

HARDI Member Spotlight: Fujitsu Offers NYC "Air Stage" Free for Events/Meetings



Last fall, HARDI member Fujitsu opened up a New York City collaborative space aptly named the "Air Stage" after their Airstage line of products. Located on Broadway overlooking Times Square, this space is more than just a showroom, designed as a "learning and sharing center" where people from all aspects of the HVACR industry can come together to discuss or create projects and ideas. Architects, engineers, building owners, contractors, energy consultants, and any HVACR customers can utilize the space, as well as attend seminars and training sessions, all for free. HARDI staff had the opportunity to speak with NYC Sales Engineer Brendan Casey about the Air Stage and the direction Fujitsu is heading with the concept.

Where did the name and idea for the "Air Stage" come from and how did it come to fruition?

Well basically it's something that's common in construction and architecture; having a showroom where architects or engineers can bring one of their customers in and just show them the equipment. One of the big things that people want to see for our style of equipment is just to hear it run. It's a new type of equipment for end users, so they just want to come by and actually see what it's like. See what it sounds like when it's running. So it's serving the purpose of a showroom, which is pretty common, but the Air Stage is unique because we deal with so many people who simply have not seen this type of equipment before - especially when we're talking about end users. You know taking an old scheme building, and looking at different options for upgrading it, and that engineer or architect might say, "Well here's one option for your building." And bring the client in to physically see what the option is, before they move forward with the design.

So is it primarily a showroom for Fujitsu products? Or is it an open space for other kind of events?

It's all of the above. The goal is that it's going to be mostly a showroom, but it's definitely both. It's interesting, the different groups in the industry sometimes have meetings here, you know rather than the same bar they always go to for example. We're happy to offer the space, and it does give us just a little bit more exposure for what Fujitsu offers. It works out really well.

Is this space part of a Fujitsu office? Or is it a standalone venue?

So Fujitsu General is headquartered in Japan, but the headquarters for United States and Canada is in Fairfield, NJ. So this is separately a "New York City Showroom Space". It's not really an office space except when someone from Fujitsu is working in the city and needs a space to set up their laptop for a little while. Mostly the space is set up either as a large conference table or as a presentation space depending on the number of people showing up to work on a project.

How far in transit does that put the Air Stage from the Fujitsu America HQ then, with NYC traffic in mind?

Let's say at 3 in the morning, it might be like 25 minutes. (Laughs) During rush hour probably 2 hours easy. But it operates separate from the office in New Jersey. So it's a New York City space, used by people working in New York.

To that end, obviously having a space right there in that specific location, downtown New York right next to Times Square, is there anything else that attracted Fujitsu to this spot?

Well actually, that's an interesting question! Times Square is not the main reason for choosing that location. The area where it is, is exactly in the middle of, let's say, the triangle of Grand Central Station, Penn Station, and the Port Authority. So the commuters that come into New York come into one of those hubs either by bus or by train. As a result of that public transit, we also have most of the consulting engineering firms that are in NYC in that same triangle. So the reason for choosing that space is because it's so close to all the engineering firms. You know, a 5-10 block walk max from most of the engineering firms in NYC.

So being close to all the flashy stuff is just an added benefit?

It's actually completely secondary. And actually an interesting feature of it as well is there are 17 subway lines that all stop somewhere within two blocks of the showroom as well. So if somebody is doing a project in Queens or Brooklyn or - for almost all locations in the area, someone can take a subway from there, and it would just be the one line. They wouldn't have to take a transfer. So really the location being both between the consulting engineer firms and the stations, with ease of access from everywhere, really makes it a perfect location.

Wow, saying that the "Air Stage" is in a perfect centric location isn't exaggerating then?

It really is. It's ideal.

Since it opened back on November 11th last year, at it being about 4 months open how has the "Air Stage" taken off for Fujitsu?

It's been very well received. We're getting more use out of it than our original estimate. When launching a new space, you're kind of going into an unknown, but what's been nice about it is the number of different people who just want to come and see the equipment running. You know, it's kind of a broad array of backgrounds. We've had architects, engineers, we've had small business owners who have a small project but for them it's a big project, a big upgrade for their store. They're going to put this unit in the back of their building, so they want to hear how loud it is. One group was running a Laundromat; they came by and said, "Wow, this is perfect! This is going to be nice and quiet for us". Having different groups that want to use the space for their meeting, that too has also been really great. So we're happy to be able to offer that.

With knowing that the space has gotten more foot traffic than you planned, what is the vision for the future of the "Air Stage"?

Like expanding the model and putting it in other places? Right now, as the showroom, it's invitation by appointment only. I'd imagine that if we reach a point where we get more busy we would have somebody there full-time. We're not at that point yet, but that could be something we do down the road. If it reaches a point where we need more space, we could then look at possibly expanding. But we're in a good spot where we are. At least in New York, it's not hard to get to where we are from all over the city.

I'm picturing the possibility of this kind of setup with the "Air Stage" popping up other places in the country, that being said, is there any message you would like to give to the HARDI community and fellow HARDI members?

The one main thing is we want people to come see the equipment, hear it run, to experience it, especially if someone has a customer or whoever they're working with, if you have a need to come see it, set it up and we have an open door. We have a website for it, www.theairstage.com, anyone can go there, set up an appointment, come see the equipment and hear it run, and we'd be happy to have you come and visit.

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<http://hardinet.org/blog/hardi-member-spotlight-fujitsu-offers-nyc-air-stage-free-for-eventmeetings/>