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SYSTEMS CONTRACTOR NEWS

TOP 50 SYSTEMS INTEGRATORS 2024
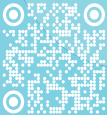
GETTY IMAGES

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Vizrt's Ulrich Voigt is focused on elevating content creation.

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VANGUARD
LED DISPLAYS

JANUS
The Mobile Folding, Pop-Up Display

Vanguard LED introduces the Janus series of transforming mobile displays. Available at 2K, 4K,dim anend siwithons diagonals from 110" up to 136", Janus displays are the perfect solution for flexible and varying display needs. Featuring motorized and folding wing columns, as well as motorized height, the entire display will deploy and collapse with the push of a button. Janus displays include speakers as well as an integrated controller making the system truly plug-n-play, while also being highly mobile.
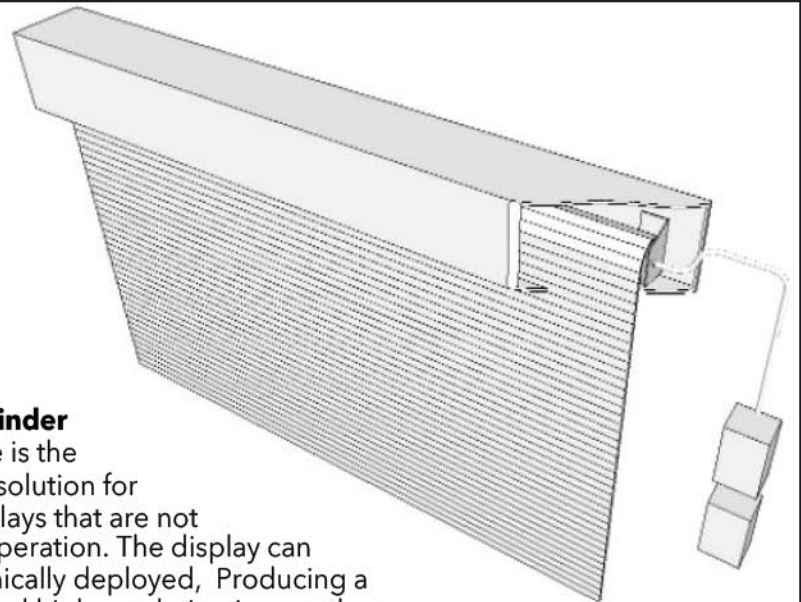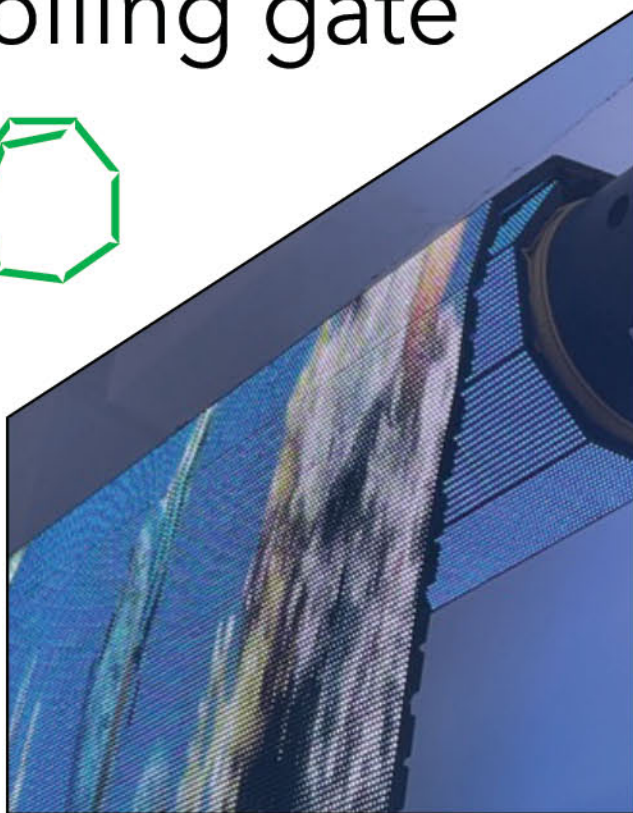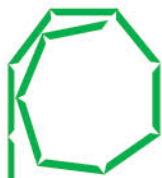
2K - 110"	2K - 130"	2K - 136"	4K - 130"	4K - 136"
1.2 mm	1.5 mm	1.56 m	0.75 mm	0.78 mm
COB	COB	COB	COB	COB

SIDEWINDER
ROLLING GATE

rolling gate
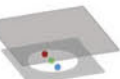
The **Sidewinder** rolling gate is the innovative solution for public displays that are not always in operation. The display can be electronically deployed, Producing a seamless and high-resolution image, then stored safely when inactive. The rolling gate can be configured up to a maximum width and/or height of 10 meters. The top of the image can be set at any height using blank frames with a cover.

Featuring an impressive durability with a GOB epoxy protective coating, **Sidewinder** rolling gates can create a display at the entrance of a closed store or to replace the function which used to be filled with projectors and motorized screens.
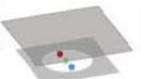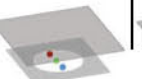
Rich with all the value of direct-view LED, **Sidewinder** rolling gates can be used for several applications where you don't want to see the display when it is inactive.

pitch	1.2	1.5	1.9	2.6	3.9
pixel tech	SMD/GOB	SMD/GOB	SMD/GOB	SMD/GOB	SMD/GOB

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Our annual industry snapshot includes insights from some of Pro AV's top integrators.

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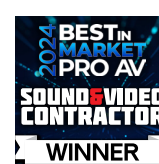
SYSTEMS CHECK

MARK J. PESCATORE
Content Director

Nothing captures the spirit of the season like Christmas lights—except perhaps a well-executed plan of attack.

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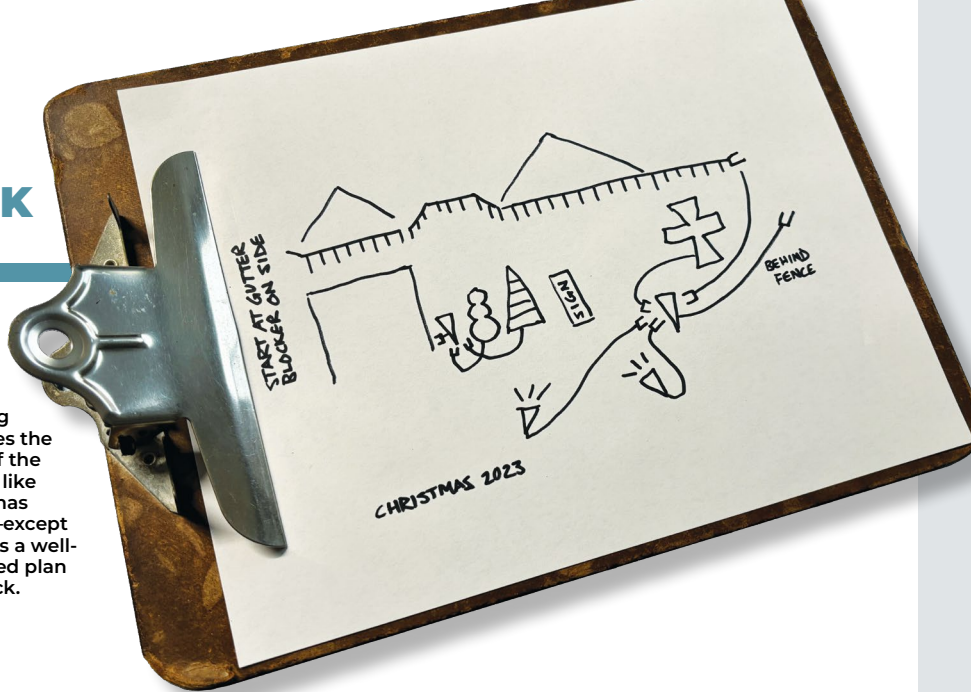
Planning Ahead for Christmas Lights

There's something truly magical about the holiday season. For those of us who live in South Florida, it's a monthlong delusion of acting like it could snow any minute. My family encourages that mindset by adorning our front lawn with wintery decorations and more. And yes, I recognize the irony of completing this process in shorts.

Outdoor decorations rarely last a lifetime. For example, our front lawn featured a blow mold plastic nativity set for several years. It had to go after the unrelenting sun had left Mary and Joseph with what appeared to be a wicked case of leprosy. We've suffered more recent losses, too, including a rickety sleigh seemingly held together by Christmas spirit for its final years, as well as a rusty snowman that made visions of your last tetanus shot dance in your head.

While I'm a sucker for almost all things Christmas, I do have a strict rule: one hour. That's how much time I'm willing to devote to outdoor Christmas decorations. From stringing the lights across the front of the house to positioning the current crop of lawn characters, we've got 60 minutes to make it happen.

A one-hour time limit doesn't make me a scrooge. I'm thinking about disassembly. For some reason, I can't seem to shave any significant time off striking the proverbial set. From wrapping cables (or extension cords in this case) to stowing lights and reorganizing all the pieces that survive to twinkle another year, it takes another hour to wrap up. That includes taking a few minutes to draw.

Yes, part of my holiday tradition is producing a diagram of our outdoor decorations. I generally sketch it each year, right before teardown. No, it's not drawn to scale. It's not even drawn very well. There's a rough approximation of a roof line, as well as some blobs that represent various outdoor decorations.

However, the important parts of the illustration are very detailed. Those are the power stakes, extension cords, and anything else with a plug. The sketch provides me with a rough idea of where the various items should be placed—but more importantly, it shows me whether I start with the female end or the male end of the lights (and the actual starting point on the house).

You see, there's no power on one side of the exterior, so if I hang the icicles incorrectly, I have to take them all down. Every. Last. Strand. And then I get to start all over again. If that happens, you can forget Christmas spirit. Or decorum. Or appropriate language.

I'm happy to report that's never happened—because I have my diagram.

"Winging it" is not an efficient way to hang Christmas lights, just like it's not an effective way to deploy a proper Pro AV system. I mean, you can always blame the kids for your choices of incongruous seasonal symbols, but that excuse doesn't translate well to the boardroom. Piecemeal lawn decorations are one thing; no one wants a Pro AV system to be described as "kitschy."

Even if your client needs to build their system over time, you should have a plan in place for moving forward. Yes, you'll need some wiggle room for changes in technology, but planning ahead and consideration of future product compatibility should translate to less wasted effort and avoidable system component replacement.

Whatever your holiday traditions, here's hoping they are merry and bright. And well diagrammed, of course.

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Acuity to Acquire QSC

In late October, Acuity Brands announced it has reached a definitive agreement to acquire QSC for $1.2 billion. Neil Ashe, chairman, president, and CEO of Acuity Brands, said the acquisition of QSC builds on the company's vision of data interoperability as it works to make spaces smarter, safer, and greener.

"In our Intelligent Spaces business, we are delivering meaningful outcomes for end users that are powered by disruptive technologies and that generate strong financial results," Ashe explained. "QSC has built a differentiated cloud-manageable audio, video, and control platform that controls what happens in a built space."

SCN confirmed both the Q-SYS and the QSC Audio brands will become a part of Acuity's Intelligent Spaces Group business unit. The company split its operations into the two divisions in July 2022. A cloud-first architecture, Q-SYS combines AI, machine learning, and computer vision into a unified AV platform for audio, video, and control solutions. It has broad applications across multiple vertical markets, including education, commercial, hospitality, government, healthcare, and transportation. QSC Audio delivers audio solutions for live sound, cinema, and installed sound applications.

"We are excited to be joining a company that is aligned around our long-term mission and shares our values," said Joe Pham, chairman and CEO of QSC. "Our shared vision of how we can leverage data with our technology solutions will elevate our ability to service our end users and drive growth."

In October, PPDS celebrated the grand opening of its new 2,368-square-foot PPDS Master Showroom experience center. Located in Fairfield, NJ, each area of the space has been designed to showcase the power, possibilities, and sustainability benefits available through the company's portfolio of indoor and outdoor digital signage, dvLED, ePaper, business TVs, interactive, and video wall hardware and software. The showroom is divided into three curated spaces, each showcasing a selection of flexible solutions to support a range of market verticals. The multidisciplinary venue is the second PPDS Master Showroom to be opened globally and the ninth in the network of PPDS Studios, following launches in Europe as well as in India.

Mauck Named Rise Woman of the Year

Rise, an advocacy group for gender diversity in the media technology sector, named Megan Mauck as the 2024 winner of its Woman of the Year Award, which is sponsored by Zixi. Mauck is the SVP of media operations at NBCUniversal, overseeing the ingestion, preparation, packaging, and distribution of NBCUniversal's domestic and international content in Los Angeles, Denver, and New York.

"During a turbulent time, when so many senior technology and operational leaders have found it difficult to convey clear, let alone inspirational, messages about innovation and strategic business initiatives, she has stood out as a leader for our times," said Mark Harrison, founder and CCO, Rise.

Mauck began her career as an engineering co-op at Toyota before joining General Electric's Operational Management Leadership Program in 2006, where she launched her professional journey with NBCUniversal. Over the years, she has progressed through a series of increasingly senior operational and project management roles. Beyond her work at NBCUniversal, Mauck serves as the board chair for Grades of Green, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting environmental education for K-12 students.

Megan Mauck

PSNI Welcomes G&D as Global Preferred Vendor Partner

Guntermann & Drunck (G&D) has announced its partnership with the PSNI Global Alliance, a global network of technology integrators and service providers. As a Global Preferred Vendor Partner, G&D will deliver high-performance and secure IT solutions for mission-critical control rooms.

Through the partnership, PSNI Certified Solution Providers (CSPs) will gain access to G&D's interoperable and secure KVM and multiview technology, while G&D will have direct access to a network of 113 integrators across more than 250 cities worldwide. The solutions will allow CSPs to address complex AV and UCC challenges, enabling the achievement of seamless, large-scale project outcomes in critical sectors such as industrial automation, process control, energy management, air traffic control, broadcasting, entertainment, and government agencies.

"Our expertise in KVM technology will support the seamless integration of mission-critical solutions for PSNI's global customers," said Jon Litt, president and managing director, G&D North America. "We are confident that this partnership will bring even greater value to control room environments across industries."

AVI Systems Acquires CCS Southeast

AVI Systems will officially acquire CCS Southeast—an AV systems integrator that designs, installs, and supports technology solutions throughout the Southeast United States—in early December. The acquisition includes locations in Jacksonville, Miami, and Orlando, FL, as well as offices in Knoxville, TN, and Atlanta.

CCS Southeast was established by John Doster, CEO, who grew the business into one of the largest AV integrators in the Southeast. Doster was instrumental in developing a customer base that includes the University of Tennessee, University of North Florida, University of Florida, EA Sports, and many others. Doster will continue to lead the Jacksonville office as area VP at AVI Systems.

All CCS Southeast employees will become employee-owners at AVI Systems. Once the acquisition is complete, AVI will employ more than 1,200 professionals across 40 U.S. locations.

"CCS Southeast has built an incredible business serving customers for more than two decades," said Jeff Stoebner, CEO of AVI Systems. "I'm impressed with their long-standing reputation assisting education and corporate enterprises. The addition of these five locations serves as a catalyst for our future growth in this region."

The new audio upgrade at Upstate Church Haywood is designed to accommodate various worship styles.

Powersoft Amplifiers Support Worship at Upstate Church Haywood

Three Powersoft Quattrocanali 8808 DSP+D and one Quattrocanali 2404 DSP+D amplifiers are at the heart of a new audio system delivering maximum power, efficiency, and connectivity to worshippers at Upstate Church Haywood in Greenville, SC.

Elevate AVL, which focuses primarily on house of worship design and integration, managed the AV upgrade for the church. It is the integrator's latest project with Upstate Church, a Baptist church with locations across upstate South Carolina. Elevate AVL was tasked with transforming Upstate Church Haywood's main room into a space that supports both blended and modern worship styles, the latter incorporating electric instruments such as guitar, bass, and drums.

The Quattrocanali amplifiers are paired with a TW Audio line-array system and Danley Sound Labs subs, providing plenty of power and headroom for the roughly 400-capacity room. The end result is a system that can provide the entire room with a clear stereo image, including underneath and onto the balconies. "The church wanted a system with a high priority on clarity, and that could also cover the room really well at higher SPLs, which is why we went with a line array as opposed to a point-source system," explained Jordan Tripp, who founded Elevate AVL in 2022.

Dante integration was also a "massive plus" for the Upstate Church Haywood project. "Dante is a pretty critical element with most installs nowadays—the ability to get audio to wherever you need it over a network is key—and having that onboard capability with the Powersoft amps definitely helps a lot," Tripp said. "We're also able to use the amplifiers' analog lines as a failsafe; having that backup is also absolutely crucial in a high-intensity environment like a house of worship."

Quattrocanali amplifiers are also equipped with Powersoft's patented Smart Rails Management (SRM) technology, which maximizes the efficiency of the entire audio system and optimizes power consumption, a must-have technology for installs like the Haywood campus, where installers are limited by the electrical infrastructure in place.

"When that happens, we need amplifiers that are able to provide the maximum performance with as minimum amperage as possible, and that's something that Powersoft does very well," Tripp noted. "It's important that we know that when we need to, we can put several amps on a single circuit and not be concerned about overloading anything."

