

Samuel Merritt University CIO Appreciates Quest's 'Partnership' Business Model

SAMUEL MERRITT UNIVERSITY (SMU), A CALIFORNIA NURSING COLLEGE WHOSE ROOTS GO BACK MORE THAN 100 YEARS, is committed to the safety and security of its students, faculty, and staff and strives to provide the advanced technologies that deliver a first-rate education. Marcus Walton, the university's Chief Information Officer, says Quest helps him achieve both of those objectives.

A few years ago, Walton recalls, someone was able to ride an elevator to an upper floor in a building on its Oakland campus, walk into an office, and steal a couple of laptops and a purse. Not a huge loss—but unacceptable.

At the time, SMU had already partnered with Quest for more than a decade on many of its technology needs. And in the years since, Quest has installed network surveillance cameras and smart ID-card readers that together allow Samuel Merritt's physical security team to completely control access to every area of its four campuses. And, Walton says, the team at Quest helped him save money.

"They changed the way we were looking at security," Walton says. "Our previous vendors wanted to put 360-degree cameras everywhere. Quest walked us through a process of looking at our actual needs and saw that we could use direct-focus cameras for most of our positions. They were able to reduce the cost of our Fresno build by over \$50,000."

Quest now delivers **Physical Security as a Service (PSaaS)** to the university. If there's a need for a camera readjustment or card reader installation, Walton's colleagues work directly with Quest. "And they don't monopolize the process," he points out. "They actually trained us while implementing for us. So that's been a big plus."

Building Better Classrooms

When the pandemic struck, like many organizations, Samuel Merritt had an immediate and acute need for virtual conference rooms and, of course, virtual classrooms. Walton recalls describing a use case for a classroom on SMU's Sacramento campus to Andrew Samms, his dedicated sales rep, and Quest quickly providing a proof of concept. Then, he says, Quest gave the college "a classroom that faculty can actually use that helps them get their jobs done much more efficiently."



"We got such an amazing response for the classroom in Sacramento that we had Quest build out two more, as well as an executive conference room, on our Oakland campus. And now they're scheduled to build a total of 10 classrooms in Oakland."

– Marcus Walton, Samuel Merritt University, CIO

The benefits of having a virtual conference room with audio visual equipment that has been carefully calibrated to SMU's needs have accrued directly to the top leadership of the university. Walton reports that the President's cabinet meetings have never been as well-attended as they are now.

Walton says he appreciates the depth and breadth of the Quest team's knowledge. "The one thing that's different about Quest is they have subject-matter experts in just about every area. We haven't identified much that they can't do."

Most importantly, Walton says, he feels good knowing that Samms and his colleagues at Quest are genuinely looking to help with his organization's technology needs.

"Every now and then, Andy will reach out and just check in. 'How are things going? How is the new product working? Do you have anything forecasted?' He'll let me know if any of my technology subscriptions are about to expire," explains Walton.

"Other technology vendors tell us what they think we need. For me, this feels more like a partnership versus sales."

Physical Security and AV Communications: Keystones to Success



TIM BURKE | President and CEO

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IS NOT ALL ABOUT ONES AND ZEROS IN THE CLOUD. It's important that the IT infrastructure you rely on to meet your business objectives — from the routers and repeaters in your wireless network to the cabling connecting everything — is sound and up-to-date. And these days, the audio visual equipment in your teleconference rooms and your physical security equipment are more important than ever.

I believe you'll agree that your top priority is keeping your properties secure and your people safe. Thanks to the digital transformation that began decades ago and now seems to be peaking, you can be fairly certain you are achieving that objective. The security industry has almost fully transitioned from analog technology (such as closed-circuit cameras) to integrated and comprehensive security systems connected to the cloud.

Networked video surveillance providing perimeter security and internal security, advances in networked access control, intrusion detection, biometrics, and other security measures offer true protection. The key in the move from analog to digital is that your devices are all networked — that's what's meant by security systems integration. This can be done by wiring from switches to cameras and from switches to door access points, or it can be done wirelessly using wireless access points and related infrastructure.

Integrating your security system via Wi-Fi comes with hefty storage requirements — you have to have tieback to your data centers or data closets that can house, for example, footage from 4K cameras. That storage will also allow you to retain data for a long period of time.

“Information technology hardware has evolved rapidly. You need first-rate equipment more than ever — and it is readily available.”

It has to be said that some of the crucial issues and pro-tips described above are relatively foreign to some legacy security providers, who cut their teeth in the analog world and invested heavily developing those technologies and expertise. But digital-native companies with broad technology expertise can provide **physical security as part of an infrastructure services agreement**.

I hope you found this information helpful. As always, **contact us any time about your technology needs.**

Good Audio Visual (AV) Tools Power Communication

The right audio visual equipment can turn virtual meeting rooms, which have become essential to many organizations, into collaborative and productive spaces. Here, the key is flexibility and customization. Conference and training rooms, huddle rooms, boardrooms, and classrooms present different challenges and require different AV solutions.

To be blunt, one of the big problems with AV systems is that they're used commonly by people that don't necessarily have technology backgrounds. Everyone within a company will probably need to use the conference room at some point, and there are many opportunities for things to go sideways.

That said, it is quite possible to build a system that can be used fairly easily by people of different levels of technological expertise. You can integrate all of the physical devices — the cameras, the monitors, the projectors, the phone systems, etc. — and create a **fully customized audio visual solution** that can span a whole gamut of use cases.

Information technology hardware has evolved rapidly. You need first-rate equipment more than ever — and it is readily available.

