

### Pre-Sales Phase

- Most important Phase of the project.
- Use the time to get to know your customer, and the customer to know you.
- Detail out everything you can, not everything you should.
- Aim and providing a workable solution and not the best one.
- Client has no appreciation for science, he needs it to work
- The person designing the system and the user may be completely different people.
- Give the features they need not what is important.



# DESIGNING THE PROCESS TO DELIVER EXCELLENT AV PROJECTS

*By Rhythm Arora, Chief Technical Officer, Qubix Technologies*

*AV integration is a crucial part of offering cutting-edge technologies to the users. Blending the high-end AV, lighting, and pro audio solutions, systems integrators play a vital role in creating a true spectacle at the sites, delivering AV excellence in the Indian market. From the AV-ICN Expo Conference and Seminar this year, Magazine team brings another excerpt from the session by **RHYTHM ARORA**, CTO, Qubix Technologies, discussing the important stages in a project, why to build excellence, and how to tackle the challenges while deploying an entire AV project.*

#### Phase I – Establishing the Project

Rhythm starts the session by sharing some of his experiences from the past, explaining how it's important to keep customer expectations in mind, achieve a well delivered project, and most essentially understand the pre-sales service. He states, "Pre-sales is the time when we get to know our customers and their requirements. We start interacting with them and chalk out everything that's required because this is the only phase where we can convince the customers. Integrators should focus on what has always worked as that brings the confidence to convince the client as well. We can try giving clients something which is ahead of our times but at the end it should be a workable solution, meeting the schedule requirements."

Rhythm further elaborates, "Another thing is to really control what we present to the clients. For instance, when someone comes to see a show, there are so many features working out at the same time, but what's crucial to the clients, are the extravagant features that we can offer. As integrators or consultants, it's our responsibility as professionals to gauge which features they require. This is all a part of the pre-sales process to control what the clients' demand and shoot down things that might not work 100% at the time of deployment. I am not saying that high-tech projects should be avoided completely but such projects should be on the proven edge of the technology."

## Phase II – Affirming with the Documentation and Detailing

Once the project is awarded and the company has received the confirmation to manage the project, how should the team move forward with it? Rhythm explains, "It's time to spell out all the expectations because generally, once the PO is printed, even the clients won't be able to work things out in terms of payment, retention, billing format, documentation, insurance, etc. Moreover, for under construction sites, it's important to discuss the storage space because integrations in offices may have the storage space required by systems integrators. However, under construction buildings might require the company to have their own storage, which costs a lot. In fact, many PMC's have started deducting power, electricity, water, or even housekeeping charges from the final bill. Therefore, by the end of the project, there's around 2-3% deduction."

Rhythm continues, "Another essential situation nowadays, is that OEMs have started giving warranty of 5 years, so the clients expect this from the integrators as well. Therefore, the entire process needs to be communicated really well to the clients that OEMs work on OEM warranties, but integrators offer DLP, that is Defect Liability Period, which could be six months to a year in practice."

While talking about the entire integration process, it is necessary to understand the small details that go behind documentation and timelines. Moving forward with this discussion, Rhythm explained, "It's necessary for an integrator to be aware of the teams involved in signing the bills, drawings, and the delivery. Furthermore, it's important to keep a note of the estimated dates for project completion." He adds, "From the contract stage, we move onto the kick-off meeting stage where we meet a new set of professionals like stakeholders on site who verify everything. During this verification and standardisation process, it's necessary to take maximum number of people from the team to understand everything that will happen on ground. Every small project for a customer is very important and as integrators, it is important to make them understand that we care."

## Phase III- Planning the Entire Deployment

With various phases of processing and

execution, next on the list is planning where a systems integrator must undergo detailed analysis of the entire project. Adding to the list of priorities, Rhythm further informs the audience, "We must distribute very realistic responsibilities amongst the team including passive pre-wiring and active pre-wiring. Let the customer complete all the wirings, get the partitions ready, finish the furniture, do the brackets mounting, etc. Once the site is near dust-free, we start installing the actives and prepare a real delivery schedule with actual delivery times (that are kept confidential to the team only). Further, at this stage, integrators can schedule external teams necessary for the tasks like programmers, consultants, manpower vendors, or even fabricators, keeping a track of the timelines." He adds, "Another important thing is not to ship while the site is in construction as if it's shipped and they are not ready to receive it, there won't be any space to keep the material. Also, handover date is not so important because the client's target is always incorrect. Out of the 100 projects I have done, for instance, 99 projects' dates were at least 15-20 days prior."

## Phase IV – Billing Phase

While we move to the billing phase, it's important to sort everything beforehand as once the billing is completed, it's not easy to cancel a bill after it has been generated. Furthermore, everything needs to be documented and verified before submissions. Comprehending the tasks, Rhythm says, "Whether it's a small shipment or a large one, maintaining the invoices is really essential. I would always suggest billing separate services in separate invoices."

## Phase V – Working Out the Integration

To make the audience understand the technical aspects of leading the AV projects, Rhythm comments, "I would say the geometry of any installation is very important. It has to be absolutely straight level considering the height spacing. In fact, IP addresses, passwords, and everything should be written down in this phase to avoid any lack of installations later."

## Phase VI – Handing Over the Project

Rhythm continues to mesmerise the audience with the detailing that goes behind

integrating an entire site with AV solutions. After the integration phase, Rhythm emphasises on the handover phase stating, "The handover phase means providing the completely integrated room to the client. It includes testing, cleaning, cable dressing, and removal of all packaging. There will always be 80-90% easy areas in a project and 10-20% complex areas, so at least the convenient portions can be finished first and handed over to the client, compiling everything into a master."

## Phase VII – After Sales Services

Moving forward, Rhythm also analyses the need for after sales services in AV industry, stating, "If it's a complex project, it will need a lot of handholding and support by the teams. Users may need some workflow changes, or they may need some volume controller. Therefore, some visits or escalations may be needed in later stages. Moreover, there is always a high possibility of facing some issues that the teams might never have anticipated. To crosscheck all those, it's essential to go around and double check everything on site." He adds, "The handover process usually passes down from internal technical team to sales team and from sales team to quality assurance team. In India, there are no particular quality assurance specialists and therefore, the owners of the company need to perform as the specialists and check everything at the site."

## Conclusion

Integrators work closely with the vendors, technicians, architects, MEP teams, and more to build excellence in terms of integrating AV solutions. Rhythm concludes, "I always say that we want to build excellence because active profits coming from the companies can never make us rich; it can only be possible if we build a brand around it. In fact, when we do plenty of projects, there may be a lot of disappointments, and a lot of projects might have so many hurdles. The scope is absolutely not defined at times and there are things which are very inevitable especially when integrating an audio project."

To view the entire conference, visit the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXDAYhyDsaw&t=1896s>