As with the previous Upstate Church installs featuring Powersoft amplification, the end user is more than satisfied with the new sound system, which provides energy-efficient, room-filling audio with headroom to spare, Tripp said. "They love the sound in the room and the performance of the system, as well as its ease of use," he added.

NSCA Boosts Next-Generation Integration at XBO Experience

By Wayne Cavadi

The National Systems Contractors Association (NSCA), together with Ignite, brought the inaugural Excellence in Business Operations (XBO) Experience to Atlanta on Nov. 12–13. The event was designed for rising Pro AV stars of today to gain the tools, insight, and knowledge to be integration firm leaders of tomorrow.

Held on the Georgia Tech campus and sponsored by ADI Global Distribution, Bose, Exertis Almo, Extron, Insperity, Liberty, Q-SYS, Quam, Shure, TD SYNNEX, XTEN-AV, We Install IT, and Windy City Wire, XBO featured sessions and breakouts derived from NSCA's Next Generation Academy to hone potential integration leaders and professionals (both young and old) who are new to their leadership roles.

NSCA has its large Business and Leadership Conference every year, and has offered a smaller conference, Pivot to Profit, for the better part of a

decade. However, as Tom LeBlanc, executive director for NSCA, explained, smaller conferences have a shelf life. Pivot to Profit set up good conversations, but after 10 years, there was not much else to say.

LeBlanc knows one of the biggest challenges in the industry today is finding and, more importantly, retaining talent and helping to mature rising leaders into Pro AV veterans. "When we started working on the NSCA Next Gen Academy, we were really excited about the topics that sprung from those conversations with veteran leaders, things that they wish they focused on more as they were emerging into a leadership role," LeBlanc explained. "But what we didn't have was a platform for having those conversations. This seems like the perfect event for that. It taps into the need that we recognize in the industry. And we have seedlings of great content in NextGen Academy. That's why we launched it, because we feel like we are poised and capable of making an impact for something that many

integration companies need right now."

With the tagline "Sparking Interest in Technology," Ignite serves as a catalyst for Pro AV curiosity through its ambassador program, according to Laura Janssen, director of workforce development at NSCA. Plus, it provides an opportunity for hiring through an internship program, LeBlanc added.

"And by adding this element of the XBO and the NextGen Academy, it helps with retention, and it helps with that other element of bringing leaders along," he said. "It feels like XBO is helping us to fill in some of the blanks."

The initial goal of XBO was to attract 100 attendees. Janssen said the hope is to grow to 120 people next year and eventually max out at around 200. But the ultimate goal is to keep it an intimate affair, allowing for true connections. In fact, NSCA called XBO the "un-conference." There weren't presenters and presentations; instead, there were mediators to larger conversations. Sponsor booths were less about pitching products and more about sharing company core values.

And that's exactly what attendees got. Janssen, alongside Maura Fitzgerald, senior account manager, ADI Global Distribution, opened the event with "What Emotional Intelligence Is and Why All Leaders Need

It," which quickly turned into a 100-person conversation. People were comfortable to discuss failures and emotions, an attitude that rolled on into sessions and breakouts throughout the event.

"It's not just all the information that we're going to present to you," Janssen explained. "It's the experience that you have. It's the conversations that you have here. It's the connections that you make. Presentations are great, but it's not a conference in that way."

Shure's specialist senior market development Aaron Niemann, who co-hosted "Having Tough Conversations: How to Navigate Workplace Conflicts" on Day 1, was excited to connect with the younger generation and get a new perspective. "We are a very forward-thinking company who place a lot of emphasis on diversity in our workplace globally," he explained. "We realize that if we don't have a bullpen, per se, of young talent, where are we going to be in the next 100 years? So, [XBO Experience] itself helps us to connect and deliver that message and helps elevate that message to these leaders."

Between sessions and breakouts, sponsors set up shop in a conference room and the hallway. Attendees moved from table to table, spending time with each sponsor to ensure a wide array of connections were made.

Aaron Niemann of Shure and Dawna Payne of Texadia Systems hosted the "Having Tough Conversations: How to Navigate Workplace Conflicts" session at the XBO Experience.

"I think there's a magic to being in a bit of a smaller group that doesn't exist sometimes when you're sitting in a massive audience of people," said Karen Castaño, director of national business at Exertis Almo. "I think doing something like this where you really are specifically focused on those people that want to be in this conversation—this is very real. This is very tangible. This is the next step for people that come to something like this, and I think that's great."
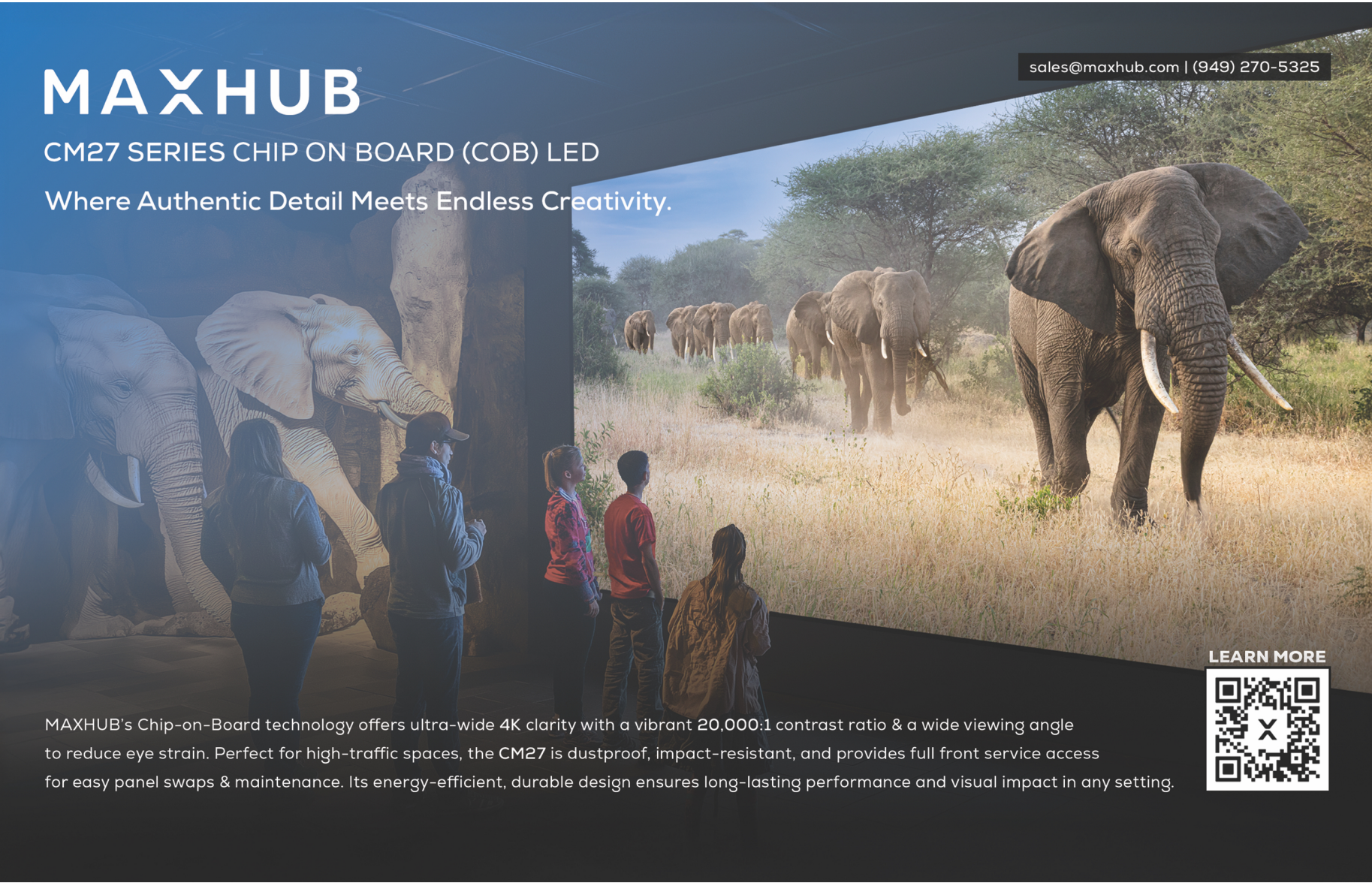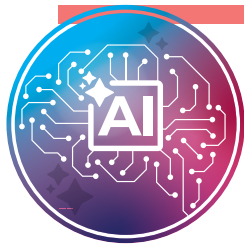
AI Poses Pro AV Ethical, Legal Issues

By James Careless

Today, it is possible to produce convincing, realistic, full-motion videos using generative AI. Attorney Sid Bose knows plenty about GenAI. That's because he's the chair of Ice Miller's Data Security and Privacy Practice in Indianapolis, and he counsels clients on compliance, cybersecurity, and privacy on a daily basis.

"There's really a tremendous amount of use cases for AI in the Pro AV space," said Bose. "When we speak particularly about the idea of generative AI and the possibilities that it provides, there's a lot of content that is coming out of AI engines and AI platforms: Everything from multimedia, descriptive content, language translations, and even just written material is being heavily produced within AI."

But when does using AI to create content potentially cross the line on ethical grounds? "The primary concern for a lot of commentators and users of AI is just the general idea of taking the human out of the loop," Bose told *SCN*. "When we think of a video or something

as simple as a written paragraph, substituting human judgment and know-how for what is essentially an algorithm gives rise to a lot of concerns on many different fronts.

"If you think of AI as a 'monkey see, monkey do' scheme, the quality of an AI's output relies on the quality of the data that it's fed and trained on to be able to generate the content that it does. The question then becomes do you trust how the AI tool has been trained? And are you relying on whatever's coming out of the AI tool with minimal or very little oversight from a human being? That certainly raises a lot of potential ethical issues for a lot of folks and organizations."

The legal lines that AI-generated content may cross also concerns Bose. For example, consider copyrighted intellectual property created by humans. "There's a lot of commentary out there about the training of AI tools," he offered. "Many publishers and authors who have created content suspect that their creations are being used to train AI tools. In the process of doing this training, some of the content that's being generated out of these AI tools may reflect some of the originally authored content used for

Sid Bose

training purposes. And so intellectual property issues are another big area of concern when it comes to generative AI."

Privacy is another legal issue that could crop up with the use of GenAI. According to Bose, any time you submit information to an AI platform, it might be confidential, proprietary, private, or sensitive—and that information could be inadvertently disclosed to an unauthorized user by the AI engine. "So, there are huge implications from a privacy standpoint, a confidentiality standpoint, and possibly even a trade secret standpoint," he added.

How well is the Pro AV industry dealing with these AI-related ethical and legal issues? "I think it's a mixed bag," Bose admitted. "I think there are certain companies and organizations within the AV industry that are getting very sophisticated about these issues and starting to address them. At the same time, there's a certain demographic that isn't nearly as sophisticated as this, and I think that this is understandable. Because generative AI is so new, its capabilities are still being fleshed out and understood to this day, which is why I don't think we're going to solve these issues anytime soon."
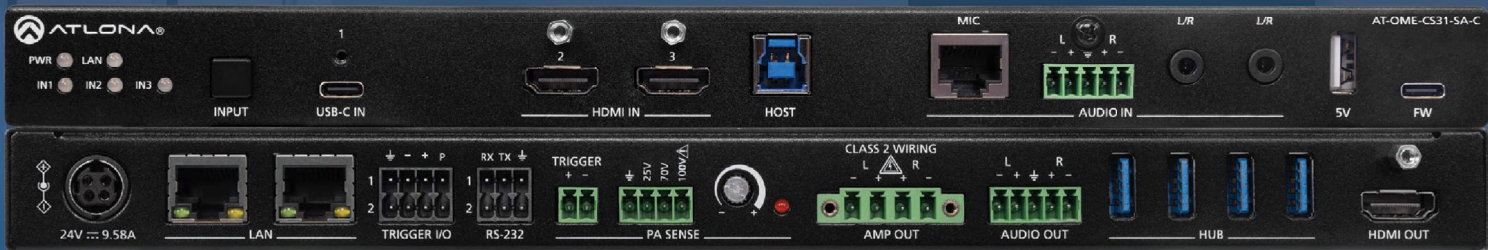
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Seacrest Studios, including the one recently added to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Arthur M. Blank Hospital, allow young patients to produce video programming and have fun.

Brightline Partners with Ryan Seacrest Foundation

There are projects where lighting goes beyond the physical and generates more lightness in life. Such is the case with Brightline's involvement as a production partner with the Ryan Seacrest Foundation (RSF). Since 2010, RSF has been building Seacrest Studios within children's hospitals, providing hands-on broadcasting and entertainment activities to patients. The studio broadcasts on each hospital's closed-circuit TV network directly to patients' rooms.

The studio at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Arthur M. Blank Hospital, which opened on Oct. 11, is the most recently completed project. It was one of four Seacrest Studios opened within an 18-month period, joining New York City, Salt Lake City, and Memphis, TN. Currently, there are studios in 14 children's hospitals, and new studios and upgrades to existing Seacrest Studios are planned in several hospitals over the next two years.

"Children's hospitals are realizing how important it is to not only care medically and physically for their patients, but to also provide a variety of options supporting their mental health and over all well-being," explained Meredith Seacrest Leach, executive director and COO of RSF. "Seacrest Studios are designed to be a safe space where kids in the hospitals can escape and have fun. It's been very rewarding to see leading pediatric hospitals continue to apply for one of our studios."

For Brightline, being selected as a key part of the "no-poke zone" at hospitals nationwide has made a huge impact on the company internally. "It's an honor to light Seacrest Studios," said Kathy Katz, managing partner, Brightline. "They're bringing real light into

children's lives, and we're all so excited to play a part. Dealing with an illness can be such a serious, dark challenge, but with a full-scale production studio in the building, they get to experience a very different, positive challenge."

"We were looking for a lighting partner known for its support and innovation. We needed a manufacturer that could provide the support we needed for each studio and a company with the innovation required to pivot design plans when needed within a very fast-paced build cycle," added Nicole Mead, VP, business development and operations, RSF. "We have found exactly that in Brightline."

Behind-the-scenes and on-camera opportunities abound at Seacrest Studios. "Patients are highly encouraged to learn how to use the equipment," said Mead. "It's very important to Ryan that patients be hands-on in the studio in areas that sparks their interest. For some patients that means a more behind-the-scenes approach—learning how to use camera equipment or how to edit content. For other patients that means working with studio staff to conceptualize, produce, and even star in their own shows."

The Seacrest Studios feature a core component of broadcast-quality equipment, including Brightline SeriesONE and FlexT lighting fixtures, JVC cameras, JVC and Vizrt production switchers, SAS audio consoles, and Genelec monitors. It's a package that consistently works within the various Seacrest Studios and a design concept that's been developed and refined since the first installation.

To create the cleanest look with the greatest mobility, lighting is the first piece of the production package installed. To minimize floor clutter, all

Brightline LED studio and in-ceiling architectural lights are placed overhead. This enables wheelchairs and gurneys to maneuver easily inside the space, while providing greater flexibility for equipment placement and different shooting styles.

RSF's attention to each studio's lighting underscores its commitment to creating the best possible production experience in each hospital. The studio lighting is designed to match the hospital's architectural lighting nearby, with the goal of bringing studio-quality lighting into a non-studio environment. "They don't want to compromise the lighting look at all," said Zihmer. "It's made such a difference in the on-camera image and what they're able to do."

Mead has also noticed the change since standardizing on Brightline lights. "It makes all the difference in the content produced, both live content and photography and videography to be published," she noted. "We have noticed an immense difference in the quality of our content since installing the Brightline lighting packages."

Brightline is brought in early to consult on initial plans for new Seacrest Studios. For a studio currently in the design stage, Zihmer reported that architectural designs were altered after he noticed the trademark Seacrest Studio blue ring affixed to the ceiling was too small to accommodate an ideal number of fixtures.

"I suggested they shift the ceiling a few feet north and make the ring larger to accommodate the lights," Zimmer recalled. "They changed the whole ceiling design to fit the fixtures. And if there's any pushback regarding the lighting design, the RSF team always supports us. They truly want to create the best space possible for the kids."

SALES INDEX

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53.4

SEPTEMBER 2024 **56.5** ▼
OCTOBER 2023 **58.8** ▼

Oct '23 — Oct '24

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Remained Unchanged ■ Increased by 5% or more ■ Decreased by 5% or more
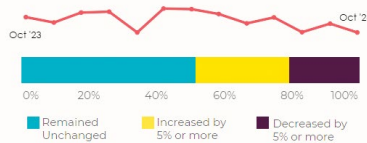
EMPLOYMENT INDEX

OCTOBER 2024

55.8

SEPTEMBER 2024 **55.9** ▼
OCTOBER 2023 **59.3** ▼

Oct '23 — Oct '24

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Remained Unchanged ■ Increased by 5% or more ■ Decreased by 5% or more
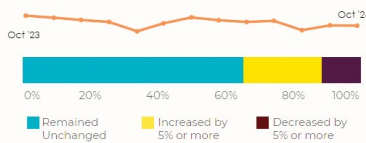
A Slowdown in Pro AV Expansion

By Peter Hansen

October continues a frankly disappointing year in the Pro AV Business Index. At 53.4, October's result ties the lowest for the year so far, equaling the 53.4 of February (also nearly equaling the 53.5 of August). Under the topline result, October's number is slightly different from the two months with such similar numbers in that it is a result less of people reporting "no change" and more of people reporting "decrease."

