



MAKING **AV** A STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE

Essential learnings from QSC end user visits

November 2016

**“ WE ARE MOVING TO A
NEW BUILDING AND WE NEED TO
STANDARDIZE. WE ARE
GROWING SO QUICKLY THAT WE
WON'T BE ABLE TO SUPPORT THE
ORGANIZATION UNLESS WE CREATE
AV STANDARDS. ”**

**– COLLABORATION MANAGER,
HIGH TECH COMPANY**

We recently had the opportunity to interview more than 35 corporate AV professionals about their AV needs, challenges, and opportunities they see ahead of them.

Our research spanned several vertical markets (e.g., energy & utilities, financial services, high tech, government, education), and included many different roles (e.g. IT manager, AV designer, AV manager, Multimedia manager, Collaboration specialist, AV support specialist).

In an effort to better leverage AV technologies, many of the companies we talked to were undergoing or have recently undergone major changes regarding their AV organizations. There was a strong trend among end users to centralize strategic AV decisions while maintaining tactical decisions and execution locally to account for regional needs and differences. Many end users were actively pursuing AV talent to join their internal design, deployment and support teams.

AV/IT convergence has impacted the way global end users purchase AV technology. Influenced by the IT world, AV decision-making processes have embraced prevalent technology trends such as fully networked, cloud-based systems, and remote monitoring and control.

“We have struggled to implement our established technology standards. In the past, AV used to be its own silo; it was isolated and it was much more expensive. Every country was its own island and AV Managers in each building just purchased what they wanted.”

– AV Project Manager, Global Energy and Utilities Company

**“ WE’VE HAD TO STRESS
THE IMPORTANCE OF
STANDARDS BECAUSE IT
STREAMLINES DEPLOYMENTS,
CONTROLS COSTS, MAKES THINGS
EASIER FOR OUR PREFERRED
INTEGRATORS, AND ULTIMATELY
OUR END USERS.”**

**– AV DIRECTOR,
FINANCIAL INSTITUTION**

Consistent User Experiences

One of the top concerns cited by many end users was the need to deliver consistent user experiences and eliminate or control the variables in the traditional models of AV deployment locally or globally.

“All our systems are totally transparent, so attorneys will have the same technology experience regardless of which office they are working in that week. All the user interfaces are the same.”

**– IT Manager, Business
Services Firm**

Many end users discussed the influence of consumer experiences on technology users’ needs in corporate environments.

Additionally, many end users are considering standardization and total cost of ownership as key value drivers when selecting AV technologies. Some end users suggest the biggest impact of convergence has been the newfound ability for AV to move away from customized solutions toward more standardized systems. Establishing AV technology standards is a major strategic initiative for several end users and is cited as an industry best practice. Many of them are defining standard room types based on size, capacity, and usability requirements. These room types are then used as a basis for standard designs that make AV deployments easily repeatable and more efficient. End users report they have been able to deliver considerable ROI with standardization of AV technology, and this has driven buy-in across their organizations. Without exception, the business case leads the investment.

**“ USING DIFFERENT
INTEGRATORS ALL THE TIME
CREATES VARIABLES,
DIFFERENT CREWS DO THINGS
DIFFERENTLY. ”**

**– AV MANAGER,
HIGHER EDUCATION**

What do Mature End Users do?

As we reviewed our findings we concluded that the most successful end users have built in some common capabilities and adopted similar philosophies. We have defined these users as mature AV end users. It's not one single trait but a variety of capabilities and philosophies that make for a mature AV end user. We have seen a wide variety of end user capabilities with regards to AV. Those that are having the most success have adopted the following:

- Presence of strong, global AV leadership with strong executive support, budget, and globally aligned resources.
- Active involvement or in-house capabilities for systems design with a clear vision of customer needs and use of technology.
- Well-developed and documented global AV standards.
- Well-defined internal processes to learn, evaluate, pilot and deploy AV technologies.
- 'Less is more' mentality that minimizes divergent system elements, integration points and variables in the AV system.
- Direct relationships with AV manufacturers of key system elements.
- Shortlist of preferred and experienced integration partners in all key regions.
- Extensive considerations for building lean support.

Where will you go next?

It's clear that there is a wide range of needs and capabilities in the global AV end user community. While the path forward is different from organization to organization; minimizing variables and standardizing is a key trait for companies that wish to provide a high quality, consistent, value-oriented suite of AV technologies to their end users. QSC is committed to help organizations build excellence in their AV technologies and operations, and get the most out their AV investments.