



Audio Visual for Events

**Made Simple**

**Sb**

**S o u n d b o x**  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Getting Started

Page 1

A Meeting / Conference / Gala etc.

Page 2

Site Visits After Choosing a Venue

Page 5

What do you WANT vs. what do you need?

Page 9

Measurements, Rigging, and Cable; OH MY!

Page 16

The Experience is Important, but the Message is too...

Page 18



# GETTING STARTED

Planning an event is no small task, ever, or at any time in the history of events. There are always far more details than you ever considered on even the simplest of events, which makes the AV side a challenge for most planners.

Keeping up to date with current equipment and options is a task that can be overwhelming even for those who work in the AV business. Technology changes every single year with new and exciting visuals to wow your attendees and clients. Working with a competent AV company in the planning stages can go a long way towards getting the right equipment and skills sets necessary for your event to run smoothly and wow your guests.

# A MEETING / CONFERENCE / GALA ETC.

What type of event are you hosting? This is the first single most important question to answer as part of defining what your expectations are as a client.

Is it a meeting, conference, trade show, gala, or awards show? What's the difference? Good question!

## MEETINGS

Meetings are often small to medium sized events and typically require basic AV needs. A small projector and screen perhaps, a microphone and speakers, sometimes the ability to coordinate with someone over a virtual platform (ZOOM, Teams, etc.), and some soft goods to make it look better; ex. drape or small lighting options. 'Clickers' and computers are usually added devices needed to host and show presentations during the meeting.

## CONFERENCE/TRADE SHOW

These types of events usually have lots of moving parts. They are often multiple rooms and require quite a bit more organization than a meeting. Similar equipment to a meeting is used, but usually much more of it spread out over a larger area. Multiple screens and projectors, larger audio systems, lots of ambient lighting or projections. Power requirements for a trade show are usually substantial depending on the number of presenters and booths. A good question to ask a venue is if there are separate charges for power consumption, power tie in's (connection), and internet lines.



# A MEETING / CONFERENCE / GALA ETC.

## GALA, AWARDS SHOW, OR DINNER BANQUET

A gala or banquet is a classier event. The décor, lighting, feel of the event is 'high class'. This usually requires a lot of lighting (moving and non-moving), custom branded projections, televisions, and many other visual features on top of the usual audio requirements. Custom videos, banners, signs, and other elements are often considered as well. The 'run of show' is incredibly important for AV operators if there are particular cues for video or audio elements and sometimes communication between the crew requires a Com network or 2-way radio setup. Think of this type of event as having similar requirements to a Broadway show or sporting event with lots of visual aids and advertising. Coordination is highly important.



# A MEETING / CONFERENCE / GALA ETC.

## HYBRID EVENTS

A new type of event that can be any one of the above events, but with the added bonus of being streamed to a web platform (YouTube, Facebook, Phfeedloop) and also potentially have presenters or Q&A periods that are hosted online.

For example, an awards show that has the presenters/recipients virtually involved in presenting/accepting an award entirely online, with a portion of the audience or presenters/recipients in person, with virtual attendees online.

In a post 2020 world this type of event has become the standard as the benefits far outweigh the cons of utilizing streaming technology. Your attendance goes up, your message is well received by the entire audience, and analytics are readily available regarding the participation of your online views.

As an added bonus, often the events can be easily recorded for posterity or use in post event advertising.





# SITE VISITS AFTER CHOOSING A VENUE

What do I look for?

We always recommend doing a site visit WITH an AV specialist to discuss and find all the necessary information they'll need when designing your AV needs. We don't expect our customers to know and recognize what these important details so if possible its worth seeing the venue with your AV specialist.

If that isn't possible here are a few things to watch for and make note of:

## POWER

- o Wall plugs only?
- o Breaker tie in? (multi coloured connections on the bottom of the electrical box)
- o Type of service (single phase, three phase )
- o Number of circuits in the room(s)?

\*\*If you aren't sure it's worth asking the venue exactly what they have. They will always have someone on staff who is able to answer this question.\*\*

On average, a small AV setup will require at least 2 circuits of power. This means, two wall plugs that are not connected on the same breaker/fuse. Larger AV setups will require either more circuits or tie-in for a power distribution.

# SITE VISITS AFTER CHOOSING A VENUE

## POTENTIAL OBSTRUCTIONS OR HAZARDS

- o Beams
- o Awkward walls
- o High stages or stairs
- o Light fixtures
- o Entrances and Exits
  - o Standard size? (important for mechanical lifts if needed)

## LOADING DOCK OR CLOSEST LOADING ENTRANCE?

- o Is there security we need to check in with?
- o What's the earliest time we can load in?
- o Elevators?
  - o Passenger or shipping style?