It's the highest percent reporting "decrease" since January 2021, a stretch of 44 months. While that sounds negative—and it certainly isn't great—it should be noted that the "decrease" reports were counterbalanced by a meaningful percent of "increase" reports. For example, more respondents reported "increase" than last month, when the index scored 3.1 points higher (56.5). So, there were pros and cons under the hood of the low October result.

Is the high proportion of "decrease" reports a red flag suggesting an underlying issue? A read of the open-ended explanations of company business results rejects this hypothesis. Rather than a consistent stream of negativity around one or two issues—recession, price point, threat of IT, etc.—the comments were mundane. This doesn't assuage the disappointment of the continued mediocre growth shown in our index, but it does allay fears of an impending downturn.

The U.S. election results were finalized after the AVIXA survey results were in; while presidential transitions have a major emotional impact, they have little economic impact—and less for Pro AV. The one asterisk this time is President-elect Donald Trump's threats of tariffs. This deserves close monitoring in the coming months, as tariffs and a possible trade war could be quite disruptive to Pro AV.

Unlike the AVI-S, the AVI-E was essentially flat from September, falling just 0.1 to 55.8. This is a low-ish result for the year, three points lower than the highest AVI-E and two points higher than the lowest AVI-E. This gives a bit more confidence to our previous conclusion that the AVI-S, while disappointing, does not presage a significant downturn.

Hiring is a lagging indicator, since business takes time to conceptualize, budget for, and hire new positions (or decide on and implement layoffs for that matter), but it is also a more reliable indicator in that it's less prone to random shifts. Wider employment news was somewhat less positive: The U.S. October employment report showed just 12,000 new jobs, by far the worst result since 2020. The good news here is that it is a true outlier. Last month, the numbers surprised in a positive direction.

The Pro AV Business Index report is derived from a monthly survey of the AVIXA Insights Community, a research community of industry members that tracks business trends in commercial AV. For more information about joining the AVIXA Insights Community, visit www.avixa.org/AVIP.

Peter Hansen is an economist at AVIXA.

Power to the Producers

Vizrt's Voigt Focused on Elevating Content Creation

By Mark J. Pescatore

QUICKBIO

Ulrich Voigt

Position: Global Head of Product Management
Company: Vizrt

SCN: How long have you been with this company, and what are your responsibilities?
Ulrich Voigt: I joined Vizrt over three years ago and am leading the product management and product marketing of our extensive broadcast graphics and live production product portfolio, which I am also representing in the executive management team of the group.

SCN: Based on Vizrt's recent employee engagement survey, it seems that good video communication is critical for today's hybrid workforce. How is that research impacting Vizrt's R&D for corporate AV solutions?
UV: We understand that our corporate customers want to communicate in the most effective way possible with their workforce, who often live in different parts of the world or work from home. We have been supporting our customers in that segment for many years with our TriCaster portfolio of integrated live production systems. Recently, we have simplified for corporate customers what we know best: stunning interactive graphics and an engaging virtual studio.

Now, Vizrt has put these features in a box. Pre-configured and ready-to-go, Viz Virtual Studio Go combines AR graphics and virtual sets for the ultimate corporate presentation. It brings an array of options for the corporate presentation to be more dynamic and memorable, so whichever corporation uses it can easily create engaging presentations without losing brand identity or tone of voice.

SCN: Vizrt purchased NewTek back in 2019. What prompted the decision to retire the NewTek brand last year, and what's new in your TriCaster integrated production switcher line?
UV: With the convergence of Broadcast and Pro AV, and a rise in demand for solutions that respond to the needs of any-sized creator, we wanted to create a better, more unified experience for customers, partners, and collaborators. A unified ecosystem of products strengthens and simplifies the access to the entire Vizrt product portfolio. All our channel partners can certify as experts with new courses on Viz University, Vizrt's learning platform, and offer more solutions to grow their business. For the end user, Vizrt's entry-level solutions are embedded with broadcast-quality technology, offering sophisticated solutions in a more accessible price range, such as the recently introduced, software-only TriCaster Mini S.

SCN: In a pretty crowded PTZ market, what makes Vizrt's PTZ cameras unique?
UV: Vizrt's PTZ cameras aim to elevate while simplifying the creation, capture, and connection of content, as an integrated solution with our live production, AR, and lecture capture systems.

As the originators of NDI, we are always innovating in that space. With the latest release, the PTZ3 PLUS line (also sold in UHD) includes production-enhancing features, such as AI presenter tracking and the world's first FreeD tracking data embedded via NDI|HX, which makes AR setups simpler. With AI presenter tracking, initial face detection intelligently tracks presenters even when they face away from the camera, and blackboard detection locks the camera in place during presentations—so the presenter can focus what they're doing, knowing that the camera will focus on them. On top of that, the sleek design blends into the space, so presenters and creators aren't distracted by the presence or movement of the camera.

SCN: Is cloud-based remote production here to stay, and what's the appeal for the Pro AV space?
UV: Cloud-based productions have proven to bring diverse benefits to a production. They remove distance constraints, which allow the *best* people to be hired for a job, not just the closest people. Cloud production also makes the work-life balance of teams much healthier, as they don't have to be constantly on the road and away from their families to work.

There are many appeals for the Pro AV space, but an important one is in how quickly a team can turn around a production. This enables more freedom to create more, however you want—there is less time spent moving around and installing the system in a new place.

Another appeal is that, with the move to more software-based platforms, the easier it is to upgrade the technology, so your production can evolve as you evolve as a producer.

SCN: Of course, I can't let you go without talking at least briefly about graphics. While Vizrt is known for its broadcast graphics, what solutions can you provide for the Pro AV space?
UV: Vizrt provides solutions for content creators of any size. We know that video connects everyone globally, so we're bringing broadcast-level solutions to every type of creator, from corporations to independent productions to small studios. Non-broadcast content providers are striving to create content that matches the broadcast experience. Broadcasters need to simplify their production workflows and create more content more efficiently. With our heritage in broadcast and Pro AV, we are in a unique position to address those increasingly blended needs.

The two brand-new TriCasters boast graphics powered by Viz Flowics as standard. With Viz Flowics, the cloud-native platform to create and manage interactive graphics, creators can enhance viewer engagement for their live stream with real-time data visualization, interactive content (such as polls), and social media integration.

SCN: Where do you see the Pro AV industry heading?
UV: With the increasing availability of broadcast-grade tools, video creation is taken to another level. Nowadays, there is no need to be a video expert to deliver broadcast-quality results. Looking at the products and solutions introduced in the past year that attend to the emerging broadcast AV market, I believe we will see creativity truly flourish with smaller creators. **scn**

Vizrt offers entry-level production solutions, such as TriCaster Mini S.

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Doing More with Meetings

Telycam's Xia Celebrates a Decade of Cameras for Cloud-Based Conferencing

By Mark J. Pescatore

QUICKBIO

Aaron Xia

Position: CEO and Co-Founder
Company: Telycam
Overtime: I occasionally enjoy a hike or a day of fishing. Fresh air and beautiful scenery clears my head and lets me recharge.

SCN: What prompted you to start Telycam?

Aaron Xia: The inspiration for Telycam started with my visit to InfoComm 2012. At that time, videoconferencing was heavily reliant on bulky hardware, and the cost of AV conferencing systems was too high for smaller businesses. It was there that cloud-based videoconferencing really struck me, and I knew it was going to revolutionize the industry. We set out to design cameras that would support this trend and deliver high performance, easy operation, and IP connectivity while being affordable. This continues to be our goal: providing state-of-the-art hardware solutions for cloud production and virtual meetings, encompassing video, audio, switching, and control.

SCN: How is Telycam celebrating its 10th anniversary?

AX: We're incredibly excited to be celebrating 10 years in business. This milestone wouldn't be possible without the dedication and hard work of every single team member. Our celebration isn't just about acknowledging achievements, it's also about sharing the joy with the people who made it possible. That's why we're doing a series of events to show our appreciation for our amazing team.

SCN: What makes Telycam's PTZ cameras different?

AX: It starts with designing and manufacturing our own cameras from the ground up. This lets us fine-tune the camera image and refine features right from the core, while being at the forefront of incorporating new standards and capabilities. Plus, just as the visual quality of a production starts with the camera, the quality of a camera starts with top-quality components, from the lens and image sensor to the image processor and mechanism. We put a strong emphasis on R&D and pride ourselves on quality control from the initial design through to manufacturing, ensuring each product meets our high standards.

SCN: What differentiates your three PTZ camera lines from each other?

AX: We strive to offer customers a range of cameras to meet any budget and project requirement. Our entry-level Drive+ PTZ cameras capture exceptional 1080p video and are reliable yet accessible even for those with limited budgets. Our Vision+ series is available in 1080p or 4K models for high-quality Pro AV applications and incorporates features such as auto-tracking as well as Free-D technology for AR/VR content creation. At the high end, our Explore series delivers broadcast-level quality and capabilities at enterprise-level pricing.

SCN: How important has NDI become for the PTZ marketplace?

AX: NDI is a very important technology for us, as its adoption has grown rapidly in both the broadcast production market and in Pro AV environments. We're seeing NDI projects everywhere from courtrooms to houses of worship. NDI's interoperability, scalability and ease of use make it very appealing, and the combination of PoE and NDI simplifies installation with single-cable connectivity for power, video, audio, and camera control. We were proud to be selected by NDI to participate in their initial NDI 6 beta testing program, and also one of the first to incorporate NDI 6 capabilities into market-ready PTZ cameras.

SCN: Telycam is now certified for use with Brainstorm AR/VR solutions. Are you seeing interest in virtual production at the corporate level?

AX: We're definitely seeing a surge of interest in virtual production in the corporate world. Many companies are discovering its potential for overcoming creative limitations and creating high-quality content more cost effectively.

Our own experience is a great example. We used to have a dedicated studio space for live webinars and video production, but it limited our ability to create diverse content for different themes. When our Explore SE camera received Brainstorm AR/VR certification, we transformed our space into a greenscreen virtual production studio. Now we can create engaging video content with different backgrounds for every show, all within the same physical space. It's a game-changer for creativity and budget efficiency.

SCN: You offer several webcams and videobars. What features are essential in a professional videoconferencing camera solution?

AX: Professional videoconferencing hinges on three pillars: rock-solid network transmission for smooth video calls, crystal-clear audio for seamless communication, and HD image quality for immersive experiences. While innovative features like auto-framing and voice tracking are exciting, we at Telycam prioritize the core—flawless video and audio—before integrating smart features that enhance without overshadowing the essentials. This ensures our cameras deliver a consistently exceptional videoconferencing experience.

SCN: What got Telycam interested in speakerphones, and what makes your new SONO wireless speakerphone unique?

AX: We know that exceptional audio is just as crucial as high-quality video for successful communication. This realization sparked the development of our own speakerphone, SONO. What truly sets SONO apart is its crystal-clear audio quality, particularly its advanced noise cancellation technology. SONO's cutting-edge algorithms automatically filter out unwanted background noise, ensuring the focus remains on the speaker. This enables clear communication in any environment.

SCN: Mobile Video Devices is your new exclusive distributor in the United States. What was your North American presence like previously, and how do you see this region strategically?

AX: Many North American customers were already using Telycam-designed cameras without even knowing it, because we supplied them for nearly a decade on an OEM basis under some very well-known brands. The strategic importance of this market is why we took our time to enter it. We wanted to have the right distribution partnership before fully launching under our own name in North America, and MVD is a perfect fit. We needed a forward-thinking partner who understands the nuances of the region and shares our commitment to innovation. The interest level we received earlier this year at NAB and InfoComm was tremendous.

SCN: What's next for Telycam?

AX: Telycam's future is user-driven. We're constantly refining our cameras based on customers' feedback, ensuring they excel in real-world scenarios. But we're not stopping there. We're expanding beyond cameras, developing a complete ecosystem—including audio and control devices—for seamless videoconferencing and live production. Our vision is to empower users to create flawless audio and video experiences, every time. **scn**

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Gary Pace

A.C.PROMEDIA welcomed **GARY PACE** as national sales manager, a role developed as part of the company's strategic plan for the AV market. In his new role, Pace is responsible for establishing strong client relationships and expanding distribution and mindshare among system designers, consultants, and live sound companies for the Luminex, AUDAC, and CAYMON brands in the United States and Canada. Powersoft Advanced Technologies, Beyerdynamic, and Dynacord.

James Oliver

JAMES OLIVER has joined ACT ENTERTAINMENT as VP of strategic partnerships. An experienced sales and marketing professional, Oliver has a history of working in the professional audio industry. In his new role, he has been tasked with developing a live sound division that mirrors the success ACT has created for its other partners in the entertainment space. Oliver previously served as partner and chief strategy officer at PK Sound, following his role as director of marketing and sales for Adamson Systems Engineering.

Jay Rohe

CCS PRESENTATION SYSTEMS SOUTHWEST has welcomed **JAY ROHE** as chief revenue officer. With more than 18 years of experience as a top executive at Legrand AV, most recently as VP of commercial channel sales, Rohe brings a wealth of expertise and a proven track record of success to CCS. Rohe is tasked with developing strategic partnerships, exploring new revenue streams, and expanding the company's reach. His leadership will be instrumental in driving growth and delivering innovative AV solutions.

Morten Lave

MORTEN LAVE, former CEO of TC Applied Technologies and most recently principal of All Access Consulting, is joining JOYNED as CTO. Lave is tasked with spearheading JOYNED's R&D efforts, using his AVB/Milan software expertise to elevate the company's audio networking solutions and drive innovation. Lave's AVB/Milan software will now be integrated into JOYNED's suite of offerings, providing a complete end-to-end solution—from endpoints to AVB switches—while remaining true to JOYNED's commitment to open standards.

Andrew DeCesare

K-ARRAY USA has appointed **ANDREW DECESARE** as account manager for corporate accounts. With more than two decades of experience in AV integration sales, DeCesare brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the K-array team. In his new role, DeCesare spearheads business development initiatives for KSCAPE focusing on corporate clients. His extensive background in both the corporate and entertainment sectors, coupled with his involvement in several large design projects, positions him to drive growth and expand K-array's presence in the U.S. market.

Todd Miller

Luke Bailey

PLANAR expanded its U.S. sales team with the hires of **TODD MILLER** and **LUKE BAILEY**. Miller joins the company as regional account manager for the Southwest, leading sales initiatives across Arizona and Nevada. He brings more than 25 years of experience in the Pro AV industry, including roles at Unilumin USA, Visual Sound, and Electrosonic. As a regional account manager for New England, Bailey is responsible for Planar's sales initiatives across Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Upstate New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Bailey joins with more than 15 years of experience in the Pro AV industry, including roles at AVI-SPL and Adtech Systems.

Mitch Rauch

POWERSOFT has appointed **MITCH RAUCH** as its new sales director for the U.S. market. With more than 20 years of Pro AV channel management experience, Rauch's expertise will be a major asset as Powersoft continues its growth in the United States. In his new role, he will expand Powersoft's U.S. footprint. Rauch—formerly of Opticis, Vivitek, and BenQ—is based in Powersoft's U.S. headquarters in Flanders, NJ. He is focusing on driving growth in existing verticals while also exploring new opportunities for the company's high-end audio technologies.

Rep Report

ABSEN has agreed to a new distribution partnership with **THE DESIGN OASIS**, a provider of AV gear and solutions in the United States. This collaboration will significantly expand the availability of AbsenLive's advanced LED products, including Polaris LED panels, throughout the rental and staging market. The Design Oasis operates two offices in Florida and is expanding its reach with new locations in Las Vegas and Washington, D.C.

BLAZE AUDIO has selected **TCB SALES** to represent the company's products throughout the Western United States regions of Northern California, Northern Nevada, and Hawaii. Jill Levine, Blaze Audio's western regional sales manager, will oversee the activities of TCB Sales. TCB Sales is an independent sales representative firm based in Northern California. The company has been in business since 2017 and its staff has more than 30 years of experience in selling and designing audio, video, power, sound masking, and infrastructure products.

ELLIPSYS COMMERCIAL TECHNOLOGY GROUP and SONY PROFESSIONAL DISPLAY SOLUTIONS announced a new program for members that will give them access to a recognizable brand and their suite of professional-grade products. The addition of Sony to the Ellipsys vendor roster makes an immediate impression on the commercial display and professional video offerings available to Ellipsys members.

The AV Industry's
Best Kept Secret

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Integrators like Kinly acknowledge that monitoring data can help organizations optimize their space usage.

Pro AV 2025: What's Trendy?

Industry Experts Share Insights on Hot Topics for the New Year

By Carolyn Heinze

There is a lot of talk about the need for professionals in every industry to embrace uncertainty. But while rapid change sweeps across the globe, those working in Pro AV can be sure of a few things: AI will continue to gain prevalence, hybrid is here to stay—no matter how many organizations attempt to force their employees back into the office—and there is still room for improvement in making these gatherings equitable. As 2024 comes to a close, *SCN* reached out to industry experts from equipment manufacturers and systems integrators to gain some insights on these trends (and a few others).

