Purewa Cemetery and Crematorium Revolutionizes Its Services with a Sophisticated, Remotely Controlled A/V System Connected by Gefen

PETALUMA, CALIFORNIA, July, 2016 – Purewa Cemetery and Crematorium in Auckland, New Zealand is modernizing the traditional funeral service. In years past, a funeral director assumed the role of an on-site technician, responsible for manually configuring and managing all of the service's A/V components, like photo montages projected onto screens and remembrance videos streamed on televisions. To enhance how its funeral services are conducted and experienced, Purewa Cemetery and Crematorium General Manager Clifton Thomson asked local distributor Amber Technology and technology integration firm PowerComs to design a network-driven A/V system that would enable seamless remote control of all A/V on the 45-acre property.

To guarantee remote, instant control, Amber Technology's Murray Wilkinson and PowerComs' Pete Mason selected signal distribution equipment from **Gefen** to serve as the connective backbone for the entire system. "I knew instantly that utilizing HDMI would be crucial for this project, and that Gefen offered the most trusted connectivity and signal processing solutions," Wilkinson said. "With multiple screens in various locations on the property, the management and distribution of content is a key consideration. It's really important that the Purewa Cemetery staff is able to direct a service without the stress and complications of faulty technology."

Previously, when family members showcased a photo slideshow during a service, funeral directors were

responsible for wheeling out a large screen television and hooking up a laptop to stream content. During the service, the family was asked to operate the slideshow manually. "There have been a few instances where I had to troubleshoot or fix the technology while the service was underway," Thomson said. "It had become very clear that we needed a modern and remotely managed system to avoid these issues."
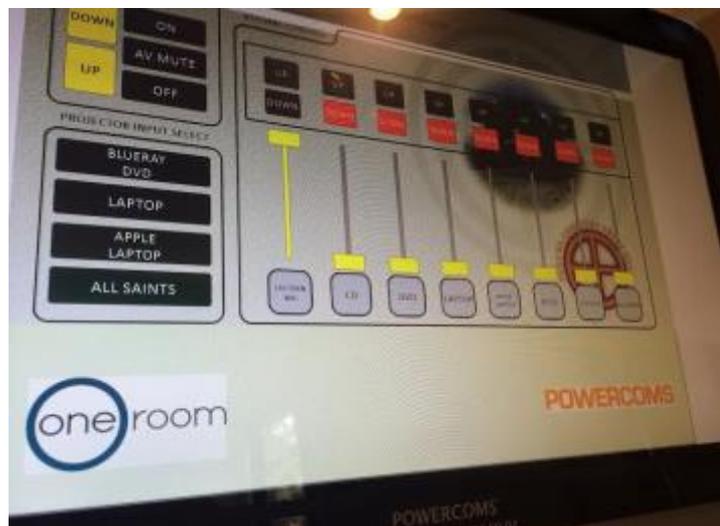
To enable remote control, The PowerComs team suggested that the cemetery's staff operate all A/V from a central location within the facility. They integrated a Gefen 4K Ultra HD Extender over One Fiber so that the staff could control the two chapels' Amber Technology Motorized Screens, Optoma Projectors and high-definition cameras from the same interface. The room now serves as "one stop shop" for managing A/V and appropriately distributing content. "With this addition, we are able to control the service with a simple button press," Thomson said. "We don't have to run out in the middle of the service to help manually facilitate a slideshow or montage. All we have to do is get the content beforehand, test it, and press a button on our touchscreen interface."

Additionally, the PowerComs team installed Gefen EDID detectives to guarantee that compatible audio and video signals are sent to the displays. They utilized Gefen Multi Format Processors to handle video scaling and switching, a crucial step between the incoming and outgoing signals. This enables streaming HD-quality content to the projectors and screens within the facility and sends a live stream to the OneRoom online content manager. "We can now plug and play with virtually no issues," Thomson added. "During testing, our celebrants were truly blown away by the quality and clarity of the content. It really does add a personalized element that enhances the experience for everyone involved."

Thomson and his staff often found that one chapel could not fit all of the guests who came to pay tribute to their loved ones. To accommodate larger-than-average crowds, he needed to guarantee a way in which all guests could experience the service, regardless of size constraints. According to Wilkinson, on-site content distribution was the ideal solution to Thomson's problems. In addition to the management and control system, the PowerComs team installed a network of Gefen extenders to expand the content to other chapels if needed. "With ten Gefen EXT-HD2IRS-LAN-TXs and four Gefen EXT-HD2IRS-LAN-RX's, we were able to create a system that could distribute content with resolutions up to 1080p Full HD," Wilkinson added. "Now, with this new system, we can broadcast the system live to screens in other chapels so everyone can experience it."

To further modernize the experience, Purewa Cemetery also added a personalized component for its guests. With two Gefen EXT-HDPVR's, they are able to capture and record every service by using "OneRoom" live streaming services which broadcasts it in real time online for anyone who could not be there in person. Using the Gefen interface, the cemetery's staff can change between different camera perspectives to enhance the production. "Before the service, guests can send an evite to an unlimited number of people that may want to tune into the OneRoom service," Wilkinson explained. "Or later on, anyone with evite access can a download link to the recording that is provided in HD quality service."

According to Thomson, the system simplifies the entire experience for staff, while also adding a more intimate touch for celebrants. "This system is now so efficient that it laves little room for mistakes," he said. "We can watch what the funeral directors are doing and what the celebrants are doing. That allows us to ensure that every single service runs smoothly. If we can see better, hear better and monitor better, the service will go better."

Watch the video [video case study.](#)

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