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## Kaplan Construction helps rebrand the New England Institute of Art

November 08, 2012 - Spotlights

Branding is a key component of success for the New England Institute of Art (NEiA), a for-profit college specializing in the creative arts in Brookline. To recruit students and instructors, the college understands the need for a brand identity that offers visual appeal. While branding is commonly known to include a logo, tagline, website, collateral and advertising, for a physical presence such as a college, branding extends to the building design as well.

Owned by parent company Education Management Corp. of Pittsburgh—one of the largest providers of private, post-secondary education in North America—NEiA offers degree programs in art and communication with a focus on the audio, broadcasting, graphics, and multimedia industries.

As part of a major rebranding initiative completed by NEiA in 2012, Kaplan Const. provided preconstruction, construction management and design/build services to help the college prepare its 70,000 s/f campus to receive new branding elements. The project included reconfiguring classrooms, preparing walls to receive new branding and applied graphics, installing power and data to accommodate technology used in the curriculum, and renovating the college's student art gallery. Kaplan's project manager Wright Dickinson established a construction schedule, together with management and department heads, which was divided into seven phases so that classes and student art shows could continue without disruption. Construction work began during off-hours while classes were still in session, and was completed during a two-week school vacation.

The project was the sixth collaboration for Kaplan and NEiA, a partnership that began in 2000 with the design/build gut rehab and build-out of the college's entire academic and office building campus. Kaplan later built a new 5.1 high-definition audio facility for NEiA, known as Studio "G," which was chosen as one of North America's 19 best-in-class studio designs by MIX Magazine.

NEiA president David Warren, DM, MPA, MA has described NEiA's decade-long relationship with Kaplan and project manager Wright Dickinson said, "I have found Wright and the whole Kaplan team to be personable, experts in the field, and able to deliver what they promise on time, on target and on budget. Of particular note is Wright's ability to suggest creative solutions in the space we are working with. He is always available for questions and is very responsive to both me and my executive team."

When undergoing major corporate branding efforts that impact physical space, Kaplan advises its clients to:

1. Know whether the company will renovate its existing facility or seek new space, based on which location, structure and environment will best reflect the overall brand
2. Consider how to address the buildings' primary branding opportunities

\* Exterior / streetscape

- \* Main entrance
- \* Common areas

3. Address construction requirements early in the branding planning process, including budget and schedule, as well as the extent to which construction will support the branding effort:

- \* Replace logo signage (minimal)
- \* Update paint colors, furnishings and main entrance aesthetic (moderate)
- \* Construct an entirely new building or fully renovate existing space (extensive)

4. Work with the architect and builder to address the best ways for the building's design to support the company's new branding

As a company's brand inevitably morphs over time, working with a long-term construction partner can ease transitions by establishing a comfortable process structured around the company's schedule and needs, and ensuring confidence in the end result.

Ken Kaplan, LEED AP, is the president and founder of Kaplan Construction, Brookline, Mass.

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