



ATHLETIC FACILITIES & SIGNAGE

By Bobby Clays

Boost Recruitment with Stadium Branding

Universities and colleges can attest that student recruiting is no easy task. It is an ever-expanding science that involves constant attention, persistent marketing, and—most importantly—the perfect image.

Many programs are realizing that the look and feel of their campus is a critical factor in many students' decision making. That is why one small college in California decided to give their campus a new look with custom-made stadium graphics. They were able to transform some of their old facilities into eye-catching works of art without breaking their budget.

Branding Your College or University

Like many other small colleges and universities, West Valley College takes pride in their athletic accomplishments, especially their successful baseball program. With multiple championships under their belt, they knew their team deserved an extraor-

dinary baseball field. They deserved a one-of-a-kind field that only the Vikings could call home.

They saw this as an opportunity to kill two birds with one branding stone. If done right, they could customize their baseball stadium and promote their school brand at the same time, which is exactly what they did.

Promoting the College through Athletics

The college's baseball program has been gaining a lot of attention through the years after winning multiple championships, which is why they moved to their athletics program to promote their college's overall brand.

"Our college decided to leverage athletics as a means of marketing our college," stated John Vlahos, Athletic Director. "The branding and signage is a great way to get our name out to the public, many of which utilize our campus facilities on a daily basis."

John Vlahos worked with a sign company that specialized in creating custom-made stadium graphics that showcased the program effectively. The school colors, brand name, and cutouts of their baseball players gave their baseball facility a fresh new look.

"The signage was an easy and effective way to pump some life into the facility and give it a much needed facelift," explained Vlahos.



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The facility branding didn't stop at the baseball stadium. They also customized their soccer facility, aquatic center, and beach volleyball facility to showcase their branding.

"With a multiple facility project... it is very important to keep branding elements

consistent to make the program's brand stronger," stated Mark Smith, Project Design Manager. Smith oversaw the multiple branding projects; along with creating these eye-catching graphics, he was able to keep the college's image intact to further promote their brand.

The Results

The custom-made graphics are now visible around campus. Not only did these new graphics give the campus new life aesthetically, but they also created a fresh sense of school pride that affected everyone. "The finished product provided an instant lift for everyone involved with the program,"

Along with outdoor branding, many universities and colleges are also beautifying their indoor facilities with wall graphics, window graphics, and floor graphics. Branding can go a long way for your program. You can take advantage of your available space while engaging students and the wider community with your university's brand.

explained Vlahos. "There was a tremendous amount of excitement and pride among our student-athletes and staff."

These new graphics appealed to visitors to the campus, while creating a positive effect on the students, the staff, and even the community. "The community loved the look and appreciated that we are making an effort to improve our facilities," Vlahos said. "The community wants to be more involved with the program as a result."

The college witnessed amazing results to this simple solution of amplifying their facilities. This transformation beautified their facility, promoted their brand, instilled team pride among staff and students, and created community awareness. Although these are incredible results, the college's main goal was to market their college for recruitment.

"Recruiting received a boost as local student-athletes wanted to be part of a program that was willing to invest in its program and promote the program," explained Vlahos.

Needless to say, the college accomplished their goal and even saw extra positive results from their branding projects. That is why they are already planning on continuing their facility branding by updating their gymnasium, tennis courts, softball field, and multi-purpose field.

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Advice for Other Programs

Now that they have gone through the whole process of rebranding their facilities, the college can look back on their experience and better prepare themselves, and others, for future projects. "Don't go cheap. We learned from experience that you get what you pay for," exclaimed Vlahos.

Many programs are realizing that the look and feel of their campus is a critical factor in many students' decision making. That is why one small college in California decided to give their campus a new look with custom-made stadium graphics. They were able to transform some of their old facilities into eye-catching works of art without breaking their budget.

Private colleges and universities have a multitude of options for branding your athletic facilities and boosting your program.

Perhaps you want to turn otherwise unsightly bleachers into a branding asset with bleacher graphics, which many colleges believe has boosted their program's image, school spirit, recruiting, team pride and increased community engagement.

You may want to brand your bare fences when branding your facility; fence graphics are an essential element to tie everything together, and stark fences around your facility are not only an eye-sore but a missed branding opportunity.

As part of an overall stadium graphics project, you can have your exterior colors matched to your interior decor with the same logos, colors and themes used around your facilities. It can start from something as simple as a single logo to a full-color photograph to create something extraordinary. The right company can assist in turning your vision into reality, by providing free design and layout options as well as mock-up and proofing opportunities.

Outdoor branding graphics is an innovative solution, for any program, to beautify their facilities. Whether it is fences, bleachers, sidewalks, or event light poles, outdoor branding can make a huge impact to any college or university.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Bobby Claeys is the Marketing Director at BigSigns.com, a stadium graphics company that specializes in helping schools transform their facilities into something unique. You can see what BigSigns.com can do for you by calling 800.790.7611 or visiting www.BigSigns.com.

FLEX-LT Case Study

Muhlenberg College - Media & Communications Building



WHERE: Allentown, PA
WHEN: February 2015
WHAT: FSR HuddleVU HV-1000 (x2), FSR 8x8 matrix switcher, FSR FLEX Control System, FSR Digital Ribbon Cables
WHO: Sean Miller, Thomas Sciarrino, Anthony Dalton, Muhlenberg College

Challenge

The staff at the Muhlenberg College wanted to optimize every bit of space on their very traditional campus by creating an area where students could heighten their leaning experience as well as work together in smaller assignment oriented groups. The task at hand was to transform a little used alcove in the John and Margaret Wilson Communication Hall into a technologically advanced room furnished with the latest collaboration equipment and control system technology. The team was further challenged by their resolve to design a modern, light, clean and open space that was easy for students and instructors to use, unaided, while maintaining the architectural integrity of the classic campus.

Solution

The Muhlenberg team, which includes Sean Miller, Thomas Sciarrino, and Anthony Dalton, designed a flexible space from the ground up that is capable of adjusting as needs and groups differ. The team furnished the room with two FSR HuddleVU HV-1000 collaboration systems, an FSR 8x8 matrix switcher, an FSR FLEX Control System, and FSR Digital Ribbon Cables to ensure students and staff were equipped with the tools they need to succeed.

Results

The Media and Communications Building is now equipped with a technically advanced, flexible room that serves as a study area, class room and meeting room and is capable of accommodating entire classes, independent group work, and individual students. Also, in an effort to introduce this new type of room to the rest of the campus' faculty and staff, it's available for departmental meetings.



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