so, they sought a contractor that could offer a well-coordinated effort, with electrical, cabling and audio visual under the same umbrella.

SNAPSHOT

Company: The DAVE School

Location: Orlando, Fla.

Industry: Education

Project Type: Design and Install

Piranha Service Lines: Structured Cabling, Electrical and Audio Visual

Real Estate: New tenant build-out in an existing structure

Square Footage: 16,000

Timeframe: 3 months

Project Challenges: Managing multiple services with a sensitive schedule and sophisticated needs

Takeaway: A contractor that skillfully provides multiple services under one roof can be a great benefit to overall project coordination and results.

"The Piranha team felt like staff."

Steve Porter, Director of IT

SUCCESS STORY

When you think of box-office giants like Avatar, Shrek and Transformers, you think about amazing digital animation and visual effects. Yet, you rarely think about the people who create those effects, or the training it requires to hone their craft. That's where the DAVE (Digital Animation and Visual Effects) School comes in. They offer an intensive, year-long curriculum that is renowned for its job placement. Their 16,000 sq. ft. facility includes 3 labs, a shooting stage with a 65'x 25' green screen (the largest in Florida), and a state of the art motion capture system.

For the DAVE School, their revenue depends on having superior equipment that is functioning at optimum capacity. Steve Porter, the school's Director of Information Technology, believes it's what makes the school so successful. He said, "By having a studio that

mimics the real work environment that they're aspiring to become part of, we give them better preparation for their future roles."

When 10 years of growth plus a newly available soundstage on the Universal Orlando back lot equaled the perfect time to move, the DAVE School knew they would need a quality technology partner to help execute the relocation.

"The wiring needs were a priority, because that's how we run our facility. Without the students being able to sit down and use the technology at their desktop ... we would not have been able to proceed."

A mutual friend referred Steve to Piranha. He was looking for a partner that could design and install a high quality data network, as well as respond quickly when new ideas came up.

Steve was also hoping for a firm that had a diverse skill set, and the ability to manage those services through one person. In the past, he'd worked on projects with separate cabling and electrical contractors; and, he felt this often resulted in finger pointing and a lack of communication. He noted, "Throughout the bid process, Piranha was the only facility that offered both low voltage (voice/data) and high voltage (electrical) solutions." He added, "The experience of their team in both areas was a significant relief for us."

"The ultimate reason we went with Piranha was because they housed both cabling and electrical under the same roof."

Piranha began the 3-month engagement by removing the infrastructure from the previous tenant, and setting up a temporary network. "We pulled approximately 5 thousand pounds of old cable out of the building before we could move our new facilities in," mentioned Steve. Then, Piranha began designing the technology layout for each room based on the school's unique and highly sophisticated needs.

Throughout this process, Steve appreciated Piranha's vast expertise. "We're a little different than some of their other projects because of the kind of work we do here. They were able to adapt their techniques to benefit us, and help come up with suggestions and ideas for the big picture." He also added some advice for others hiring Piranha, "Make sure that you let Piranha know the whole scope of the job, because their input on improvements is invaluable."

All in all, the structured cabling portion of the job required about 220 CAT 6 cables, 40 of which were for voice.

Much focus was placed on a third floor classroom, which emphasized Piranha's audio visual capabilities. They utilized a distributed audio visual over twisted pair solution to create a high-tech display system. Steve said, "Because of the change in size of the building, we were no longer able to use an overhead projector for the teachers to show work to the class."

Piranha set up two displays for the instructor, the second of which is wired to the server room and then distributed over CAT 5 cable to monitors at 24 student stations.

"We like the system so much that we'd probably use it instead of a projector anyway because it puts the text in front of the student. It's right by them instead of hard to read, and everybody has the same experience no matter how far away they are from the front," noted Steve.

Piranha also installed a distributed VGA system that uses a more compact design than what the DAVE School had in the past. It allows them to display from a main computer to any device up to 200 ft away and is used to broadcast "DAVE's TV" throughout the building.

When it came to electrical, Piranha's work was extensive. The team installed and moved multiple power poles, particularly in the cafeteria. They also installed suspended light sconces, wall sconces, recessed can lighting, ambient lighting, track lighting and 2x4 ceiling fixtures.

Though the actual move happened during spring break, Piranha still had to work around classes to facilitate

the project. Steve was happy with the way the Piranha staff handled the sensitivity of the situation. He said, "They were very aware of our teaching environment and they knew when and where they could work around our needs perfectly. They gave the teachers the respect, so they were more willing to have small interruptions when they were required. It was a good working relationship on all levels."

He was also pleased that the move went so well, and that there was little impact to students. "Our students have purchased a product, which is learning how to use these tools. Whether data, voice or electrical, any interruptions in service meant that we were not able to fulfill the expectations of our client. We would have to cancel class and send our students home."

"Piranha enabled us to make the transition from one building to another with no interruption of service and almost transparent move to our student body."

When it was time to wrap up the job, the Piranha team was disappointed to leave behind Hulk Hogan sightings and a behind-the-scenes view of construction on the Harry Potter ride. Yet, the DAVE School was even sorer to lose Piranha. When asked if his expectations were met, Steve said, "Absolutely." He added, "... it's been so convenient to accommodate last minute requests. They [Piranha] were always able to jump right on it and solve the problem. With them not in the building anymore, we feel like we've lost a partner and a friend."