## RIGGING POINTS

These are secure points that AV equipment can be hung from. Sometimes they will have chain fall motors already installed in the ceiling (ask the venue tech/coordinator), permanent rigging points, or "I Beams" in the ceiling that heavy objects can be hung from.

If your event includes a video wall or heavy truss, this information is crucial for the AV designer.

## CEILING HEIGHT

- o Would we need a power lift for install?



# SITE VISITS AFTER CHOOSING A VENUE

What if I'm using 'in-house' AV?

Every venue is different, and some are older than others. If you're using in-house services like their installed projectors, audio system, or television monitors then you're going to want to look and find their connection points to AV system.

## PROJECTOR

- o What type of video input does it have? (Ex. VGA, HDMI, SDI)
- o Where are the patch points? (wall plate?)

## AUDIO

- o Speaker position? (will it cover my audience?)
- o Is there an audio console/mixer?
- o Where are the patch points? (wall plate?)
- o What type of connections? (XLR, RCA, etc.?)

## POWER

- o What power is available? (wall plug, stove plug, tie-in)
- o Number of available circuits?
- o Will cables be laid across walkways or paths?

## LOAD-IN/LOAD OUT

- o Is there a loading dock?
- o Security issues?
- o Stairs?
- o Elevators? (size, cargo, passenger, etc.)

## SITE VISITS AFTER CHOOSING A VENUE

Another consideration is that many venues with in-house services have their own AV tech. Sometimes they're fantastic, and other times ... less so. Either way it's best to contact them and discuss your needs. They'll usually know the answers to the majority of the above questions and, on occasion, if some of their equipment is difficult or inoperative. They'll also likely know access points, have keys to lockers and other rooms you might need access to, and know procedures and protocols. Get their phone number in case anything goes wrong or other arrangements with security or logistics go sideways. Sometimes they can be the solution to those last-minute issues.





# WHAT DO YOU NEED VS. WOULD DO YOU WANT?

Deciding what you NEED versus what you WANT is hard for most people, but crucial when it comes to AV. Your budget (AH! He said that word!) will usually dictate what your limitations are. An element that is very labour intensive and requiring a lot of setup time is going to limit how far your budget can go. If you're trying to decide between a large LED wall on stage compared to a couple of projectors and fast fold screens, and your budget is already running out, then the decision has really been made for you.

What elements do you NEED?



# WHAT DO YOU NEED VS. WOULD DO YOU WANT?

## AUDIO

If you have speeches, music, a band, then you must have an audio component. How much of the budget to allocate just for the audio will depend on the size of the room and the production involved. If it's a meeting, with a handful of participants, then it likely won't be very much.

If, however, you have a large corporate party band, a large stage, and 500 people attending then likely audio will be a large part of the budget. Rarely is there too much audio on an event, but often there is too little because of cost saving decisions. Always allocate the proper budget for audio elements or you'll find most of your 500 guests won't be able to hear the speech or presentation.

Trust the advice of your audio technician. If they are recommending you use a headset mic instead of a LAV (lapel) mic, or placing the speakers in another spot than what you imagined, there is probably a good reason.



# WHAT DO YOU NEED VS. WOULD DO YOU WANT?

## VIDEO

Video, like audio, can make or break a big presentation. If your guest speakers or the president of the company is playing a video to demonstrate their point or message, then video elements become the crucial point of the evening. With easy-to-use equipment and proper technicians, proper timing can make a world of difference when coordinating and effectively deploying video.

The main things to consider are sight lines and coverage. *Can my guests see the screen from anywhere?* If not, you may need to add a few more tv monitors or projector screens. Do you NEED an LED wall? They look great, but for the average corporate event they're far too costly. An outdoor event, or if you have a need for a very large screen, may make an LED wall more practical, especially for considerations of weather. It's best to consult a specialist to figure out what your best options are for the space you're in.



# WHAT DO YOU NEED VS. WOULD DO YOU WANT?

## LIGHTING

Lighting is a tricky one. Knowing what lighting is necessary versus ambient or mood lighting can be a whole discussion in and of itself. Some people will consider the ambient lighting to be the most important aspect of an event, depending on the type of event it is. Likely for a business conference the lighting you'll need is simple and only to light up a stage or presenter, but for a reveal or marketing event you may want to highlight a product and/or create a luxurious atmosphere. For a gala or awards show you'll likely want a bit of both. A little of the necessary lighting, but also a little pizzazz to make guests feel they're attending something special!

With lighting design the decisions really begin and end with:

- o What lighting do I NEED, or can't do without?
- o What feeling do I want my event to have?
- o What would I like to have?

