

Stock in Trade

ALL-DIGITAL SIGNAL PATH HELPS ENSURE LONG-TERM RELIABILITY FOR GLOBAL FOREX TRADING IN GRAND RAPIDS

GRAND RAPIDS, MI—"We had three directives in creating these AV systems: They had to be high-definition, 100-percent bulletproof, and they had to be easy to use." That's how Kirk Griffes, systems engineer and programmer for Bluewater Technologies, describes the AV systems at the new headquarters of Global Forex Trading (GFT) in Grand Rapids, MI.

GFT is a currency trading or "foreign exchange" (forex) provider. Unlike trading in stocks and bonds, there are no central exchanges for currency. GFT facilitates direct client-to-client trades through its DealBook online trading platform. With the pressure and stress of operating in a business like this, GFT staff need to know that their AV systems will work the first time and every time.

"We built these systems for anyone in the company to use," said Eric Johns, IT facilities coordinator for GFT. "We have a wide variety of technical abilities, and we don't want a meeting with a high-value client to crash because the person leading it is not a computer genius."

The finished GFT headquarters includes 20 conference rooms and offices with AV systems, including an executive conference center, a training center, sales and marketing conference centers, and employee break rooms.



Users can control the videoconferencing system with a 5.7-inch Crestron wireless touchpanel, or they can switch to any of seven additional sources.

Because of the client's requirements, Griffes decided to design an all-digital signal path, using HDMI cables in the smaller conference rooms and offices and Crestron DigitalMedia for the larger and more complex systems. DigitalMedia keeps the audio and video signals in the HDMI format, but transports them over super-high-bandwidth ethernet cable, allowing for longer transmission distances and faster, more reliable installation and setup. BlueWater was one of the first AV integrators to use this new technology, and it offered major benefits to GFT. By using an all-digital signal path, Griffes ensured that GFT would be ready for new digital devices (as well as older analog systems).

As its name implies, Global Forex Trading has a worldwide customer base, and they are heavy users of videoconferencing systems. BlueWater installed the latest high-definition Tandberg systems in four conference rooms and offices. They also supplied four cart-mounted systems that can add HD videoconferencing on the fly to smaller conference rooms or even offices with or without additional AV equipment.

For the GFT boardroom, BlueWater installed a 65-inch LCD monitor at each end of the conference table, each with a Tandberg pan-tilt-zoom camera mounted below it. Users can control the videoconferencing system with a 5.7-inch Crestron wireless touchpanel, or they can switch to any of seven additional sources, showing the same or separate sources on each monitor. These sources include two built-in PCs, a laptop input, two Blu-ray players, and two HD satellite TV receivers. BlueWater also installed an 8-channel wireless microphone system and a sound system with digital signal processor and ceiling speakers for audio conferencing and sound reinforcement.

Griffes said he spent a great deal of time with Johns in designing a control system that would work intuitively. "Controlling a videoconferencing system is always complicated, but we wanted to create a series of screens that would make the process simple for novice users," Griffes explained.

more online

See an extended version of this story at systemscontractor.com/apr11.

SLS
AUDIO

✓ NO SIMULATION ✓ NO EMULATION

JUST INNOVATION

SEE ALL THE SLS AUDIO PLANAR EQUIPPED LOUDSPEAKERS
SLS AUDIO OZARK, MO 417 883 4549

WWW.SLSAUDIO.COM