Three Strategies for Dramatically Reducing AV Support Calls

Studies show that at least 20% of all classes suffer some sort of a delay due to technology issues. This is an unending nightmare for the IT and AV professionals that support these learning spaces, since it's typically the IT team that shoulders the blame for an important meeting that's gone bad.

But there's good news. With the right systems and software, a support organization can easily and quickly transition from solving crises to serving as a key organizational asset.

Provide a simple, intuitive User Interface

The most effective way to minimize AV support calls is to simplify the room's user interface to the point where even Grandma could operate the equipment. This is easier said than done, especially now that modern conference rooms include such complex capabilities as video conferencing, several audio and video sources, and multiple displays. Some tips include:

An intuitively-designed touch panel is the key to effective room control

- Install state-of-the art touch panels to control the room. These should be easy to customize, intuitive in design and attractive to the eye.
- Standardize. As much as possible, make the user experience consistent from room to room.
- Make sure your touch panel supports macros that can combine several actions into a single push of a button. For example, you could include a button for "Weekly Staff Video Conference" that turns on the conferencing system, adjusts the lighting and camera, and dials the number automatically.

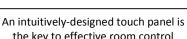**Deploy reliable room automation equipment**

Even the most intuitive user interface is meaningless if the equipment that manages the audio and video behind the scenes is unreliable. If a switcher, controller, mixer, scaler, amplifier or other equipment fails, the meeting is over. Ways to improve reliability include:

- Wherever possible, install integrated products like all-in-one Presentation Switchers to reduce cabling, save rack space and minimize the number of disparate boxes that make up the solution. Reduce points of failure.
- Use architectural connectivity solutions to easily connect devices to the system. These products provide easy ways to connect HDMI, USB, VGA and other inputs directly from the meeting table.
- Minimize custom programming that can add complexity to the overall system design. Use a software configuration tool to set up your system.

Architectural connectivity solutions provide an easy way to connect laptops and other devices to the system

Remotely manage, maintain & troubleshoot

It's next to impossible to support multiple classroom buildings across multiple campuses without having a way to remotely manage and maintain the AV assets. Many technicians spend their days scrambling from room to room, fighting an endless series of fires that have users on edge. With centralized management, AV technicians can spend more time improving performance and less time in crisis mode. Some tips include:

- Use Enterprise software that allows for the remote troubleshooting, maintenance and management of your AV assets. This is one of the most effective ways to minimize support calls.
- Use software that allows for centralized scheduling of space so users can easily book rooms and technicians can schedule support windows.
- Deploy a system that allows for remote shutdowns and standby power modes. This is an excellent way to significantly reduce energy costs.

The best way to derive the most value from your conference rooms is to make them reliable, easy to use and easy to support.

TAKE ACTION

This Industry Brief is an excerpt from the AMX White Paper "When Industries Collide: What is AV/IT Convergence – And what it means for you." You will find this White Paper and many other industry materials at www.amxcampus.com/whitepapers

You can always **CONTACT A SOLUTIONS ADVISOR**, who will be glad to guide you through the process of identifying, specifying and purchasing your ideal conference room or classroom AV solution. The "Contact an Advisor" link is on the www.amxcampus.com home page. Options to connect include chat, phone and email.