If you can answer these questions then you'll have everything you need to create the perfect lighting design for your event.



# WHAT DO YOU NEED VS. WOULD DO YOU WANT?

## Fixture -

A light. Plain and simple.

## Pin Light -

These lights are often very small with a really small ('pin sized') focus. They're used for lighting up an area or product in an area no more than a couple of feet or smaller.

## Spots / Pars -

Small to medium size spotlights that are typically used for drawing attention to something or adding a streak colour. Pars are used typically for up-lighting on walls and curtains or add light to a smaller area.

## Wash -

A wash is used to 'wash' colour over a larger area. If you want to light up a whole back wall or a stage with colour then wash lights are used.



# WHAT DO YOU NEED VS. WOULD DO YOU WANT?

## Leko -

These are the Swiss Army Knife's of the lighting world. They're used as spot lights, wash lights, or general lighting for just about anything. They have different interchangeable lenses and each lens has a difference degree of focus (spot light all the way to wash light focus). They can provide a variety of colours or even shapes of light. Which brings us to...

## GOBO -

In short, a gobo can create an image in the light on something. If you want to project your company logo onto a wall then a gobo is a disk that's cut with the shape of your logo into it and then placed into a leko or other light. Think of your old slide show projectors growing up and you know exactly what a gobo is.

## Mover -

These lights can be a spot type of light, a wash, a bar of lights, but they also MOVE in some way. They are quite a bit more expensive but are far more capable fixtures. If you've ever been to a concert, then you have seen moving lights in action.



# WHAT DO YOU NEED VS. WOULD DO YOU WANT?

## PIPE AND DRAPE / CURTAINS

Drape or Curtains are often used for hiding areas of an event space or creating 'walls' around a space. Let's say there's a big wall behind your stage where you want to hang an LED or projector screen for presentations and it's very unsightly or just not what you'd like to see as your background. Pipe and drape are a temporary curtain made of velour or other materials and can be often extended almost to ceiling height. They're an easy and temporary solution for finishing the look of your event to create a polished atmosphere.

It can also be used to create green rooms or change rooms, hide equipment or a front-of-house tech space, or even create a 'maze' leading into an event to keep things private from on-lookers outside. They're a very versatile solution for many visual hindrances at your event.



# MEASUREMENTS, RIGGING, AND CABLE; OH MY!

Do **NOT** get overwhelmed trying to figure out these elements. There are a lot of things to know about cabling (wires we use to communicate with elements or connect them to us) and rigging (the tools and parts used to secure AV elements to something sturdy); and you will never need to know them all. That's what we're here for. All you need to decide on is what AV elements you want included in your event and we'll figure out how to hang it and how to connect them.

What you can do is measure the room for us. ...

- o How wide and long is the room?
- o How tall?
  - o Can we use ladders, or do we need a mechanical lift to access areas?
- o Does the venue have a lift we can use or staff that are licensed to use the lift for us?
- o Does the cable need to go around the room or into hallways?
- o How far do you think cable needs to travel?
  - o How far away are the power sources?
- o Are there any permanent elements like seating or stairs risers?



# MEASUREMENTS, RIGGING, AND CABLE; OH MY!

If you can take pictures of the space so we can see the magnitude of what we're working with, the ceiling, the floor, the wall spaces and doors, that would be excellent. Pictures go a long way towards filling in the mental gaps.

This is all in lieu of a site visit with your AV specialist, of course. It's always best to request a site visit with your AV specialist in tow to help ask the questions you might not think about and get a hands-on feel for your event in that space. They can anticipate the problems you'd never think about and have them solved before you need to ask how. But, if that's not possible, at least you have this list of considerations to take with you as a guide.



## THE EXPERIENCE IS IMPORTANT, BUT THE MESSAGE IS TOO...

Remember, when deciding what elements you want in your event, the attendee experience is always an important factor. A successful event is a memorable and engaging one with elements that both impress and facilitate a welcoming environment.

'So the EXPERIENCE is most important?' ... kinda...

If you're trying to make a brand recognizable, do you care if they remember the lighting or if they remember the product and message?

The 'experience' must convey 'your message' to attendees, whatever that message is. Maybe it's the brand colours, the logo, a catch phrase, or a brand motto. Whatever it is needs to be associated with your event and be the most memorable part of it. You want your guests knowing when they walk in that the event is built around *your* brand and that they feel comfortable in it.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

Audio Visual planning really starts right from the beginning stages. Before you commit to too much, make sure you involve your AV specialist right from the get go so you can avoid any last minute issues or mishaps.

Event planning is tough, so try not to make it harder on yourself by doing everything. Tell us your wishlist and we can help you make it happen.