Real Talk on Real Estate

Good design produces spaces that accommodate how people collaborate, learn, and even shop. Julian Phillips, senior vice president of global workspace solutions and managing director of XTG at AVI-SPL, argues that AI's ability to capture rich data can contribute to providing better, more valuable experiences for corporate employees, students, retailers, and consumers.

"We cannot design dumb spaces anymore," Phillips said. "If we want to take advantage of everything AI can do to help us analyze this rich data, to get insights into it—to improve and unlock productivity—we have to have a reliable, constant, verifiable source of rich data. That means that everything we do in space and environment has to be captured, and we have to be able to use that data to great effect."

Beyond traditional smart building analytics that focus on electricity usage and HVAC control, Phillips believes in AI's capacity for delivering observational data. What is going on in the space? Where are people sitting? Are they moving around? How are they presenting? How are they collaborating? In other words, what are they doing?

For organizations to successfully optimize their real estate, they need to know how their current facilities are being used. This is where monitoring can play a valuable role, according to Simon Watson, global head of innovation at Kinly.

"A lot of companies say, 'We're going to split our office in half.' But what's going to be the effect of that?

Do you know how busy your office is at the moment?" he offered.

Phillips acknowledged that privacy laws and regulations limit how and what data organizations may gather, but he argued that shouldn't be an excuse to continue doing things the old way. "If [people] do want to make use of this new era of technology, they have to start taking data seriously," he said.

With monitoring, companies can gain better insight into how many people are in the office—and where they are on campus. That data can better inform decision-making on what the smaller, redesigned space should accommodate. "That's where monitoring of the real estate comes in because you need tangible output to make those decisions," Watson added.

In Northern California, where the digital media, entertainment, and broadcast engineering firm Advanced Systems Group is headquartered, ASG president Dave Van Hoy has observed a focus on the reduction of corporate real estate. For example, technology companies in Silicon Valley are consolidating their campuses by moving into newer facilities and closing their old buildings, which has led to less demand for outfitting conferencing spaces.

"There is a very large amount of that going on right now, which means that if you look at the systems integrator business, it's probably not a great sign," Van Hoy said.

However, at the same time, Van Hoy said the corporate broadcast production business is solid. The lesson here is that AV companies that concentrate on diversifying their revenue stream are better positioned to accommodate market fluctuations.

From Left: John Bailey, Holli Hulett, Jeremy Caldera, Tyler Troutman, and Dave Van Hoy

"The diversification of your client base is always important, whether you make it through geographical diversity, whether you make it through line-of-business diversity," Van Hoy said. "That is what 2025 is going to be about. We're going to see some markets shift up, [and] some parts of the market shift down. It's going to be about understanding what you're good at and not good at, and where you can be to maximize the situation."

Better Business and Audio

AI is also improving the audio experience for remote and hybrid meetings. No longer are participants bothered by the proverbial crackling chip bag or barking dog off in the distance. Tyler Troutman, strategic market development manager at Shure, noted that AI also helps strike the balance between achieving great sound while rolling out systems as fast as possible.

"We end up with a little bit of a competing narrative where we want to deploy more rooms with better quality audio at a quicker pace," Troutman said. "That is where AI steps in and helps us out. It helps us deploy quicker with more repeatable, accurate results—and then deliver fantastic audio."

It's not enough for AV professionals to limit AI adoption to customer-facing applications. There are significant opportunities to take advantage of these tools to drive efficiency in AV design and integration firms themselves.

AVI-SPL is establishing an AI Center of Excellence that brings together business groups across the organization to determine the best internal use cases for AI. Phillips described it as a sandbox of sorts, a venue that encourages people to experiment with the technology. He said the goal isn't to eliminate people, but to identify the repetitive tasks that AI could perform so the organization's human talent can focus on more sophisticated, higher-level tasks.

"When we start turning AI internally on ourselves, we can start looking at ways that we can unlock efficiencies and cost reduction," Phillips added. "It's going to create a healthier industry that's going to enable us to invest more in the kinds of things that we should be doing."

For example, ASG is using AI to optimize statement of work (SOW) and contract generation.

"Its ability to create much better templates, if your model is trained well, is insane," explained Van Hoy. "The first thing people say is, 'This is going to get rid of people's jobs.' I don't believe that for a minute. I'll tell you one thing that's for sure, though: I still have the same number of people, but boy do they turn out better stuff using that tool."

Opportunity to Improve

Advancements in camera technology have enabled AV designers and integrators to provide better collaborative experiences, acknowledged John Bailey, senior VP of technology and innovation at AVI-SPL. Now what needs to improve are the displays in these spaces.

"It's still the panel of glass on the wall at the end of the room that everybody refers to," he said. "It's not working well for video and virtual presence."

Instead, Bailey suggested the need to position more displays on multiple walls—or maybe even on the conference table itself. "There is a lot we can explore there," he noted, "and we need to be open-minded about different experiences."

Holli Hulett, co-founder and COO of Boom Collaboration, said that for meeting equity to be possible, at the bare minimum, organizations need high-quality AV systems. "Facilitating simple things like being able to make eye contact, read body language, hear the intonation of words along with all of the words—those are some of the first components that have to exist to even begin discussing equity," she explained. "Are we there yet? I don't think so. I think we're getting better."

Jeremy Caldera, EVP at AV design and integration firm Pearl Technology, argued that the term "meeting equity" means different things to different organizations. Some may be focused on creating the same experience for both on-site and remote meeting participants, while others may be concerned about delivering a good experience in multiple languages.

Plus, creating equitable meeting spaces—featuring multiple camera angles, high-quality audio, and production-style switching—is hard to do at scale. "I don't know if that is going to happen," Caldera admitted. "People are still watching their budgets."

For Garth Lobban, director of marketing at Atlona, audio is becoming more important than video in meeting and learning spaces. For hybrid gatherings to be truly equitable, remote participants need to be able to hear what is being said on site, and in-person collaborators shouldn't have trouble hearing colleagues who are contributing virtually. This requires quality audio systems and good acoustics.

"What are we doing to make it easier for the audio DSPs that are built into Google, Teams, and Zoom?" Lobban asked. "If [I'm] in a reverberant space where there are lots of echoes, now it's got to try to get all those reflections off my voice. We can make those systems work [better] if we can make sure that the rooms are well-treated."

A vast majority of meeting spaces feature a BYOD element, observed Fredrik Hornkvist, co-founder and CEO of Boom Collaboration. This is what has driven his organization to develop technology that enables users to take advantage of installed, in-room systems while using their own devices.

"We're combining some of the hardware endpoints that have AI functionality with a bring your own device use case," Hornkvist said. "We want to strike a balance [so] that you can have both—you can have the familiarity of using your own device and leverage that with AI-driven equipment, without having to lock down on a high-end AI solution that might be proprietary to one platform."

Cloud Management Migration

Remote monitoring and management are nothing new, but its migration to the cloud has streamlined scalability. It facilitates the management of multiple sites and offers deeper control, observed Naurry Kwon, product manager at Planar. The result: IT organizations are more efficient. "Cloud monitoring solutions are bypassing the need for full IT teams to setup and maintain the network and application structure," Kwon said.

One issue with some monitoring systems is that they are device-specific: one platform monitors displays, another looks after cameras, etc. According to Kwon, technology developers are addressing this, and some integrators are creating tools that bring

From Left: Julian Phillips, Simon Watson, Garth Lobban, Fredrik Hornkvist, and Naurry Kwon

different systems under one umbrella. "What we're seeing is more collaboration across different types of equipment or solutions where possible, with some platforms offering the capability to integrate with a range of AV devices," he said.

At Pearl Technology, Caldera explained that while cloud monitoring reduces truck rolls—which in turn decreases the need to pull valuable talent off projects in progress to perform on-site troubleshooting—not all clients are willing to migrate systems to the cloud. His Fortune 100 customers are an example of this.

"[For these clients,] we put all of our systems on closed networks—they're not allowed to touch the internet, so I can't cloud monitor anything," Caldera said. "It's too much of a security risk, and these days that's huge."

With cybersecurity a primary focus for enterprise-level organizations, Caldera believes that an increasing number of clients will include stipulations in their master service agreements that require AV integrators to comply with recognized cybersecurity standards. Not only do these companies want to protect their data and that of

their customers, their cybersecurity insurance policies require them to uphold a certain level of security hygiene. This is why Caldera urges his peers to keep security top-of-mind.

"I don't want one of my pieces of AV gear to be responsible for the takedown of an entire Fortune 100 corporation," he said. "You don't want to be the responsible party. And it's not just the Fortune 100s that are being targeted. It's the church. It's my kid's school. There needs to be some major adoption [of security best practices] from the AV industry." scn
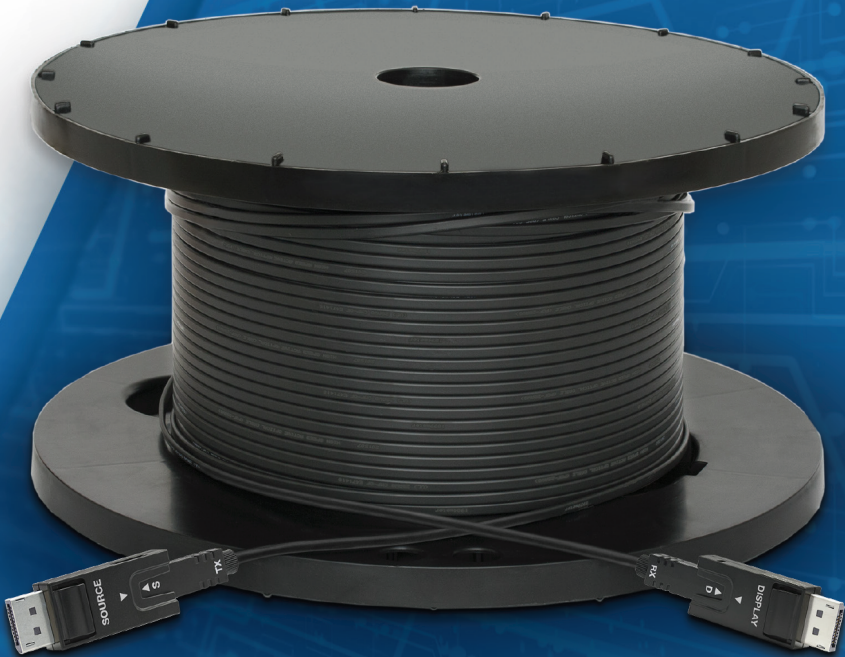
The 'I' in Team

How to Build and Maintain an Innovative Organization

By Matt Czyzewski

This is the last entry in the "Blueprint for Success" series for me. So, rather than dive into various technologies and trends, I decided to concentrate on the one thing that is different for every organization and makes the biggest impact: our people.

In my first two columns, the focus was on the individual. That's certainly important, but we all have to function as a team to really become that game-changing organization that climbs mountains, works through pain, solves problems that seem to be unsolvable at first glance, and leaps tall buildings in a single bound. You get the picture. How do we bring people together as a team and keep innovating?

From the Top

Just because we have the right people in a department does not make them a team. If the team's only interaction is the weekly "team" meeting, it's not a team.

That doesn't mean those employees are ineffectual or poor team players; it merely indicates there's room for improvement, such as building on each other's strengths and team roles to innovate and improve outputs. It doesn't matter what area of responsibility—engineering, operations, marketing, or accounts payable—every group can be more effective. But it takes time, commitment, and teamwork to make it happen.

Fostering a sense of team starts with the leadership. Leaders need to identify and document core principles and clearly communicate them to the team. Keep them simple, easy to remember, and no more than five. However, cultivating teams takes effort and intention well beyond establishing goals and responsibilities.

Leaders need to foster a sense of two-way trust—trusting that the team can attain its goals and trusting in leadership that the team will be supported, especially if (when?) things go sideways. Trust is not always easy to come by. You have to hire the right people for the right jobs, build up trust over time as people meet their commitments and deadlines, and see management supporting them in various ways if they need help.

Leaders need to remember that part of their job is "herding cats." People have lives outside of work, and emotions and personalities can clash. Leaders need to be sympathetic when situations occur outside of employees' control (COVID-19, anyone?). Developing an open communication style is crucial to team members being comfortable sharing problems in a timely manner before they become bigger problems.

Open Culture Is a Must

To cultivate a culture of innovation, everyone has to feel empowered to share thoughts and ideas, however crazy they may be. Instead of immediately jumping to why an idea won't work, ask how we can make it work. This change in approach is what breeds innovation. The culture that breeds innovation will not only listen to someone's idea but will look for ways to make it work or (even better) improve on the idea.

Consider recent or past scenarios when you have seen this or been a part of it. Now think of ways you can participate more openly and inclusively, such as asking clarifying questions. Use phrases like "tell me more" or inquire about other use cases. Ask what needs or problems this addresses—and how you can help move the idea forward.

All this comes before diving into the technical details of how it works. This approach works far beyond new products or gadgets. It can be applied to any kind of business process, such as reducing the number of technical support calls, streamlining the RMA process, or improving on-time delivery.

Spoiler alert for executives and senior management: Very rarely does any one person hold the keys to all the best ways to innovate. If you genuinely want innovation to be a core element of the company's DNA, everyone must feel free to participate and contribute to the innovation process.

If not, your limitations as a company will rest with you or perhaps a few individuals, which is not a company culture but the culture of a small group of individuals. With this, you may be successful in your mind; however, could you be even more successful in building a culture that enlists the rest of the company? The good news is there's a high probability of that happening if you hire the right people.

Making the Dream Work

Hiring external candidates brings new ways of thinking and experiences that can positively challenge processes and approaches. Company culture, and by extension, traditions, help define what a company stands for. But sometimes traditions need to be challenged or re-verified as the best way forward.

Constructive conversations between team members questioning the status quo should be encouraged within reason. However, once a decision has been made about the path forward, it's equally important that team members respect the decision and move on.

Maintaining long-term engagement within a team can be a daunting task. Whether a company or a department is purpose-driven or performance-driven, it's crucial to keep the team aligned with the overarching core principles.

For purpose-driven teams, leaders must be adept at articulating the answer to the question, "What is our purpose?" This doesn't diminish the importance of meeting deadlines and deliverables, but it does provide a deeper sense of inspiration for those working in purpose-driven companies.

Performance-driven companies can be more challenging environments for innovation and highly effective teams because the culture emphasizes individual output. Creating quantifiable parameters for (future) tasks can be challenging and stress-inducing, making employees risk-averse if they miss their performance targets. This can be difficult for some in management and individual contributors to grasp, because many of us have been brought up in a different culture that has shifted a fair amount over the years.

All of this information may seem fairly intuitive, but it is very hard to implement and maintain in practice. Everyone needs to participate actively, with leaders in all aspects of the business playing a crucial role in ensuring it stays part of the company's DNA.

Keeping the culture fresh and innovative always has to be front of mind. Success often breeds complacency, and when companies become complacent, there's often a younger, leaner competitor waiting in the wings to help themselves to underserved customers. Team-centric innovation, the ability to try new things, to fail gracefully, and to celebrate even small wins, is what elevates marketplace leaders. **scn**

Room with a (Wide) View

Experts Discuss Benefits of Panoramic Cameras

By Jennifer Hoecker

Panoramic cameras like the Logitech Sight, which are sometimes used with front-of-room cameras, are designed to create a more engaging meeting experience with remote participants.

Videoconferencing technologies continue to evolve, keeping pace with the needs of hybrid workplaces. Conferencing audio and video quality are more important than ever for employee satisfaction and retention, and panoramic cameras are helping to create a more equitable hybrid space.

With panoramic cameras, is more always, well, more? Not necessarily. Selecting the best solution for your space involves considering several factors.

Jeff Wilen, chief product officer at Owl Labs, offered several variables to consider, including the size and shape of the meeting space, device portability, location of power source, installation resources, desired experience for remote participants, and price.

Degrees of Participation

Perhaps most importantly, device location, and its impacts on image capture, may be the first thing to consider. "A 180-degree camera is meant to sit at the head of the meeting room and visually capture the entire conference room, from front to back," explained Josh Blalock, chief video evangelist at Jabra.

In contrast, 360-degree cameras are meant to be positioned in the center of the room or conference table. "From our experience and market research, 360-degree solutions offer more context and view of the full room as the camera is typically closer to its participants, allowing for a more intimate and engaging experience with remote participants," Wilen explained.

Blalock suggested there are many factors to consider when designing a hybrid conferencing configuration. "From a use-case standpoint, meeting room environment, the shape of the space, and the desired camera angles are key factors when deciding on a camera model," he explained. For example, a 360-degree camera may be the best solution for rooms with long tables, allowing participants to enjoy a more face-to-face experience, while a 180-degree camera can be the best choice for spaces that can be entirely seen from the front of the room.

Incorporating a 360-degree camera into a conference space provides a "complete view of the room and allows remote participants to be fully engaged and experience the most immersive version of the conversation," said Vivek Sekar, senior director,

product management at Logitech.

"The biggest and best advantages [of a 360-degree camera] are engagement and the elevated quality of the experience for the remote participants," Wilen agreed. "Audio quality for [in-person] meeting attendees is better distributed and more natural, regardless of where participants sit in a room or space."

