

CNN Washington Bureau

Excellence Award category

Post & network production facilities

Submitted by

Lawson & Associates, Architects



Design team

CNN Washington: Matt Speiser, deputy bureau chief; Jan Hoover, sr. proj. mgr., Turner Properties; Michele Warren, mgr.-interiors, Turner Properties; Tu Vu, VP of broadcast eng. & systems tech.; George Kinney, resource mgr., broadcast eng. & sys. tech.

Lawson & Associates, Architects:

Bruce Lawson, principal

DesignTech, MEP Engineers: Matt

Bowers, principal; Tom Igo, principal

Holbert Apple Associates, Structural

Engineers: Rich Apple, principal

Technology at work

Advanced Fiber Products: Custom A/V fiber-optics HD run gear

Advanced Network Devices: Power over Ethernet clocks

Crestron: Conference room A/V controls

Litepanels: LED lighting

Mode-AL: Monitor mounts

Moveo: Demountable glass partitions

Polycom: Video conference facilities

RTS: RVON key panels

Telemetrics: Robotics flash cameras

Vinten: Robotics flash cameras



The CNN Washington Bureau expanded its operation onto a new floor of its building in April 2010. The D.C. Bureau's 8th floor renovation was a project with an extensive design phase employing out-of-the-box ideas on functionality. Primarily used as an open work area for the bureau's assignment desk, political coverage unit and show staffs, the new 8th floor also includes live stand-up positions, extensive RTS intercom connectivity and four robust video conference room facilities.

A singular achievement of the new floor is the enhanced work environment for the staffs that migrated there. Lawson & Associates, Architects, along with Turner Broadcast's Properties Department and the CNN staff, looked at the work environment with a unique perspective and designed a space that offers a different type of functional work environment while maintaining a distinctive brand throughout. Previously, the shows, coverage beats, assignment desk and executives had been segregated on separate floors. Even "the desk," which had occupied a single space before, was handicapped by poor acoustics and intruding structural columns.

With the opening of the new floor, the most dramatic innovation introduced was that the assignment desk, the beats, the situation room, "John King USA," the political unit and bureau management all share a single common floor. In a significant environmental change, offices were clustered around the building core, giving window views and natural light to the open workspace areas.

In bringing all the groups together, the designers focused on dramatically improving communication, even eye-to-eye contact. At the assignment desk, workstations, custom-made by dTank, are arranged in two large semi-circles with a minimum of obstructions between desks, and attention was paid to improved acoustics. Adjacent to the assignment desk is a robotic camera with low-profile LED lighting that allows for quick live reports with a minimum of interruption to the working desk. The desk is able to communicate with CNN headquarters in Atlanta, as well as studios and control rooms through RTS intercom panels.

On the opposite side of the floor, overlooking the network's political unit, is another stand-up position used for hourly updates on campaign developments. Four conference rooms on the floor are equipped with Polycom conferencing facilities. The largest conference room, which holds more than 100 people, features a Crestron control system feeding five oversized monitors. Moveo glass demountable partitions separate this conference room from the political unit, but are easily removed in order to expand the size of the room when necessary. CNN also installed added infrastructure to accommodate additional cameras on the floor, allowing for the possibility of expanded broadcasting.

Because fewer traditional offices exist on this floor, unique spaces known as privacy pods were devised, giving employees a place to hold private conversations or small meetings. The glassed in, but still private, pods vaguely resemble the shape of a boat, a swirl and a pentagonal funnel, and are emblazoned by bright semi-transparent graphics of CNN and Washington. The 8th floor of the CNN Washington Bureau has flair, form and, most importantly, functionality. ■