

R&M Consulting Update

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SOUND & VIDEO SYSTEMS DESIGN

SERVING NORTHERN ILLINOIS, INDIANA AND SOUTHERN WISCONSIN

SERVICE TO YOUR SOUND SYSTEM Developing a regular schedule of maintenance

Regular service to your sound system is like changing the oil in your car – it's vital to keep it functioning well and prolong its life! The investment in your church or educational facility's sound system may be one of your greatest expenses initially, but did you know it is also one of your greatest assets?

Part of what makes our business stand out in our industry and community is the importance we place on *servicing the systems and equipment we install*, in order that they will last and provide for your needs faithfully for many years after the original installation. This is the reason that you will receive periodic e-mails or calls from R&M Consulting, offering proactive service and maintenance to your electronic systems.

Sometimes folks fail to understand and appreciate our diligence and our attempts to keep in touch, and tell us "everything is going just fine". Fast forward several months and we get a call from the very same "just fine" client that there have been serious sound system issues which had been previously ignored and have now caused major problems and complete system failures. When this happens, even more monies have to be spent just to straighten out the problems often on very short notice.

"With good service, we are seeing sound systems that were installed 30 years ago faithfully still providing quality service to our clients."

Russel O'Toole

On the other hand, many of our clients, rather than replace the entire sound system, have allowed us to upgrade and update their systems over time, saving them money and extending the life of their installations. And, by working with the same system designer and installer who has the as-built documentation for your installation, it saves your church or school monies in the long run.

Recently, a church out of our immediate area called us with an urgent service request between Good Friday and Easter Sunday this year. We had not serviced their system for six years! After an in depth inspection at this church, we found that improper wiring connections fed phantom



Fig 1: A properly wired equipment cabinet allows for easier service & operation.

power back into their keyboard damaging a \$500+ instrument. Modified Radio-Shack microphones had shorted out causing hum in the sound system. Loose microphone capsules on the wireless microphone systems were causing audio drop outs during the preaching services. Lastly, we discovered an improperly wired AC power receptacle that placed 80 volts on the chassis of the keyboard. Touching the keyboard and a microphone could have had fatal results!

With major holidays behind us for a few months, this summer would be ideal for *planned service and improvements* to your church or school's sound system. In addition, with the summer's thunderstorm season approaching, now is a good time to have us evaluate how well your audio/video/computer systems are protected against *lightning or power surges*, excessive over or under voltages for a fail-safe system so that when the power has been interrupted, the system will not try to come back on until you decide it is safe to do so!

We have the proper testing equipment platforms to quickly analyze and resolve your needs in a very professional manner. Why not contact us and schedule a service call to have us evaluate your church/school's sound system and get everything ready for your fall and winter programs.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ANSWERED BY EXPERIENCE

Q: *What is involved in a site evaluation?*

RLO: The goal of a site evaluation is to get to know you and your system! During an evaluation, we come onsite to check out the system, look for documentation, age and condition of all equipment, and sit down with those who use the system to discuss present and future needs and goals.

Q: *In this current economy, we just don't have the money for upgrades at this time. How can we afford needed upgrades and does all the work have to be completed at the same time?*

RLO: First of all, we determine just what is really needed and then prioritize those needs, spreading those needs across time as your finances allow. Once an overall design has been decided, the system can be costed out and budgeted over time for the complete installation.

Q: *We have a volunteer that has a little experience with sound equipment and will not charge us to work on the sound system. Why can't we just use him?*

RLO: You can always do this, but will it be in the long term interests of your church to have someone with little or no training to further complicate your sound system issues? We have many years of training, experience and the tools to quickly and cost effectively diagnose and resolve your sound system issues.

Q: *You recommended a product and I went up on the internet and found it cheaper. Shouldn't I save my organization money and buy it from the cheapest supplier?*

RLO: How much follow up can you expect from your internet supplier? Will he come to your house of worship to install, connect, and properly program that equipment for you? What about service after the sale? Are these things important to you and the success of your church services?

Q: *We are thinking about replacing or upgrading our sound system and are required to go out for bids. How do we pick our winning contractor? Shouldn't we save money and just go with the cheapest bid?*

RLO: Of course, however, in order to go out for competitive bids, one needs a properly thought out system design *clearly* specifying the design, the quality level of equipment, and how that system is to be installed. A consultant like R&M Consulting will be able to handle this for you, much like a general contractor when you are building a house. It can be done by you, but be prepared to answer a LOT of questions! Also, having a consultant to "commission" the system for you, will assure you that all has been completed according to the bid, and proper documentation on the system has been provided.



Russel L. O'Toole, Princ. Consultant

Q: *How can I assure adequate sound coverage and clarity of the music & spoken word throughout our space?*

RLO: You must consider the type of sound system desired, room acoustics, noise levels, and determine the best manufacturer and type of loudspeaker including placement for those loudspeakers. This requires considerable field experience and the use of sound system loudspeaker and room modeling systems.

Q: *We want to add media to our church services using video, projector screens, ipads, etc. Where do we begin?*

RLO: A good consultant can provide you with proper system designs and recommendations, but only after clearly understanding your needs, expectations and budget. If this is something you are interested in, call us to discuss further.

Q: *We have a great sound system but no one knows how to run it. Do you provide onsite training?*

RLO: We do provide onsite training. First we need to know about your installation, and you need to have the actual as-built drawings for your installation. We can custom tailor a training session to address your church's specific needs.

Q: *Why does it cost so much to propose something like a speaker?*

RLO: There are many issues to be considered to make a proper speaker selection. For example, how big is the space it will be used in? How far does the speaker have to project into your space? Will it be used for voice only or a combination of voice and music? Will you be doing traditional style worship or "knock'em dead high level contemporary services", and what kind of a budget do you have? We help you answer these questions and design a speaker installation to meet your needs.

Q: *What does a typical service call cost?*

RLO: Each project is unique with many variables that determine the price of a service call. We must consider travel time, time onsite for consultation and taking pictures, as well as making measurements with test equipment to be analyzed back in our office. Time is also needed to engineer & design the best and most affordable solutions. After a brief discussion and request for service, we provide an estimate for the service call and provide reports afterwards for improvements where needed.

Q: *How long has R&M Consulting been in business?*

RLO: We began as in 1972 as Audio Electronics to provide quality sound systems to House of Worship and Educational markets. After selling the business to a larger sound/video integrator in 1999, I took a brief sabbatical to work with a leading consulting firm out of Dallas, TX. Upon returning to Romeoville in 2004, R&M Consulting was restarted where Audio Electronics left off to address the needs of the church market.

Give R&M Consulting a call at 815-372-1990 for answers to all of your sound system questions!