"When placed in the center of a meeting space, participants at any seat are visible in high-quality, realistic images," added Rudolf Vitti, senior project manager, Panasonic Connect North America. "Using a multi-camera setup allows for higher resolution to capture expressive details making remote participants feel truly immersed in the room itself."

Meeting equity is a primary consideration in designing conferencing spaces, and panoramic cameras go a long way in bringing hybrid teams together. "A 360-degree camera most notably helps extend the feeling of a 'face-to-face' conversation into those longer rooms with long tables," Blalock explained, "ensuring that participants towards the back of the room don't feel disconnected from the virtual attendees."

Working in Space

At times there can be a tradeoff between the immersive benefits of a 360-degree camera and a sense of spatial orientation. Whereas a 180-degree camera depicts the location of in-person meeting participants around a table, this can be lost with center-of-room cameras. "For remote participants, 360-degree cameras often make it harder to grasp the spatial context of where in-room participants are seated," Sekar noted.

In some cases, an integrated front-of-room and center-of-room camera configuration may be an ideal solution, offering the best of both worlds. "This approach provides remote participants with both a view of the room and spatial context for seating

Left: The Owl Labs Meeting Owl 4+ is an all-in-one, 360-degree 4K camera, speaker, and mic device. Right: The Panasonic PressIT 360 features four integrated cameras and seven microphones.

arrangements and active speakers," Sekar continued. "For those in the meeting room, remote participants appear on the front display, with their audio originating from the same location. This setup allows in-room participants to associate voices with the displayed participants, enhancing spatial awareness for everyone involved."

Let's not overlook installation and cabling requirements. This is important to consider when configuring a videoconferencing space. Locating a power source, connecting to other meeting room media, internet connectivity, and required cable types all need to be taken into consideration from an installation perspective.
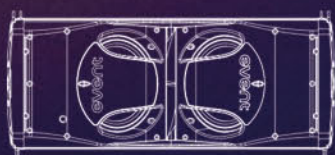

From left, Rudolf Vitti, Vivek Sekar, Jeff Wilen, and Josh Blalock

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The Jabra PanaCast 50 4K videobar offers a 180-degree field of view.

Adding a 360-degree camera to a conferencing setup may entail integrating it with an existing front-of-room system, noted Blalock. This can create additional cost and installation complexity. A center-of-room camera may require running additional cables through the floor, and the table may need to be modified to hide those cables (for aesthetic as well as tripping purposes).

Specific installation requirements vary from camera to camera. For example, the Logitech Sight connects and draws power through two category cables, and it comes with built-in cable management. Other cameras, such as the Meeting Owl, may need to be physically connected to a laptop in addition to a power source. And then there's the Panasonic Connect's PressIT 360, which only requires a single USB-C cable to connect camera, microphone, and speakers to a computer.

You may also want to consider mounting options.

A 360-degree camera may include micro-suction bases, whereas tripod mounts may be an option for U or V-shaped conference tables.

AI Advantages

AI-driven features in panoramic cameras such as auto-tracking and video stitching create high-quality, immersive hybrid meeting experiences. It enables both remote and in-room participants to connect more naturally, mimicking the benefits of face-to-face exchanges.

"We know that clearly seeing someone's eyes, expressions, and gestures, as well as understanding their way of speaking, is fundamental to human interaction," said Sekar. "Auto-tracking is crucial for hybrid meetings, providing an equitable experience for remote participants and helping them feel as if they're seated at the table with their colleagues."

Different display modes on the PressIT 360 allow participants to select the camera layout best suited for communication, Vitti explained. Each mode offers specific benefits based on the meeting's needs, and Sekar said that variety of display modes is "crucial to keep remote participants engaged with dynamic and relevant views of the meeting. It also gives IT teams the flexibility to easily adapt to their particular environment, whether it's Microsoft, Zoom, Google Meet, or another platform."

Sekar also noted that the Logitech Sight utilizes on-device AI to shift between camera settings based on participants' gaze direction, which gives remote participants a front-facing view. An additional camera mode continually shifts frame and focus to recently active speakers in the in-room conversation.

Similarly, Wilen said the Meeting Owl offers a camera mode designed specifically for presenters, which allows them to move about the room while remaining in focus. Another feature allows a key presenter to remain in frame even when they are not speaking. Blalock added that the Jabra PanaCast 50 offers the option to present an in-room whiteboard and present it as digital content, offering video participants a more immersive, collaborative experience. scn

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Extron scheduling systems help to manage shared spaces effectively and reduce the stress of the hybrid workforce.

Right on Schedule

Conference Rooms, Desks, and ... Parking Spots?

By Wayne Cavadi

The office space continues to evolve, and whether it is a full-time, back-to-office approach or a hybrid work environment, finding a conference room or space to work is a task that must not be difficult for employees. Simply put, the right scheduling solution—one that is easy to use and operates efficiently in real time—streamlines workplace management. Whether it is reserving conference rooms or booking individual desks, the right hardware and software are imperative to making office life easy on the workforce.

But with multiple approaches available, how do you choose the best one? "The answer lies in understanding the organization's size, scheduling needs, and the specific work environment," said Joe Da Silva, VP of marketing for Extron.

System Decisions

The types of room and desk scheduling solutions available range from basic, manual systems to fully automated Pro AV setups with touchpanels, interactive wayfinding, and room availability sensors. "Smaller offices might get by with manual systems, but these tend to lack scalability and require more staff resources for day-to-day management," Da Silva explained. "For larger, more dynamic workplaces, automated systems are ideal. These solutions provide real-time information about room and desk availability, integrate seamlessly with existing calendar systems, and reduce the burden on IT or AV staff."

However, room size is not the only consideration—let's not forget about location. According to Jason Parson, Atlona's regional sales manager, Northwest, a hard surface is the common thread among most customer installations. It provides stronger support when people interact with the touchpanel, and it provides a better user experience when booking a space.

"If the specific purpose of the touchpanel is to display meeting room information and provide scheduling functions, these tend to go outside the meeting room adjacent to the door," Parson said. "If the touchpanel's purpose is for both AV control and room scheduling, these tend to be placed inside the room. That opens other possibilities beyond wall-mounted installations, including the use of a tabletop mount."

Room and desk scheduling solutions are two basic parts: hardware, such as the touchpanel, and software. Many companies offer one or the other, but some, like Humly, offer both.

"Our goal is to save time for people and remove friction in the workplace to allow [employees] to spend more time working on their core business," said Anders Karlsson, CEO, Humly. "The combination of the Humly platform and the Humly hardware gives advantages beyond access to all features and the tightest possible integration, but it also provides our customers with a single point of contact with a clear responsibility for the whole system."

While touchpanels for room scheduling do just that—enable a person to reserve a space at the touch of a button—Humly has been adding newer features, like 3D floor plans, wayfinding, and even parking spaces.

From left, Joe Da Silva, Jason Parson, Anders Karlsson

"Parking spaces started as a close collaboration project with one of our customers and it was a perfect fit for our vision," Karlsson said. "Knowing you have a parking space waiting for you when you arrive is a huge time saver. Even when you want to book parking but realize they are already full, it saves you the time driving around looking for one—you can go looking for other options straight away."

Installation Challenges

Installing the right touchpanel should be a breeze, right? Per Parson, touchpanel installation is a straightforward process, as long as the installer understands the proper mounting requirements for the environment.

That doesn't mean, as with any installation, it doesn't come without its challenges. "The biggest challenge is pulling the cable to the installation point," Parson said. "It's a very simple job for installers with low-voltage experience." That's one reason Parson recommends network category cabling. "Wireless connectivity remains an option, but it creates more complexity, particularly in enterprise environments. It's also proven to be far less reliable, so hardwired connections have become the preference by a very large margin."

The environment of installation could also create some challenges. "Installing panels on glass walls, granite surfaces, or tight spaces requires careful consideration," Da Silva noted. "To overcome these challenges, Extron offers flexible and secure mounting options designed to fit almost any surface, including desks, glass walls, or mullions, without compromising on aesthetics. To ensure smooth installation and provisioning, integrators should focus on solutions that not only offer flexibility in mounting but also simplify network management."

PoE eliminates the need for additional power cables, which makes installation quicker and reduces cable clutter. "Centralizing control through a scheduling management system helps integrators efficiently deploy and manage multiple panels across a large space," Da Silva added.

For Your Consideration

Now that we understand the features, challenges, and use cases for a scheduling system, what are a few options for your next office install? As Parson observed, decisions are sometimes driven by architectural considerations, like glass-enclosed meeting spaces that require dual-stick glass mounts to securely affix the touchpanel. Atlona's Velocity AV touchpanels are adaptable to all these scenarios.

"Velocity broke ground as the first IP-based control system upon its introduction in 2017, with room scheduling functionality added in 2019," he explained. "Velocity's network architecture also brought the benefits of an openly programmable environment. That makes interfacing with common calendaring systems like G Suite and

Office365 very simple."

"At Humly, we have an excellent team that loves building devices, but we don't consider every problem a nail just because we got a hammer," Karlsson said. "The Humly [software] platform can help utilize the full potential of existing solutions, and if there are already several good options for sensors, kiosks, or interactive displays, we will integrate. We put a lot of effort into every piece of hardware we develop, and we only develop our own hardware, such as the Humly Room Display or the Humly Booking Device, because our custom hardware can solve customer needs in a more secure and more beautiful way."

Extron has a wide array of solutions including the TLS touchpanel series, which offers intuitive scheduling panels that incorporate sensor-based indicators and centralized wayfinding displays. Its TLS 300M is a new addition, designed specifically for managing desks and flexible workspaces. The touchpanel provides clear visual status indicators and integrates seamlessly with popular scheduling systems like Microsoft Exchange, Office 365, and Google Calendar.

Coordinating Communication

And then there's the Extron TLP Pro 520M TouchLink Pro touchpanel. Delta Galil is a designer and producer of textiles and clothing, with more than 10,000 employees in multiple geographical locations. When Delta Galil completed construction of its new headquarters in Caesarea, Israel—which houses the design center, R&D, and production divisions, along with the executive and corporate staff—the right AV technology was a must. That meant enhanced image quality on the videoconferencing and presentation systems and user-friendly operation, but also it required efficient room and resource management.

Delta Galil is using the Extron TLP Pro 520M TouchLink Pro touchpanel. With a 5-inch touchscreen, the touchpanel uses Room Agent software that transforms it into a standalone, full-featured room booking appliance. Customized with the company name and logo, employees see the name of the room, current availability, date and time, and a timeline showing open and reserved blocks for the rest of that day. With the simple touch of the Reserve button—or through Microsoft Outlook—a space is scheduled.

"Using the broad range of product solutions provided by Extron ... we were able to select various solutions for video switching, digital audio, professional-grade touchpanels or simple button control, wireless connection, and advanced room scheduling," explained Sharon Shemer, technical director at Audio Visual Control Solutions (AVCS), which selected Extron for the Delta Galil installation. "The challenge was to create reliable, simple-to-use systems that provide a coherent experience for the user, regardless of the room they were using."

Like the modern hybrid workplace itself, touchpanels and the software behind them seemingly only continue to improve with further enhancements. For now and the foreseeable future, selecting the right room and desk scheduling solution really depends on the unique needs of each organization.

"For a small office, a basic system might suffice, but for others, the ability to automate scheduling, integrate with existing calendars, and provide real-time updates is essential," said Da Silva. "With flexible installation options and the power of centralized management, [companies like] Extron provide a turnkey solution for integrators looking to future-proof their clients' workspaces while ensuring ease of use for everyday users." **scn**

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TOP 50 SYSTEMS INTEGRATORS 2024

GETTY IMAGES

By Mark J. Pescatore

Every summer, *SCN* asks integrators to help us provide a snapshot of the industry. The information they share allows us to create this list and showcase some of the top companies that deliver Pro AV solutions to a variety of vertical markets around the world. Rankings are based on the projected revenue from commercial AV systems installations for the current year.

Our top four entries haven't changed from last year, and three of the companies—AVI-SPL, Ricoh, and AVI Systems—reported higher projected revenue for 2024. EOS IT Solutions and IES Communications made big jumps to land in the top 10. Solotech and Solutionz both had higher revenues and more installations, keeping them in the top 10. Paladin Technologies added revenue and installations to vault into the top 10 ahead of Kinly, which reported improved revenue but fewer installations compared to 2023.

So, how's business these days? At first glance, the numbers tell me it's healthy. Our Top 50 integrators are staying busy, with thousands of full-time employees delivering tens of thousands of projects in 2024.

However, revenue numbers from commercial AV systems installations are all over the place. Some Top 50 mainstays, such as Ford Audio-Video and Key Code Media, showed growth for 2024. Others, including MCA Communications and Red Thread Spaces, had dips in revenue. And the industry's billion-dollar club, which welcomed a second member last year, is once again a party of one.

It's also pretty competitive out there. For example, Advanced Systems Group showed a modest increase in revenue (from $95.2 to $95.6 million) in 2024, yet it dropped four spots on the list. Meanwhile, Yorktel reported a big increase from $86 to $170 million, but only moved up one spot. And TRITECH had a good year, with a revenue increase of $20 million, but stayed put at 19. Is it time to start asking about managed services revenue?

SCN would also like to welcome some new companies to the Top 50, such as American Sound. The company itself isn't new—it's been around since 1946—but decided to submit its information this year and landed in the top 25. Nice debut. We're always looking for new integrators to submit their information to the Top 50. If you're interested, look for our Call for Entries around Labor Day 2025 on avnetwork.com.

It's important to note that all Top 50 submissions are voluntary. All information is received directly from participating companies. After all these years, I've still yet to receive an invitation from a single integrator to drop by the office and open the books, which speaks to the wisdom of the folks in charge. But the fact that more than four dozen companies are willing to share their financials publicly indicates just how important this list remains to our industry. As always, we appreciate their participation and hope this year's Top 50 helps you better understand the current Pro AV landscape. **scn**

Ones to Watch

It's not called the SCN Top 50 for nothing—we have to stop somewhere. But that doesn't mean there are only 50 integrators in our industry. Here are a handful of systems Integrators that (very) narrowly missed our list but are poised to make a move into the Top 50 next year.

- HS Solutions, Washington, DC
- TVS Pro, Salt Lake City, UT
- PIVIUM, Phoenix, AZ

PROJECTED 2024 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS INSTALLATIONS IN MILLIONS/ NUMBER OF 2024 INSTALLATIONS	2023 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS IN MILLIONS	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES/ COMPANY LOCATIONS/ YEARS IN BUSINESS	PRIMARY SERVICES OFFERED
1 AVI-SPL Tampa, FL | (813) 884-7168 | avispl.com			
$1,615 12,800 Installations	$1,538	4,464 Employees 66 Locations 45 Years in Business	AVI-SPL is a digital enablement solutions provider that transforms how people and technology connect to elevate experiences, create new value, and enable organizations to thrive and grow. AVI-SPL helps customers of all sizes and industries worldwide and is a global provider of AV, UC, and collaboration technology solutions, including its managed services.
2 DIVERSIFIED Kenilworth, NJ | (866) 447-1004 | onediversified.com			
$968 11,500 Installations	$991	2,722 Employees 40 Locations 31 Years in Business	Diversified is a global leader in AV and media innovation, specializing in designing and building installations of different complexity and scale. When projects require expertise in more than one or two technology disciplines, Diversified consistently provides seamless integration across AV, IT, media, security, digital signage, and more.
3 RICOH Exton, PA | (610) 296-8000 | ricoh-usa.com			
$615 11,600 Installations	$505.5	79,544 Employees 242 Locations 88 Years in Business	Ricoh is a leading provider of integrated digital services designed to support digital transformation of workplaces and optimize business performance. Ricoh has a customer base of 1.4 million globally, and empowers customers' creativity by providing optimal environments for seamless communication and high-quality collaboration enabled by our digital technology.

What vertical market has shown the most growth for you in 2024?

Andrea Nicholson, Chief Strategy Officer, American Sound
Healthcare has been American Sound's most evolving and growing vertical market in 2024. We attribute this growth to our clients reinventing how to maximize the collaboration tools and spaces while rebuilding or updating highly secure network environments. Healthcare, as well as most other verticals, is feeling the pressure to tighten security and fully onboard all AV assets on to their network. By providing this as an IT managed service, American Sound has also grown our remote monitoring and video interoperability services to help support these efforts.

David Riberi, President and CEO, LightWerks
In 2024, education and healthcare have shown significant growth for LightWerks. Institutions in these sectors are investing in advanced AV solutions to improve hybrid learning, training, and telemedicine capabilities. Our work with universities and healthcare providers reflects a strong demand for innovative, flexible, and future-proof solutions, driven by the need for both enhanced in-person experiences and seamless remote connections. Notable projects include our recent integrations at STAAR Surgical and University of the Pacific.

Bill Chamberlin, VP of Sales and Marketing, Verrex
The corporate market, which has transitioned from a vertical market to a horizontal one affecting all companies, continues to show promising growth potential. As the return to office gains momentum, our clients increasingly prioritize simplicity and end user focus, indicating a positive trajectory for the corporate market.

