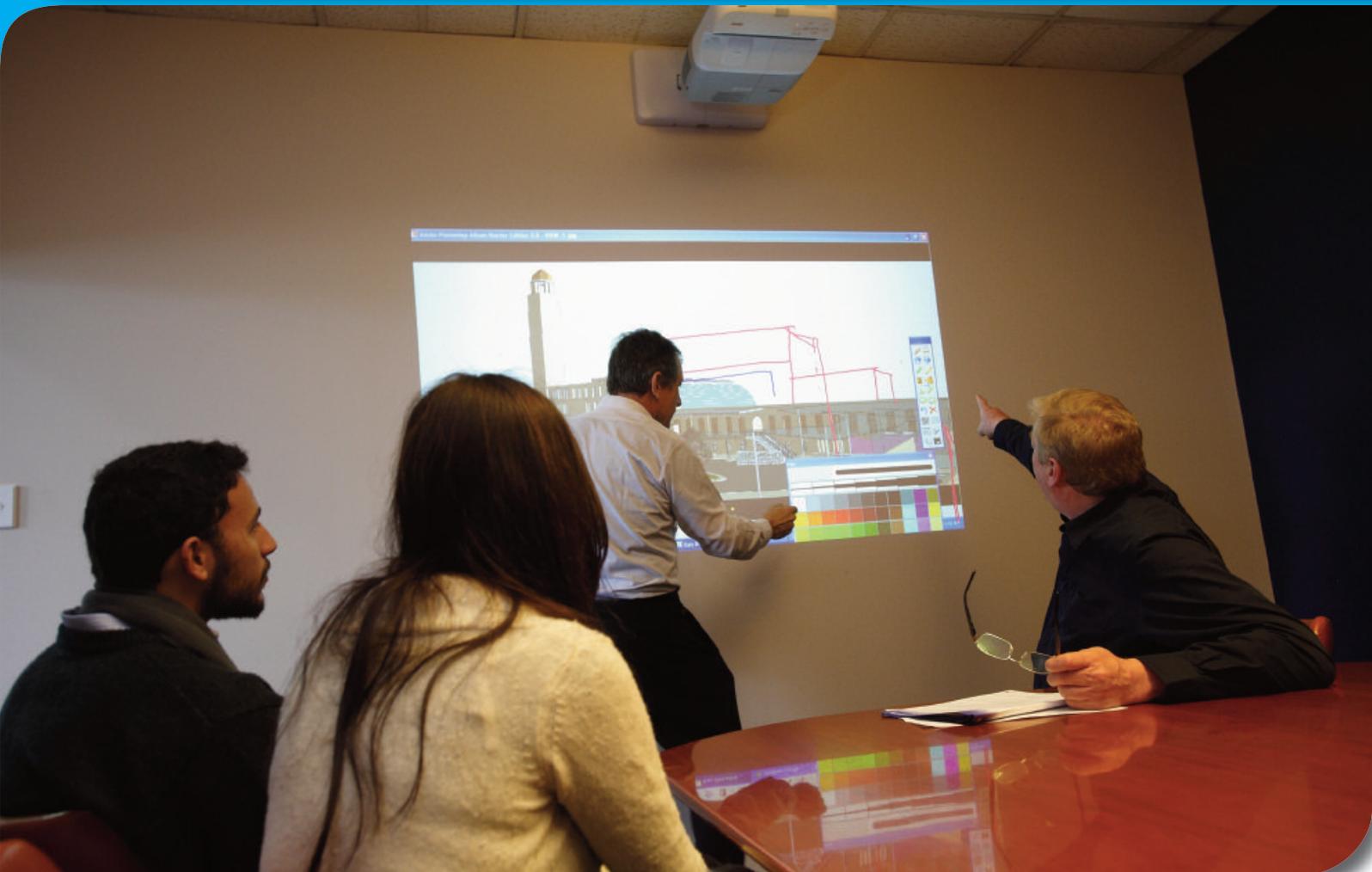


Caldis Cook Group

Architects with an eye to design and innovation



“

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”

David Cook
Director
Caldis Cook Group

Caldis Cook Group

While most Australians may not be familiar with the Caldís Cook Group name, the chances are that many will have experienced first-hand the company's design and architectural skills. Based in Sydney and expanding out to Melbourne and Brisbane, the company is a 50-strong practice of corporate architects, interior designers, heritage architects, town planners, urban designers and project managers.

Among its extensive portfolio of high profile designs, Caldís Cook Group has delivered on projects such as the Rail Heritage Centre alterations at Sydney's Central Station, Sydney suburban railway station refurbishments, and the heritage-listed Chamberlain Hotel.

