



RECOVERY AND RENEWAL: How Spaulding Boston Uses Digital Display To Powerfully Drive Patient Experiences And The Hospital's Brand

ACESO CASE STUDY

Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital Boston is in the business of restoring lives – bringing people back from the trauma of injuries and illness. So as new facilities were planned to open along the old Charlestown Navy Yard for 2013, the management team needed ways to convey the uplifting stories of recovery and rebirth, and make those stories central to the experience of patients, their friends and families, caregivers and donors.

The solution was a mix of strategically positioned digital displays, run by Aceso and powered by ComQi, that have transformed the hospital experience from the moment people come inside.

In this white paper, you will learn the origins of this award-winning project, what was done and why, results, new plans and lessons learned.

DEVELOPING THE IDEA



The Spaulding Rehabilitation Network offers a wide range of inpatient programs and runs 23 outpatient centers located throughout Eastern Massachusetts. It is consistently ranked among the top rehabilitation hospitals in the United States.

In April 2013, Spaulding opened a new 132-bed facility in Charlestown, touted as a national model for environmental and inclusive design. The new Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital

Boston, or Spaulding Boston, helps patients and their loved ones recover from serious injury or illness, and puts people on the tracks to greater independence.

Thousands of people would pass through Spaulding's doors each day, and the management team wanted an idea, plan, technology and efficient, sustainable processes to reach all of them with powerful messaging that not only left viewers inspired, but also reinforced the Spaulding brand. "When we started conceiving this project," relates John Campbell, CIO at Spaulding Boston, "there were not a lot of other projects out there like it. There just weren't a lot of examples we could even point to."

What Spaulding had was something of a blank canvas – a new building that digital could be designed into, and few preconceived ideas about how things should look or what programming was required.

"We have a very strong brand," adds Campbell. "We knew we wanted to do things that reinforced that brand, and tell the Spaulding story."



A POWERFUL, UNIQUE SOLUTION

Healthcare management and communications solutions provider Aceso worked with ComQi, a digital signage content management platform provider, to develop a unique digital message platform that now spans eight floors at Spaulding Boston.

There are 18 different digital media display walls strategically placed around the facility, from a dramatic 1 by 6 horizontal display strip behind the main floor reception, to smaller arrays in secondary areas. In all, there are 51 46-inch LCD displays.

Programming is focused on uplifting stories of renewal: A young girl who almost drowned, now back dancing ballet; the victim of a brutal accident back tossing footballs, using his one intact limb.

Sometimes, media elements occupy individual panels in a larger display wall. Other times, custom media pieces cascade content across the breadth of displays – like a swimmer doing laps in the therapy pool.

Programming enlivens waiting and reception areas on the different floor levels – at times bringing in the outside with compelling content, like long-form video on the accessible children’s playground out front that was championed by late Boston Mayor Tom Menino. There is a piece that captures, in stop-motion, how Spaulding rose up from an empty waterfront lot, and another that captures a time-lapse sunrise to sunset along the historic city’s harbor.

“Some of them are like beautiful pieces of art,” says Mary Bures, Spaulding Boston’s Senior Director of Communications.

More practically, digital screens have replaced the bulletin boards and taped-up posters that cluttered Spaulding’s previous site. ComQi’s browser-based platform enables any necessary messaging to be developed, scheduled and delivered without a sheet of paper. “We’ve eliminated paper messaging, all the visual noise,” says Bures. “We have a vice-president who, when she’s walking around, will pull a poster down if she sees it.”



EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

When the screens were turned on around Spaulding Boston, the impact was powerful, and immediate.

“It exceeded our expectations,” recalls Bures. “When we did the unveiling, we had the management team there, and I’d say half of them there were dabbing tears from their eyes. It was that impactful.”

In tangible terms, digital has allowed communicators to get messages where they need to be, and when they need to be up and then down – something extraordinarily tough to manage in the paper days.

Surveys of both patients and staff have confirmed very strong scores for the hospital experience, and for how Spaulding is regarded as innovative.

Spaulding is now, also, getting former patients – like one fishing enthusiast who’s finally back on the water – bringing his old caregivers his story of renewal in photos. They’re now used as a sequence on the video walls.

Operationally, the combination of Aceso and ComQi has enabled the hospital’s designated, approved communicators to quickly target and deliver across the facility’s full display network, managing it all off a browser and using Internet connectivity to move files and schedules around. Those easy, centralized management tools have required far less time than were envisioned, says Bures, in the original planning process.

The larger industry has seen what’s been done, and recognized its excellence. Spaulding Boston’s video walls were honored in 2014 by the Digital Screenmedia Association as the Best Healthcare Digital Signage project.

“Spaulding Boston’s project is a tremendous reference point for how digital can be properly integrated into an emotion-packed setting like a hospital,” says Stuart Armstrong, Group President at ComQi. “They invested the time and resources to think through and execute on great content, and then put a platform in place that could deliver and run it effectively.”

LESSONS LEARNED

- Patient stories are very powerful, and easily told.
- Digital reinforces the brand and powerfully demonstrates innovation.
- Choosing the right platform and partners leads to efficiency and reliability.
- Creating wide format videos is challenging, and an art form.
- Keeping content fresh requires a dedicated effort and resources.