PROJECTED 2024 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS INSTALLATIONS IN MILLIONS/ NUMBER OF 2024 INSTALLATIONS	2023 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS IN MILLIONS	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES/ COMPANY LOCATIONS/ YEARS IN BUSINESS	PRIMARY SERVICES OFFERED

4 AVI SYSTEMS Minneapolis, MN | (855) 825-6030 | avisystems.com

| $612 5,000 Installations | $434 | 1,200 Employees 40 Locations 50 Years in Business | AVI Systems | GPA is a global technology solutions provider with $1.6 billion in global revenues and more than 6,000 global employees in 51 countries and 172 locations. Connecting the dots between people, space, and technology, the company works with customers of all sizes, offering AV systems integration, managed services, Microsoft consulting, and digital streaming globally. With its unique business structure, AVI Systems | GPA can deliver in more than 50 countries, providing a standardized delivery model and global managed services. |

5 EOS IT SOLUTIONS Austin, TX | (408) 907-9145 | eosits.com

| $475 13,400 Installations | $425 | 2,300 Employees 23 Locations 16 Years in Business | EOS IT Solutions is a global IT service provider specializing in AV, smart buildings, networking, and security, with global logistical capabilities. The company provides all IT design, supply, logistics, installations and deployments, and post-installation support, together with a full managed services strategy with more than 1,300 dedicated staffing solutions. |

6 IES COMMUNICATIONS Tempe, AZ | (480) 379-6200 | iescomm.com

| $360 15,684 Installations | $285 | 8,427 Employees 93 Locations 40 Years in Business | IES goes beyond technology by redefining experiences. The company spearheads technological innovations to revolutionize how clients live, play, communicate, and work by crafting AV design and integration solutions. IES builds robust AV infrastructures, handles commissioning and calibration, and specializes in control system programming—and offers a complete technology ecosystem with round-the-clock support. |

7 SOLOTECH Montreal, Canada, and Los Angeles, CA | (514) 526-7721 | solotech.com

| $324 2,700 Installations | $310 | 1,731 Employees 20 Locations 47 Years in Business | Founded more than 45 years ago, Solotech is a world leader in AV and entertainment technology, offering audio, video, lighting, rigging, soft goods, control and collaboration solutions, and services. From consultation and design to installation and integration, clients turn to Solotech for high-quality, reliable, and user-friendly systems, along with comprehensive remote monitoring, support, and on-site maintenance. |

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PROJECTED 2024 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS INSTALLATIONS IN MILLIONS/ NUMBER OF 2024 INSTALLATIONS	2023 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS IN MILLIONS	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES/ COMPANY LOCATIONS/ YEARS IN BUSINESS	PRIMARY SERVICES OFFERED
8 SOLUTIONZ Pacific Palisades, CA	(888) 815-6128	solutionzinc.com			
$282 2,700 Installations	$273	500 Employees 17 Locations 22 Years in Business	Solutionz delivers AV solutions for audio and videoconferencing, command and control centers, conference and meeting rooms, lecture hall and classroom technology, digital signage and content creation, professional audio, system design and integration, video walls and large-format displays, legal/courtrooms, remote monitoring and management, cybersecurity, on-site staffing, integrated support, digital training, device support, and success management.
9 PALADIN TECHNOLOGIES New York, NY	(855) 296-3199	paladintechnologies.com			
$255 3,700 Installations	$118	1,500 Employees 34 Locations 26 Years in Business	Paladin Technologies designs and installs technology solutions for companies requiring AV, network cabling, data center, OSP, security, and network services. From basic conference rooms to enterprise-wide videoconferencing deployments, Paladin handles all aspects of a project—from design to implementation to post-installation maintenance. Paladin's team consists of in-house programmers, engineers, project managers, and technicians certified to support a wide range of commercial equipment.
10 KINLY Amsterdam, The Netherlands	(973) 585-3000	kinly.com			
$240 2,813 Installations	$224.3	1,100 Employees 20 Locations 34 Years in Business	Kinly is a trusted technology advisor to organizations across the world, providing services across AV and UC integration, corporate communications, workspace management, events, and end-to-end support. Using a 360-degree lifecycle approach to integration that puts the needs of people first, Kinly creates meaningful experiences through innovative, secure, and sustainable AV solutions.
11 PAVION Chantilly, VA	(866) 572-8466	pavion.com			
$207 6,000 Installations	$121	2,560 Employees 70 Locations 55 Years in Business	Pavion connects and protects by providing design, installation, maintenance, management, monitoring, and support to customers in more than 63 U.S. locations and 22 countries, delivering critical communications, AV, integration, fire, and security solutions.

IES
Communications

Information technology services that work for your business.
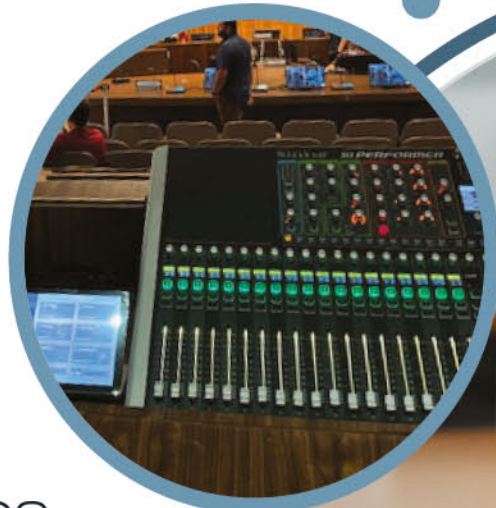
Video Systems
- Video Walls
- Digital Signage

Sound Systems
- Background Music | Paging Systems
- Sound Masking
- Voice Lift

Networked Systems
- IP Conferencing
- AV Collaboration
- Room Schedulers
- Asset Tracking

COMMERCIAL AV SOLUTIONS

- Huddle Spaces
- Training Rooms
- Telepresence
- Corporate Boardrooms
- Network Operations Centers
- Presentation & Performance Venues

ADDITONAL SERVICES

- AV Design Consulting
- Sound System Commissioning & Calibration
- Digital Signage Content Development
- Control System Programming

PROJECTED 2024 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS INSTALLATIONS IN MILLIONS/ NUMBER OF 2024 INSTALLATIONS	2023 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS IN MILLIONS	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES/ COMPANY LOCATIONS/ YEARS IN BUSINESS	PRIMARY SERVICES OFFERED
12 CCS PRESENTATION SYSTEMS		Mesa, AZ | (480) 348-0100 | ccsprojects.com	
$200 5,125 Installations	$175.7	345 Employees 27 Locations 33 Years in Business	CCS Presentation Systems provides design, integration, installation, training, and maintenance of AV equipment to businesses, schools, and government clients. Solutions include dvLED walls, large-format displays, digital signage, interactive presentation tools, AV-over-IP distribution systems, room control and automation, audio systems, sound masking, digital projection, esports gaming labs, unified communication, and more.
13 FORD AUDIO-VIDEO SYSTEMS		Oklahoma City, OK | (405) 946-9966 | fordav.com	
$184 650 Installations	$168	550 Employees 18 Locations 51 Years in Business	Ford AV provides engineering, design, programming, project management, field supervision, installation, service, on-site support, and training for professional and commercial sound, video, lighting, broadcast, Wi-Fi, security, and digital signage systems.
14 AVIDEX		Cary, NC | (800) 999-8590 | avidex.com	
$179 2,287 Installations	$172	450 Employees 12 Locations 20 Years in Business	Avidex is a global AV integrator specializing in the design, integration, and support of innovative and collaborative AV solutions. From strategic planning and system design through deployment, training, and managed services/support, Avidex creates an ideal client experience. Avidex is a subsidiary of ITOCHU Corporation, a Fortune Global 500 company.
15 YORKTEL		Wall, NJ | (732) 413-6000 | yorktel.com	
$170 11,700 Installations	$149	500 Employees 10 Locations 39 Years in Business	Yorktel is a leading next-generation global systems integrator across AV, IT, and voice for enterprises and top government agencies in the hybrid workplace. The company manages and secures collaboration estates with strategic partners like Microsoft, Cisco, Poly | HP, Zoom, Appspace, and others, offering comprehensive solutions including video, voice, AIOps monitoring, management, help desk support, digital signage, media services, and security.

What do you think will be Pro AV's hottest technology trends in 2025?

David Riberi, President and CEO, LightWerks

In 2025, we anticipate that AI integration, augmented reality (AR), and advancements in AV-over-IP technology will drive major trends in Pro AV. AI-powered features like automated room configuration, voice-activated commands, cinematic-style videoconferencing, and intelligent analytics will streamline operations and create highly interactive experiences. In fact, our 5th Annual LightWerks Virtual Trade Show, which took place in late October, was themed "AI and AV." Additionally, with the growth of AR and VR in immersive training and experiential spaces, we expect to see an increasing demand for systems that bridge physical and digital environments seamlessly.

Ashish Maru, Director of AV Technology, Red Thread

In 2025, we anticipate a number of introductions in various AI-driven solutions. These solutions could be in the areas of meeting notes capture, AV system control, space management, energy management, etc. This includes the integration of IoT devices for creating smarter, more connected environments for personalized user experiences. Most immediately, voice-based tracking cameras to enhance the meeting experience is seeing a lot of growth and demand. Augmented and virtual reality always seem to be on the brink of takeoff, but we have not seen anything significant or scalable yet.

Curtis Heath, President of Business Solutions, Guitar Center (GC Pro/AVDG)

In 2025, we expect innovations like automatically switched camera systems (Crestron 1 Beyond, Poly DirectorAI, QSC Seervision) and multi-camera switching on videoconferencing platforms (like Zoom Director) to be major trends. Additionally, dvLED chip-on-board (COB) solutions with finer sub-millimeter pitches and reduced pricing will lead to more installations.

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SCN TOP 50

PROJECTED 2024 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS INSTALLATIONS IN MILLIONS/ NUMBER OF 2024 INSTALLATIONS	2023 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS IN MILLIONS	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES/ COMPANY LOCATIONS/ YEARS IN BUSINESS	PRIMARY SERVICES OFFERED

16 NEW ERA TECHNOLOGY — New York, NY | (877) 696-7720 | neweratech.com

| $135
567 Installations | $127 | 4,500 Employees
80 Locations
30 Years in Business | New Era delivers AV integration enhanced by AI-driven solutions and managed services worldwide. With deep expertise and a focus on innovation, the company creates customized AV solutions powered by AI to enhance communication and collaboration. From design to deployment and support, New Era offers scalable, future-proof technology to help businesses thrive in today's digital landscape. |

17 AVDG/GC PRO — Westlake Village, CA | (631) 379-3626 | avdg.com

| $113.5
547 Installations | $105.8 | 190 Employees
55 Locations
27 Years in Business | AVDG (Audio Visual Design Group) and GC Pro (Guitar Center Professional) offer a range of specialized AV services tailored for commercial environments, including custom AV design and integration for businesses, higher education, healthcare, studios, houses of worship, entertainment venues, and corporate environments. Other offerings include comprehensive AV systems for conference rooms, boardrooms, and collaborative workspaces, as well as control systems, video walls and displays, and event solutions. |

18 ADVANCED SYSTEMS GROUP — Emeryville, CA | (510) 654-8300 | asgllc.com

| $95.6
89 Installations | $95.1 | 505 Employees
8 Locations
27 Years in Business | Advanced Systems Group (ASG) is a services provider for professional video, audio, high-speed storage and data, CCTV/surveillance, and other systems design, installation, and maintenance on-premise and in public cloud, along with managed services that enable sophisticated, high-impact communications. From presentation spaces to broadcast and recording studios to high-speed media storage and cloud workflows, ASG brings experience and value. |

19 TRITECH COMMUNICATIONS — New York, NY | (631) 254-4500 | tritechcomm.com

| $95
240 Installations | $87 | 300 Employees
5 Locations
22 Years in Business | TRITECH provides AV design, systems integration, and managed services. |
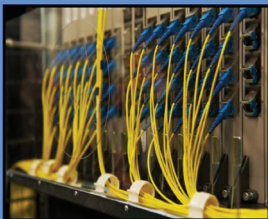
Is hiring and retaining talent still an issue for the Pro AV industry?

Dawn Cagliano, President, IVCi
In today's competitive market for technical talent, integrators must take accountability for retention. The highest bidder may win the talent, but how will you keep them? We must challenge ourselves to create enriching environments that allow employees to thrive. Offering value is a mutual commitment. If we expect employees to maximize client's ROI and create memorable experiences, we must do the same. Committing to employee development empowers employees to explore their curiosities. I also believe in giving back to the AV community. I recently became a mentor with an organization that supports women in AV, making a continuous effort to invest back into the future generations.

Jeff Burns, Director of Human Resources, Verrex
The labor market, especially for technical talent, remains very tight. Talent retention has stabilized in 2024 since the "great resignation" trend subsided. Increased company-wide communication and a focus on employee relations remain essential for retaining talent.

Curtis Heath, President of Business Solutions, Guitar Center (GC Pro/AVDG)
Yes, there remains a shortage of qualified candidates. We're focused on retention with industry-leading compensation structures, and the industry needs to engage younger generations to ensure a strong future talent pipeline.

Joe Gillis, VP of Sales, New Era Technology
Yes, talent acquisition and retention remain key challenges. We're focusing on continuous education for our current team and development processes for newer employees. By investing in training and growth, we are better positioned to support our customers effectively.

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TOP 50 SYSTEMS INTEGRATORS 2024

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Deployment & Installation

Proactive Monitoring & Management

Support For All Video Enabled Rooms & Spaces

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SCAN ME

SCN TOP 50

PROJECTED 2024 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS INSTALLATIONS IN MILLIONS/ NUMBER OF 2024 INSTALLATIONS	2023 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS IN MILLIONS	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES/ COMPANY LOCATIONS/ YEARS IN BUSINESS	PRIMARY SERVICES OFFERED

20 ALPHA
Eden Prairie, MN | (952) 896-9898 | alphax.us

$93 251 Installations	$75.7	112 Employees 1 Locations 54 Years in Business	Alpha is a leading technology integrator committed to realizing its clients' visions. With expertise in live production, digital signage, IPTV, experiential displays, and audio solutions, Alpha sets a high standard in the industry. The company's extensive knowledge and experience enables it to craft exceptional and captivating experiences that engage audiences across a range of markets.

21 KEY CODE MEDIA
Burbank, CA | (818) 303-3900 | keycodemedia.com

$90 800 Installations	$88	200 Employees 14 Locations 23 Years in Business	Key Code Media is a leading systems integration and media technology company that can assist clients in adopting technology solutions that are effective both today and in the future. The company specializes in helping design, integrate, manage, and support on-premise or cloud-based AV, broadcast, and post-production solutions.

22 WASHINGTON PROFESSIONAL SYSTEMS
Wheaton, MD | (301) 942-6800 | wpsproav.com

$83.4 120 Installations	$74.3	56 Employees 3 Locations 38 Years in Business	WPS designs and installs AV solutions that help connect people, elevate experiences, and transform spaces into collaboration powerhouses. The company offers expertly engineered broadcasting, audio, lighting, videoconferencing, and control systems for organizations of all sizes. From the nation's largest airports and stadiums to multi-campus universities and government agencies, WPS has the experience and capabilities to solve the most challenging technology problems.

23 EKC ENTERPRISES
Fresno, CA | (559) 438-0330 | ekccorp.com

$71 2,100 Installations	$56	350 Employees 8 Locations 21 Years in Business	For more than 20 years, EKC Enterprises has been providing complete low-voltage solutions across the Western United States and Texas.

24 AMERICAN SOUND
Covington, KY | (859) 261-9024 | americansound.cc

$70 1,312 Installations	$944	210 Employees 5 Locations 78 Years in Business	American Sound provides premier AV design, integration, and support services with a focus on unified communications, large-venue AVL, theater technology, IT technology, IT networking, and proactive support. With fully resourced regional offices and dedicated client teams, American Sound supports clients across the United States with highly qualified technical experts who focus on providing best-in-class outcomes.

PROJECTED 2024 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS INSTALLATIONS IN MILLIONS/ NUMBER OF 2024 INSTALLATIONS	2023 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS IN MILLIONS	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES/ COMPANY LOCATIONS/ YEARS IN BUSINESS	PRIMARY SERVICES OFFERED
25 CONSTANT TECHNOLOGIES North Kingstown, RI | (401) 294-7171 | constanttech.com			
$68 125 Installations	$60	100 Employees 6 Locations 42 Years in Business	Constant Technologies specializes in mission-critical projects, leveraging its expertise to deliver consistently high-performance operations center video wall systems.
26 INTER TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION Mishawaka, IN | (800) 254-0506 | intertech.tv			
$64.2 1,925 Installations	$53.1	135 Employees 27 Locations 24 Years in Business	ITC offers complete AV services and solutions, including design, project management, installation, support, and managed services.
27 MATRIX VIDEO COMMUNICATIONS Calgary, Alberta, Canada | (800) 254-0506 | mvcc.ca			
$61 2,010 Installations	$59	120 Employees 12 Locations 30 Years in Business	Matrix Video Communications is a leading Canadian AV technology integrator, specializing in design, installation, related services, training, maintenance, and support of AV systems tailored to the needs of clients across Canada. In addition, Matrix has more than 30 years of experience in the design and installation of broadcast AV and broadcast control systems in sports and live event venues.
28 ARCHKEY SOLUTIONS St. Louis, MO | (636) 492-7500 | archkey.com			
$50.2 1,000 Installations	$72.8	360 Employees 8 Locations 43 Years in Business	ArchKey Solutions provides integrated technology solutions from conception through design, installation, commissioning, and maintenance. The firm specializes in commercial AV, broadcast, network, wireless, fire/life safety, and security systems.
29 RED THREAD SPACES Boston, MA | (617) 719-3460 | red-thread.com			
$49 1,250 Installations	$52	490 Employees 6 Locations 60 Years in Business	Red Thread Spaces provides fully integrated interiors that leverages research from its parent organization, Steelcase, which allows clients to maximize their people, space, and technology in the new hybrid world.