Challenge: Achieve more effective collaboration

As the scope and number of projects being undertaken by Caldís Cook Group continues to increase, the company maintains a strong focus on employing best practices, technology and personnel; and with that, effective collaboration between staff members and with clients.

It was in early 2010 that one of the two founding directors, David Cook, attended a presentation at his daughter's school and saw the collaboration potential of an interactive whiteboard and projector solution. He believed, though, that there had to be a better solution – one that took all the best of the whiteboard/projector combination then took it all several steps further.

"I'd seen other businesses use systems that featured large plasma or LCD screens," David says, "and while the functionality – being able to interact directly with a connected computer – was there, I was looking for a solution that could deliver a very large projection, bypassed the big price tag, and, when not in use, wasn't taking up space in the board room."

Solution: The Epson EB-450Wi Interactive Projector

Having discarded the interactive screen and whiteboard alternatives, David began to research a less complex but just as powerful solution; and it was then that he came across the Epson EB-450Wi interactive projector and pen combination. "The fact that it delivered all the functionality of the other systems, yet achieved that with only a projector and stylus was an immediate attraction," he states.

Within a matter of days, David was attending a presentation of the EB-450Wi at EOS Design, one of Epson's leading projector resellers, controlling the connected computer and its software using only the stylus as a mouse and pen on the projected image.

"Right from the start, the ease-of-use and the enormous potential for training and collaboration were all too obvious," David relates. "We

wouldn't need a special screen or whiteboard, and the high levels of brightness meant we'd be able to use it without having to consider lighting."

An enhanced collaboration model

From day one of the EB-450Wi's installation by EOS Design and Caldís Cook Group, the projector has been enabling an enhanced collaboration model, dramatically improving the free exchange of ideas and information – crucial requirements for the design team that faces tight deadlines and extremely high client expectations.

Where Caldís Cook Group's board room previously hosted meetings between design team members, each taking notes and marking up design prints, it's now a common sight to see architects and designers sitting around the board room table, taking turns to mark up changes to designs projected directly onto one of the room's walls.

In commenting on the EB-450Wi's ability to bypass the need for a dedicated interactive whiteboard, David says: "It's one of the projector's strong features – allowing people to use the system's pen and interact directly with the connected computer, simply by drawing on the wall where the image is projected."

As team members use the pen to make notes and changes to projected designs, the EB-450Wi's software automatically tracks the pen location and motion, then accurately writes those changes directly to the file being projected. After pushing a button on the pen to switch it from drawing to mouse mode, it's then a straightforward process of saving the file and even emailing it to each of the team members.

"The key advantage of this," David explains, "is that there's no misinterpretation. Everyone ends up working from the same file with the same mark ups; and that goes a long way to ensuring we're all working in tandem and minimising delays."

An intuitive tool

By way of explaining the EB-450Wi's ease-of-use, David cites the example of a meeting held between Caldís Cook and one of its clients, during which a 50 year master plan for Sydney's Central Railway Station was being discussed. "During the meeting we'd been using the projector without taking advantage of the interactive features," he says. "It was just a case of displaying concepts and designs, and discussing them with the client.

"When the client asked for a pen and paper to sketch out some suggestions, though, I simply passed him the interactive pen and suggested he mark them up directly on the image. I didn't bother



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instructing him on how it worked, simply because it was such a natural thing – drawing on the screen just as if he were drawing on a piece of paper.

“At the end of the meeting, I think he was just as impressed with the projector as he was with the designs.”

It's the projector's ease-of-use that lends itself also to becoming one of the Caldis Cook's most effective training tools.

With the majority of the company's 50 employees being CAD technicians, and new and upgraded software being introduced on a fairly regular basis, the EB-450Wi is often put to use in group training sessions. “Having the software installed on a connected computer, a trainer is able to step users through new features and cut training time down by at anywhere up to 50 per cent,” David says.

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Beyond the interactive benefits

Underpinning the versatility of the EB-450Wi at Caldis Cook Group is a combination of technologies that gives the company significant benefits in a number of areas. Among those is the projector's ultra short throw, supporting the ability to project an image of over 200 cm from a distance of only 65 cm.

“The ultra-short throw is absolutely crucial to the effectiveness of the projector in the work we do with it,” David says. “Firstly, it provides a very large viewing area, which means we can present a full design on the wall and see an enormous amount of detail without having to zoom in.

“Secondly, with the projector mounted such a short distance from the wall, we're able to stand close to the projected image and not have any shadow cast.”

It's worth noting that the EB-450Wi is not being used solely as an interactive projector at Caldis Cook. In fact, because of its high brightness and colour reproduction, it has replaced the company's existing board room projector for all projector-based activities.

“The real advantage,” David says, “is that we have, with a single solution, an interactive training and collaboration environment, as well as a high performance presentation tool. It's the best of both worlds in a single unit.”

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