



The Seattle Space Needle Recognizes the Value of Large Interactive Displays Horizon Display Recognizes the Value of a Superior Customer Experience

The Application

SkyQ is a set of five interactive kiosks that circle the observation deck atop the Seattle Space Needle. The kiosks utilize 30" and 42" touch screen displays. Together, they create a set of unique and engaging experiences for visitors looking for a hands-on and memorable way to make a direct connection with Seattle's people and places. There's no other known installation like it in the world.

The project concept was 10 years in the making and became reality as technology caught up with imagination. The first attempt was referred to as Zoomitron. That set of kiosks employed much smaller touch screens and were more informational than interactive. The Zoomitron was a relative success however, and the men and women at Space Needle LLC knew they had to take the next step towards their ultimate dream; the SkyQ.

"After gathering market research and conducting exit surveys with our visitors, it was clear that the kiosks were making a positive impact on the Seattle Space Needle experience. We knew then that expanding the project made business sense, and we were right, SkyQ has been a wonderful success." – Director of Marketing

Five 30" Dell LCD monitors mounted contiguously display a single high-resolution 360 degree panorama image of the Seattle landscape as photographed from the roof of the Space Needle. Visitors passing their hand over the monitors will reveal a second image layer beneath the photograph. The layer beneath is a photo-realistic illustration of the same landscape with points of interest called out through whimsical illustration. Touching any of these illustrations will reveal fun facts and trivia about that part of the city and its culture.

"...it was clear that the kiosks were making a positive impact on the Seattle Space Needle experience."

"They use the SkyQ to learn about all that our wonderful city has to offer."

A 42" LCD touch monitor displays a 'photo wheel' of 27 local Seattle citizens. All of the individuals featured on the screen vary in age, culture and occupation in order to provide visitors with a wide array of local perspectives. The touch screen allows visitors to wave their finger and spin the 'photo wheel.' Visitors can touch one of the pictures and it will fill the screen and begin playing video. The content is 'real stories from real people' – local Seattle citizens from all walks of life, giving their impressions of the city's best and favorite activities.

"There was no single resource for planning your stay in Seattle, no starting point; we wanted the Space Needle to be that point. Now tourists think Space Needle as soon as they arrive. They use the SkyQ to learn about all that our wonderful city has to offer." – President



* Photos Courtesy of Space Needle LLC



Challenges. Execution. Service.

When the time came to make their dream a reality, Space Needle LLC went to their trusted and very reputable Marketing & Design Agency to help bring the concept to life. The agency was pivotal in determining floor plan, kiosk location, design, software development and the overall look and feel of the SkyQ. The agency also recommended that Horizon Display would be the organization best suited to meet their touch screen hardware needs.

When Space Needle LLC reached out to Horizon Display, they did so after receiving a hard recommendation from their agency to use SAW (Surface Acoustic Wave) technology. A few years ago this recommendation would have been sound, but the technology, as it always does, had changed, and SAW was now an outdated option. Horizon Display urged the use of Optical Technology, but there were time pressures as well as a strict budget for the Space Needle to operate within. Reluctantly, Horizon provided five 30" touch screens utilizing SAW.

A few months after the launch of SkyQ, the SAW units began failing, and visitors were not getting the experience they had expected. False touches were being registered, touch points were inaccurate, and sometimes the touch wasn't reading at all. The Space Needle immediately contacted Jeff Niles, the National Account Manager at Horizon Display, and requested a demo unit of the optical touch screens he had originally recommended. Without a single "I told you so," Jeff acted quickly and had one 30" optical touch screen delivered over night to Seattle. That following morning the MIS Manager for Space Needle LLC, Glenn Arnold, installed the touch panel and immediately witnessed the difference in performance.

"It was their response; it was their knowledge of the competing technologies, that's what I appreciated most about dealing with Horizon Display. From overnighting a sample piece to always being available on the phone to answer questions along the way, my experience as a customer has been exactly what I hoped, but not exactly what I expected." – MIS Manager, Glenn Arnold

"...having Horizon Display in my corner has helped me feel confident about what we're doing here."

The Results

- **Increased foot traffic**
- **Increased revenues**
- **More return visitors**
- **Longer average stay of visit**
- **Higher customer satisfaction ratings**