Leading Pros Rely On ADI and Snap One

ADI is a leading global distributor of security, AV and low voltage products. We supply products that help keep our communities safe, secure, comfortable, and connected.

Leading professionals rely on ADI for our wide selection of trusted brands, immediate product availability, knowledgeable sales staff and support services.

In 2024, Snap One became part of ADI, expanding our smart technology portfolio and distribution capabilities. Snap One is a leading provider of smart-living products, services, and software.

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www.adiglobal.com | www.snapone.com

PROJECTED 2024 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS INSTALLATIONS IN MILLIONS/ NUMBER OF 2024 INSTALLATIONS	2023 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS IN MILLIONS	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES/ COMPANY LOCATIONS/ YEARS IN BUSINESS	PRIMARY SERVICES OFFERED

30 VERREX Mountainside, NJ | (908) 232-7000 | verrex.com

| $42.3
216 Installations | $36.4 | 99 Employees
3 Locations
77 Years in Business | Primary services from Verrex include AV Integration, LVC cabling, sound masking, digital signage, VTC, service, design consultant, and on-site infrastructure. Verrex designs, integrates, services, and supports conferencing and collaboration systems globally that allow companies to communicate and collaborate through videoconferencing, digital media, and other networked AV technologies. |

31 MCA COMMUNICATIONS Houston, TX | (281) 591-2434 | mcacom.com

| $40
1,000 Installations | $45 | 306 Employees
4 Locations
41 Years in Business | The primary services offered by MCA Communications are design consulting and engineering, integration, supply chain and logistics, IT infrastructure, AV, and security. |

32 IVCI Hauppauge, NY | (631) 273-5800 | ivci.com

| $37
103 Installations | $20 | 88 Employees
2 Locations
29 Years in Business | IVCi specializes in videoconferencing and AV systems integration, as well as developing and delivering standardized, scalable solutions backed by managed services. The company's process includes identifying, deploying, and managing the ideal technology mix to create outstanding user experiences and deliver a clear ROI. Offered programs also include an AVaaS solution, training, and user adoption and support. |

33 USIS AV Pearl River, NY | (845) 358-7755 | usisAV.net

| $34.3
280 Installations | $32.8 | 70 Employees
5 Locations
12 Years in Business | USIS AV doesn't underestimate the human factor: The company designs, builds, and supports for it. A trusted resource to the most recognizable brands, hottest startups, iconic spaces, and prominent enterprises in the world, USIS AV delivers both extraordinary and "everyday" AV projects. USIS AV is part of USIS, a global leader in technology enablement for the built environment. |

Total Visibility.
Complete Control.

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PROJECTED 2024 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS INSTALLATIONS IN MILLIONS/ NUMBER OF 2024 INSTALLATIONS	2023 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS IN MILLIONS	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES/ COMPANY LOCATIONS/ YEARS IN BUSINESS	PRIMARY SERVICES OFFERED

34 ACP CREATIVIT LLC (CAMERA CORNER CONNECTING POINT) Buffalo Grove, IL | (847) 541-6333 | acpcreativit.com

$34 520 Installations	$32	337 Employees 5 Locations 71 Years in Business	ACP CreativIT and Camera Corner Connecting Point provide AV solutions across a wide range of technologies serving many different customer types. From basic conference rooms to custom systems for performing arts centers, its team has the knowledge and skill to meet high customer expectations. As a full-service IT provider as well as AV, its systems take advantage of the latest in network-based video and audio products.

35 DATA PROJECTIONS Houston, TX | (713) 781-1999 | dataprojections.com

$33.5 1,229 Installations	$35.1	88 Employees 5 Locations 37 Years in Business	Data Projections is an AV systems designer and integrator providing advanced collaboration technology solutions and support services. Its solutions include AV systems, AV conferencing/collaboration, unified communications, content management/delivery, interactive technology, and managed services.

36 LINX Denver, CO | (303) 574-1552 | teamlinx.com

$32.5 1,900 Installations	$28.4	700 Employees 7 Locations 21 Years in Business	LINX offers comprehensive solutions in network cabling, multimedia, security, and wireless services. The company provides design build, installation, and maintenance services in these areas.

37 LEVEL 3 AUDIOVISUAL Mesa, AZ | (480) 892-1071 | level3av.com

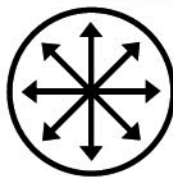|			
$31.6 209 Installations	$20.2	117 Employees 1 Locations 29 Years in Business	Look to Level 3 Audiovisual to strategize, design, deploy, and support.

SIMPLY SCALABLE
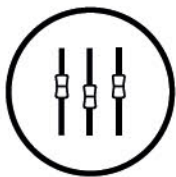
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PROJECTED 2024 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS INSTALLATIONS IN MILLIONS/ NUMBER OF 2024 INSTALLATIONS	2023 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS IN MILLIONS	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES/ COMPANY LOCATIONS/ YEARS IN BUSINESS	PRIMARY SERVICES OFFERED
38 TSI GLOBAL COMPANIES St. Charles, MO	(636) 949-8889	tsi-global.com			
$30 500 Installations	$28	136 Employees 2 Locations 37 Years in Business	TSI Global Companies is an MBE-certified, full-service, design-build AV and low-voltage systems integrator providing turnkey convergent AV, networked communications, security systems, electrical solutions, and locating services to clients throughout North America.
39 IMS TECHNOLOGY SERVICES Garnet Valley, PA	(610) 631-1870	imsts.com			
$28 222 Installations	$21	131 Employees 3 Locations 30 Years in Business	The core goal at IMS Technology Services is to provide the absolute best value in AV systems integration, event staging, project management, and AV managed services for the companies and organizations it serves. IMS specializes in delivering presentation, collaboration, and unified communication technologies that are ROI and enhance communications.
40 GOLDEN STAR TECHNOLOGY Cerritos, CA	(562) 345-8700	gstinc.com			
$25.7 200 Installations	$21.8	140 Employees 3 Locations 39 Years in Business	GST provides end-to-end IT and AV solutions and services.
41 JKL TECHNOLOGIES Thousand Oaks, CA	(805) 375-5820	cos-jkl.com			
$25.5 597 Installations	$23.5	77 Employees 7 Locations 20 Years in Business	JKL Technologies is an information technology solutions firm helping businesses manage, improve, and integrate their entire technology infrastructure. JKL provides a single source of expertise in network infrastructure, structured cabling, desk side services, technology relocations, AV design, installation, maintenance, and on-site support services.

What are some of the challenges you face regularly with conference room AV?

Ashish Maru, Director of AV Technology, Red Thread
While conference room AV technologies are becoming simpler and theoretically easy for anyone to install quickly, this simplicity requires more design thought to ensure consistent and user-friendly experiences. Additionally, the rapid pace of technological advancements makes it challenging for companies to keep up, often causing them to hesitate in implementing solutions due to fears of rapid obsolescence.

Jeff Stoebner, CEO, AVI Systems
When you take an outcomes-based approach, the technology is the easy part. The challenge is in logistics and managed services. Global rollouts are now commonplace. Our customers are looking for a service provider who can deliver and manage their conference room standards around the globe. Those that master global logistics and develop a true follow-the-sun managed services portfolio will find success.

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JKL TECHNOLOGIES

How important is managed services to your business model?

Joe Gillis, VP of Sales, New Era Technology

Managed services is a cornerstone of our AV business. We have established a global Video Network Operations Center (VNOC), staffed by specialists across three time zones, to support standardized and complex environments. This insight into customer operational efficiency enables us to provide impactful guidance, ensuring AV systems bolster, rather than hinder, digital transformation.

Bill Chamberlin, VP of Sales and Marketing, Verrex

I cannot emphasize enough that managed services are extremely important to our business model. Managed services—particularly remote monitoring and staffing—are strategically positioned as our most substantial growth area. We have two dedicated global managed service account managers who work hand-in-hand with our account managers to ensure the managed services conversation is part of the sales process. Our emphasis on managed services, a recurring income source, reassures our stakeholders about our proactive approach to evolving business models.

Linda Lentz, VP of Sales Operations, IVCi

IVCi's managed service program is essential to our business model, distinguishing us in the AV integration industry. We provide comprehensive, U.S.-based support that maximizes clients' AV investments through technical assistance and strategic guidance. We actively monitor systems remotely to reduce interruptions and improve overall performance, while our event management services create a user-friendly environment for successful collaboration. Customization is key; our flexible program adapts to each client's unique needs. By building long-term partnerships and continuously integrating the latest technologies, we ensure client satisfaction and effective meeting experiences. Ultimately, managed services drive productivity and deliver significant value to our clients.

Andrea Nicholson, Chief Strategy Officer, American Sound

Managed services are in our DNA. Everything we design and sell is optimized for Day 2 support and an ongoing partnership with our clients. We have an entire team in our U.S.-based Remote Operations Center that focuses only on educating, selling, and supporting managed services. While the recurring revenue of services is critical to any AV company, we approach managed services in a way where we team up with our clients to be proactive, maximize their ROI, and allow for transparent management and reporting of all AV/IT assets including AV, security systems, networked devices, and beyond.

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42 IMMEDIA Scottsdale, AZ	(480) 483-3399	immedia-tech.com			
$24.8 315 Installations	$26.2	83 Employees 1 Locations 20 Years in Business	Immedia is an enterprise and hospitality-centric organization that continues to evolve and grow within the Phoenix market. Its on-staff team includes sales, design, engineering, programming, commissioning, and associated services necessary to complete complex design-build projects. Specialties include complex programming and dvLED integration.
43 PRO-MOTION TECHNOLOGY GROUP (PTG) Wixom, MI	(248) 668-3100	promotion.tech			
$23.2 2,043 Installations	$18.5	49 Employees 1 Locations 21 Years in Business	PTG delivers end-to-end digital signage solutions, including installation, content management, and ongoing technical support. It specializes in creating custom display systems that drive customer engagement and brand impact. From concept to deployment, its services ensure seamless integration and reliable performance, allowing businesses to communicate more effectively with their audiences in dynamic, innovative ways.
44 ITI SYSTEMS Beltsville, MD	(855) 805-4484	itisystems.com			
$20.5 550 Installations	$26.2	42 Employees 4 Locations 16 Years in Business	ITI Systems delivers AV design, integration, programming, maintenance, and managed services.
45 ECC Lincoln, NE	(402) 466-8274	eccoinc.com			
$20 218 Installations	$20	131 Employees 5 Locations 66 Years in Business	ECC is a full-service technology systems integrator that has built a foundation on bringing dynamic solutions to organizations throughout the Midwest. The company connects businesses to better experiences using AV, communication, electronic security, fire safety, healthcare, and managed services technology solutions.
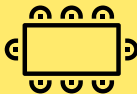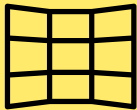
What do you expect to be the biggest challenges for your company in 2025?

Jeff Stoebner, CEO, AVI Systems

In 2025, we anticipate that our biggest challenges will revolve around managing our rapid growth and ensuring that we have the necessary infrastructure and support systems in place to scale effectively. Since 2022, AVI Systems has experienced significant expansion, both organically and through acquisitions. As we continue to grow, it will be crucial to maintain our unique ESOP culture, which has been a cornerstone of our success. This means investing in robust systems and processes that can support a larger organization while preserving the values and principles that define our company. We also need to focus on employee development and retention to ensure we have the talent and leadership required to navigate this period of growth successfully.

And we must plan to scale our workforce to meet our customers' demands. As the value of our services grow, our ability to scale our workforce nationally and internationally will present unique challenges. Our customers' operational successes often depend on our ability to get to the local site quickly and efficiently.

Continuing on this theme, another challenge is to handle more incidents through remote remediation. Through our practice of ITIL and agile-based processes, we are constantly improving our remote resolution capabilities. Our manufacturing partners have also taken a big step in developing their cloud management tools. It is now up to the integration channel to be able to provide an offer that includes remote management and remediation of our customer's audiovisual estate without relying quite as heavily on an onsite dispatch.

PROJECTED 2024 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS INSTALLATIONS IN MILLIONS/ NUMBER OF 2024 INSTALLATIONS	2023 REVENUE FROM COMMERCIAL AV SYSTEMS IN MILLIONS	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES/ COMPANY LOCATIONS/ YEARS IN BUSINESS	PRIMARY SERVICES OFFERED

46 APPLIED VIDEO TECHNOLOGY Kimberton, PA | (610) 407-0776 | appliedvideo.com

| $19.5 165 Installations | $15.2 | 42 Employees 1 Locations 28 Years in Business | An experienced full-service AV integrator, AVT is all about helping customers communicate more effectively. With more than 27 years of industry experience, AVT is well-positioned to deliver the support, expertise, and tools needed to meet communication goals. The company works to provide the best possible service for design, engineering, project management, installation, training, and support. |

47 LIGHTWERKS COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS Gardena, CA | (888) 454-4489 | lightwerks.com

| $19 740 Installations | $16 | 50 Employees 6 Locations 28 Years in Business | LightWerks is a leader in AV and communications solutions. It has expertise in videoconference room technologies, Microsoft Teams and Zoom Rooms, digital signage, and video walls. The company specializes in AV system design, installation, support, and maintenance. It serves corporations, schools, and healthcare organizations across the West Coast and nationwide. |

48 CAL COAST TELECOM San Jose, CA | (408) 275-8888 | cctcom.net

| $17.5 500 Installations | $13 | 200 Employees 4 Locations 29 Years in Business | Cal Coast Telecom is a full-service, design-build integrator that bridges the gap between AV/IT and construction to provide the best communications experience. At Cal Coast Telecom, the focus is on AV, security, network, and wireless systems. From startups to enterprises, technology to life sciences, colleges to hospitals, Cal Coast Telecom is active in every vertical. |

49 METINTERACTIVE Oxford, CT | (800) 951-8407 | metinteractive.com

| $17 12 Installations | $16 | 32 Employees 5 Locations 12 Years in Business | Metinteractive provides system design and integration, experience design and development, UX/UI strategy design and information architecture, creative services, content development, AV design, managed services, operations, and hosting. |

50 DMS Dallas, TX | (254) 824-8161 | dms.tech

| $13.9 2,400 Installations | $12.7 | 85 Employees 7 Locations 15 Years in Business | DMS provides comprehensive videoconferencing solutions, digital customer experience (CX) technologies, and workplace management tools. Services encompass end-to-end design, deployment, and management, ensuring seamless integration and enhanced collaboration. From strategic consulting to system optimization, DMS delivers customized solutions that empower organizations to drive efficiency, innovation, and growth in the digital workplace. |

QUICKBIO

Eric Hutto

Position: CEO
Company: Diversified
Overtime: Beyond my family, I am an avid golfer and enjoy spending time outdoors, traveling, and generally learning new things.

Time for Transformation

Diversified CEO Hutto Focused on Global Technology Solutions

By Mark J. Pescatore

SCN: You joined Diversified back in March 2022, but you've held executive positions in companies from different industries. What makes the Pro AV industry unique?

Eric Hutto: The AV industry was at an inflection point. Traditionally, it has followed the path of a conventional integrator. From my point of view, the industry was in a similar position to where the IT sector was years ago, heading where I had already been. To move forward, the focus needed to shift toward cloud adoption and bolstering cybersecurity measures. I felt that my experience within the IT services industry would be more relevant to the future of the Pro AV industry, and I could, in turn, transform Diversified from an integrator into a global technology solutions company.

SCN: How's business these days?

EH: Our business has evolved as we have narrowed our focus to specific markets and industries. This shift allows us to take on fewer, higher-value projects, allowing us to dedicate more time to our clients. As a result, we're able to address real business challenges rather than focusing on individual project scopes. The outcome has been a growing business with a higher profitability rate, allowing us to invest in both our associates and innovative solutions.

SCN: What are some of the significant business challenges facing the Pro AV industry in general and your company specifically?

EH: The Pro AV industry needs to embrace a different approach to solving business problems. It's no longer about completing a project—it's about delivering an outcome. This shift requires new technology, with software replacing product and AI becoming an essential part of operations. At Diversified, we've already established a cybersecurity approach, transitioned to the cloud, and are responsibly leveraging AI. Now our challenge is guiding our clients in evolving their offerings to align with this shift and developing our internal team to not only integrate products but to design, implement, and operate.

SCN: Supply chain issues aren't talked about much anymore, but what lessons did Diversified learn from that experience?

EH: We had to move from a purchasing model to a procurement approach. This meant creating a more strategic thinking organization focused on category management, working with fewer, but more aligned suppliers and partners. Additionally, we had to become less dependent on products and look to software to mitigate risk. We also looked for ways to extend product life while boosting productivity. By expanding beyond traditional Pro AV partnerships, we now co-innovate with key partners to ensure we stay relevant for the future.

SCN: You and I talked about Intelligent Orchestration at your booth at the 2024 NAB Show. For those who didn't attend, what is this new service?

EH: Intelligent Orchestration is designed to automate application deployment into decentralized (cloud) infrastructure. It allows operators to set event schedules or run applications on demand, ultimately reducing financial barriers in accessing the latest media technologies. Using cloud-based and virtualized assets for production can be challenging, especially for clients that lack the in-house expertise. Intelligent Orchestration aims to abstract away that necessary expertise so that users can use cloud-based production in a more user-friendly way.

SCN: How important is managed services to Diversified's revenue strategy?

EH: It is absolutely a focus for us, as clients are always asking for ways to lower their costs. Many have had their budgets and staff reduced but are still expected to meet the same business objectives. While we've made significant progress, there is still more work ahead—both for Diversified and the Pro AV industry as a whole.

SCN: Over the summer, we learned about Diversified's strategic partnership with Grass Valley. How does this partnership help your customers, and how important are these types of partnerships in today's Pro AV environment?

EH: For us, connecting with partners that help us accelerate innovation and bring solutions to market faster is essential. This partnership was all about velocity and gaining a competitive edge. These types of partnerships are essential to deliver results. No single company has all the talent and ideas necessary to solve every business challenge ahead. By collaborating, we are able to accelerate the industry faster.

SCN: AI continues to be quite the buzzword in Pro AV. How is AI impacting Diversified?

EH: As AI is already here and in use, our first step was to establish a policy that governs the responsible use of technology. There's so much unknown and there's no roadmap to follow. Having said that, Diversified uses AI internally to streamline our processes and reduce administrative tasks, so our talent is more focused on client engagement and solving their challenges. Until we have clearer guidelines and industry precedents, our focus is internal. That said, AI will certainly be embedded in our solutions, but always in a responsible manner.

SCN: Is Diversified seeing more "wow" projects (eye candy) or "work" projects (productivity) in the pipeline?

EH: Our clients look to us in a consultative manner to help them understand the art of the possible, as there are bigger things to solve than just the product to deliver. Our team is taught to probe and really understand the business problem at hand so we can take a step back from the project scope and think more broadly. Our clients aren't just seeking products or services—they want outcomes that provide a competitive edge or create experiences that attract top talent. That requires more "wow" factor than ever before. However, solutions have to be practical, affordable and pragmatic. We can't lose sight of productivity, but we have to deliver the "wow."

SCN: Diversified has also been delivering some impressive installations. What were some of your favorites from 2024?

EH: Some of my favorites include the Museum of Art + Light, Monumental Sports, and our work with a major media and entertainment company with multiple productions in New York, including morning, sports, and news production. scn

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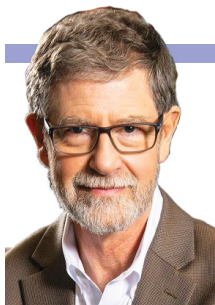
Wheels Not Included

What Does a Virtual Truck Bring to the Mobile Production Party?

By Dave Van Hoy

Advanced Systems Group (ASG) recently launched an advanced iteration of our virtual cloud control room designed to mirror the functionality of a traditional production truck. The motivation behind our Virtual Truck was simple yet profound: When clients rent a mobile production truck, they're not just renting equipment, they're securing a complete production package that includes everything from cameras and comms to the truck's switching, routing, and audio mixing systems.

This all-inclusive model has dominated the industry since the 1960s, and it became clear that emulating this model through cloud technology could be transformative. So, why transition from a conventional mobile production truck to a virtual truck? The primary driver is cost.

Operating a mobile production truck is not just expensive—it can be a financial burden. Between the gear and the truck, you're looking at substantial capital expenses. There's also continual maintenance and the cost of transporting the crew to the production site.

Virtual Truck tackles these costs head-on by eliminating not just the physical truck's expenses, but also the greenhouse gas emissions associated with transporting the truck and its crew. With Virtual Truck, operators can be based in a centralized location or work entirely remotely from their homes. This flexibility presents numerous advantages.

For instance, if travel costs are significantly reduced, you can reallocate that budget to hire top-tier talent. Instead of investing 20% of your budget on travel, you could use that same amount to bring in exceptional crew members and technical directors. And by reducing travel time, operators can spend more time working and less time on the road,

boosting productivity and production quality.

Howdy, Partners

Our biggest design challenge was making it simple for users to integrate contribution elements— essentially bringing cameras, comms, and audio from the venue to feed encoders that feed content to the cloud. To address this, we partnered with specialized companies that excel in contribution services, which allows us to seamlessly integrate on-site contribution into Virtual Truck.

Historically, cloud production was focused on installing permanent setups fed from fixed venues. With REMI, all the operators, even if remote, generally must be in one place. Thanks to the on-site contribution model of Virtual Truck, operators can be in one place or work from whatever location works best for the content creator.

Virtual production removes the capital expense of maintaining a physical truck or permanent control
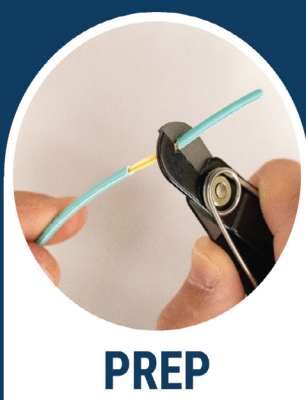
room. Although on-site talent such as camera operators will still need to be present, the entire backend of the production can now be done remotely.

One of the great things about Virtual Truck is that it opens the door to a broad range of partnerships. Companies that already provide contribution encoders, camera packages, and flypacks can all become integral parts of the virtual production ecosystem. This inclusivity is crucial because it allows us to leverage our long-standing relationships with equipment rental companies and production experts. At ASG, we believe strongly in fostering partnerships rather than competing with our clients.

This is a critical part of the ecosystem and is transforming the use of the cloud for live production. Our overall approach is rooted in collaboration. By working together with equipment rental companies and contribution specialists, we're broadening our network and creating more opportunities for all.

Similar Functionalities

For organizations such as large corporations or universities with on-premise venues, virtual production offers a cost-effective solution for streaming or broadcasting. Rather than investing in a permanent control room, it allows companies to scale their production capabilities according to their needs.

Effective monitoring remains a cornerstone of mobile video production, whether in a physical control room or a remote setup. Through ASG's managed services division, we can handle the engineering support, including the engineer-in-charge (EIC) function, as well as the essential infrastructure.

Monitoring can be accomplished in various ways, depending on whether operators are in a physical control room or working remotely. For physical control rooms, the setup remains traditional, with physical controllers and multiviewers. For remote operations, we've adapted by providing virtual multiview solutions that ensure operators have the necessary tools for effective production management. Modern software-based multiviewers replicate the functionality of their hardware counterparts, allowing for consistent monitoring across different environments.

One great advantage of a cloud-based production workflow is that you're no longer driven by talent selection—whether it's the competency of the operator or their equipment preference—because equipment can be changed with the simple push of a button. With a physical truck, switching equipment is more akin to open heart surgery and can be prohibitively expensive.

In fact, virtual production is highly adaptable and can be applied to nearly any type of production, with one notable exception: on-premise image magnification (I-MAG). For events requiring I-MAG, local switching is still preferred to avoid

latency issues that could affect on-premise AV sync with talent. However, for most other productions, the advantages of virtual trucks are compelling.

Like other cloud-based solutions, ASG's Virtual Truck represents a revolutionary shift in mobile production, offering unparalleled flexibility, cost savings, and ecological benefits. As technology continues to advance, virtual production will become an even more attractive option for a wider range of productions. **scn**

Dave Van Hoy is the president of Advanced Systems Group, LLC. Contact him at dvh@asgllc.com.

TECHNOLOGY PRODUCTS

Avocor S Series

Specifically designed for education, the S Seriescombines sophisticated design, advanced touch technology, and a comprehensive suite of software solutions to create an engaging and collaborative learning environment. A key feature of the S Series is advanced touch technology, which enables seamless interaction with digital content. The 4K displays are preloaded with a comprehensive software suite and support wireless sharing and integration with existing classroom technology. Other features include remote management capability and versatile mounting options, which are suitable for the demands of educational settings. Plus, by adding the recently launched Avocor EDLA OPS PC, users can enhance their Google experience with a certified Google EDLA display, enjoying an immersive experience while maintaining energy efficiency.
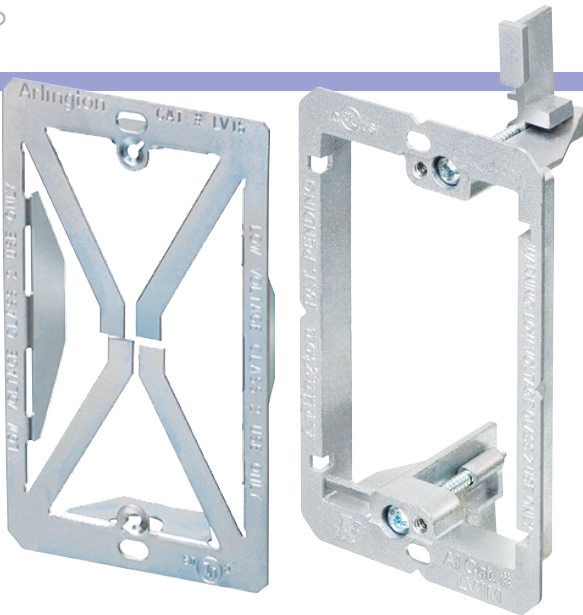
Arlington LV1S/LV1M

Arlington's new low voltage mounting brackets provide fast and easy cut-in installation and mounting of Class 2 communications, computer, and cable TV wiring and connections. With its unique X-shaped bracket design, the LV1S plated steel cut-in mounting bracket provides stable and secure cable installation in an existing wall without an electrical box. The LV1M zinc cut-in mounting bracket offers extra rigidity compared to sheet metal or plastic alternatives. Plus, it features threaded holes for fast installation. Both brackets serve as templates for cut outs and can be installed with a drywall saw and screwdriver.

Alfatron Electronics ALF-UC1 (Gen2)

With the ability to serve as the central point of control for a camera, computer, video display, and audio system, the ALF-UC1 Generation 2 wireless conferencing system can link a computer to the in-room AV system without the need for cables or converters—or having to worry about where the various connection plates are located in the room. The ALF-UC1 (Gen2) features dual-screen HDMI outputs, with Output 1 configured for 4K and Output 2 intended for 1080p displays. Switching between presenters is quick and easy, as the screen can be split for connecting multiple presenters. The ALF-UC1 (Gen2) supports multiple sharing and connection methods, including direct connection, 4K HDMI and USB-C dongles, or wirelessly from any Windows or Mac OS platform via an app. It also supports USB peripheral device sharing over a Wi-Fi connection for additional meeting flexibility.   scn

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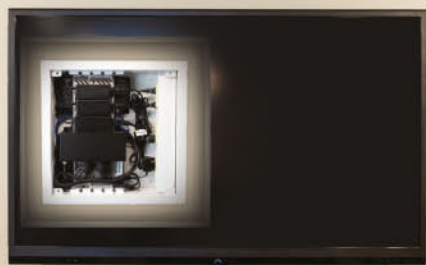
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Managed Services Are a Must

Project-Based Sales Alone Will Not Sustain Pro AV Industry

By Jeff Singer

The AV industry continues to thrive through tumultuous political, social, financial, and technological riptides. However, the seemingly firm ground on which we stand is anything but a solid foundation. We feel the tectonic shifts of our industry often as small tremors and sometimes as transformational sea changes, such as from box sales to system sales or from analog to digital. Now, perhaps we face another pivotal evolutionary moment.

Our industry is a frog in a pot of water warming ever so slowly. We need to face the realities rather than hope everything remains the same. Because it won't. Change is constant and inevitable.

Consolidation and Commoditization

Over the past several years, we have witnessed the consolidation of the integration channel, as large dealers acquire other dealers, big and small. As the sales channel shrinks, the remaining dealers are simultaneously refining their product catalog. Integrators realize that offering several similar product lines is an operational, technical support, and financial nightmare. It's much more efficient and profitable to focus on only a few brands of each product category.

And it's easy for integrators to pare down vendors, because manufacturers often design their products using the same chips—and even outsource their engineering and manufacturing to the same OEMs/ODMs. As a result, there is little or no difference among the many branded devices on the market today (and if there are unique value propositions, marketers struggle to clearly communicate them).

The commoditization of hardware is driving prices down in a race to the bottom. Profit margins on hardware for integrators are decreasing, leaving dealers to make up the difference in labor. Unfortunately, labor hours are dwindling, too.

Sorry for stating the obvious, but technology continuously (and with increased rapidity) evolves and improves. Most manufacturers now realize the market will no longer tolerate complexity. Even companies that built their businesses and reputations on customization are now touting "out-of-the-box functionality," "interoperable ecosystems," and "simple web-based configuration tools."

Replacing Profits

Integrators simply won't be able to make up for lost hardware profits with more installation and programming labor hours. Once the hardware is installed, there's a 60% increased need for technical support, according to ConnectWise. Plus, the same 2022 study showed 70% of institutions look to managed service providers (MSPs) for technical support.

Managed services mitigate reliance on hardware and labor as profit engines. Integrators can maintain robust profitability from existing customers rather than from new projects, which is more stable. Managed services provide consistent engagement with customers, delivering value and building loyalty. Retaining customers is the most efficient path to profitability and consistent cash flow.

Recurring monthly revenue also makes financial planning much more accurate and realistic. Rising operational expenses, including rent, cost of goods, and even interest rates are cutting into shrinking profits. Couple increasing overhead with longer sales cycles (project close rates were down 15% in 2023 from the previous year) and lower revenue per project (also down 5.3% YOY in 2023), and cash flow quickly becomes inconsistent.

Financial planning becomes challenging, if not impossible, when you can't accurately forecast revenue. This has a chilling effect on investments in inventory, headcount, marketing, vans, equipment, showrooms, and more.

According to the NSCA 2023 State of the AV Industry report, 57% of integrators earn less than or equal to 20% project-based profit margins. Financial experts state that gross profit margins below 30% are considered "dangerous" and not sustainable long-term. Meanwhile, the average profit margin for managed services is a healthy 52%.

Explaining Value

Services are the most profitable product integrators have in their portfolio, yet sales teams rarely offer it. Many integrators don't view managed services as a strategic priority and don't structure their businesses or commissions to focus on selling services.

Plus, sales and marketing don't know how to express the value of managed services. Integrators must go beyond a simple break-fix offering or providing "receipts" for a required SLA. Customers want 100% uptime, device and room usage analytics, asset management, immediate response time, budget planning, and warranty and license renewal tracking.

It's not surprising that the attach rate for those who even offer services is an anemic 10%. To thrive in the future, managed services will need to account for about 40% of revenue.

A feature-rich, reliable, and user-friendly software platform is required. It seems almost every hardware manufacturer is promoting their own "single pane of glass" software. In fact, most platforms are aspirational and are not nearly as robust as they claim. Many are difficult to implement. Manufacturers should offer pre-loaded appliances, robust training and certification programs for integrators, and direct technical support (at least to support the integrator on their first installation).

The backend financial operations of most integrators are not structured to support selling managed services. Today, accounting and compensation packages are designed for project-based CapEx transactions. The CapEx financial model does not align with OpEx budgeting or sales. It all becomes an accounting nightmare.

The Right Workforce

Staffing is another challenge. To deliver on the promise of managed services, humans are needed to constantly monitor systems and/or immediately respond to alerts. Expertise in implementing, updating, servicing, and utilizing the managed services software becomes much more important to earning and maintaining customer trust and loyalty.

Highly skilled technicians will always be needed, but maybe not in the same numbers or used in the same ways. Most support calls are Level 1 user errors or an easily remedied issue, such as cycling the power or switching an input. Those corrections can be done automatically and remotely. Level 2 issues, which require some technical experience, can also be handled remotely. Only the limited Level 3 issues require a truck roll and expert technician, allowing your top techs to focus on mostly new installations.

No one likes change—and fundamentally changing a business model that has worked for decades requires bold, courageous leadership. Establishing the need, commitment, patience, and vision within an organization to transition from a pure CapEx model to at least a partial OpEx model is critical for success, and it can be done. **scn**

Jeff Singer is the principal of JKS Marketing.

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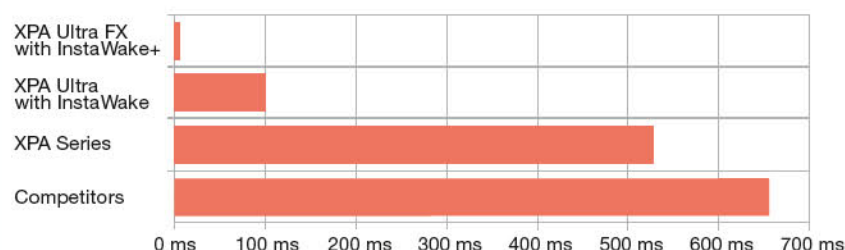
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