Maximum Flexibility, Speed, And Security Are Key Considerations for Mission Critical Clients

Background
Shen Milsom & Wilke LLC is a global acoustics, audiovisual, information technology, physical security, and medical equipment consulting firm that neither sells equipment nor bases fees on the amount of equipment specified. SM&W provides clients with innovative technology designs and converged disciplinary services with a single point of responsibility. SM&W’s audiovisual design consultants engineer creative solutions and deliver specification guidance across all market verticals. Some of SM&W’s clients include Deloitte, National Public Radio, Smithsonian Institute, and local and federal government agencies.

Problem
Ron Willis, a Senior Associate at SM&W, describes the complex set of demanding challenges some of his Mission Critical Environments clients face:

- Exacting environments require enterprise-grade multimedia solutions that include advanced reporting, reliability, and security restrictions as stringent as client’s IT networks.
- These types of organizations have requirements to remotely support and maintain AV technology that matches the management of their IT infrastructure.
- Clients are pressed to deploy the most technologically advanced collaboration solutions in order to attract new talent and maximize productivity.
- While these clients want innovative and creative solutions, the technology must still be easy to manage and deliver a positive end-user experience.
- The mandate is to provide solutions that work today and are able to integrate with new technologies for the next three to seven years, thus products must run platforms that allow an enterprise to expand.

Solution
With all the control options available, Willis considers Utelogy a good match for clients who have extremely technical needs and a desire for world-class security. For example, SM&W recently recommended Utelogy for a project which had many secure zones and multipurpose production rooms. The customer wanted the flexibility of an IP-based platform, the versatility to use a non-proprietary control interface, and a solution that addressed their stringent security requirements.
In addition, the client needed the flexibility to expand the solution to include the full control of several hundred rooms plus the analytics and power to manage all spaces from a centralized location. Like many of SM&W’s clients, reliance on analytics is expected to grow, so Willis made sure that future planning for the facility was also a key consideration. After an extensive needs assessment with the customer and careful evaluation of the available solutions, SM&W recommended Utelogy for this complex project.

Remote Management Capabilities

One of the benefits of using a platform like Utelogy is the remote management capabilities. In this case, the ability to provide incremental remote monitoring and management as the project was being deployed was very beneficial as it meant fewer resources needed to be deployed to site and it allowed the team to bring the project online in less time.

The Utelogy platform is recognized in the industry for its asset tracking and the ability to monitor devices and room usage. This type of functionality helps organizations with their digital transformation plans because room drawings and design documentation are uploaded and retrievable online. The platform allows clients to facilitate preventive maintenance tasks such as firmware revisions and respond to device alerts to reduce downtime, thus reducing Total Cost of Ownership.

Utelogy’s unique monitoring capabilities also helps with future resource planning. The organization has access to real-time analytics to understand utilization metrics for both real estate and technology future planning. On-going resource planning and data-enabled decision-making are key requirements for many of SM&W’s clients, not just for those with mission critical environments.

Easy Expansion

First, Willis says, “I look for a stable product upon which my clients can use to expand the enterprise’s build-out. It’s no longer a single room design. Utelogy offers a baseline platform that can easily be expanded for growth,” he added. The simplicity and lack of hardware dependencies are also a benefit. “All you do is add a room license to the site and you’re good to go. It’s software.” Thus, the tool expands efficiently as the organization grows.

Creativity and Flexibility

“Flexibility is very important because it allows a full re-thinking of design whenever necessary to fulfill the organization’s mission,” says Willis. IT departments want to manage AV like they do IT, with a simple dashboard that is accessible and flexible and matches what they are already using for data network monitoring. “Our clients are looking for solutions that do not limit their creative thinking, innovation, or problem-solving,” added Willis.

The Speed of Software

Hardware-based control solutions typically require on-going modifications when new components are added, which can hinder deployment speed and flexibility. Unlike pure-software solutions, costs can be prohibitive when additional customized programming is required for each new piece of hardware. With software-based solutions like Utelogy, deployment and expansion are very fast because it’s much easier to configure new devices.

Positive Feedback

As proof of the power of SM&W’s design solutions, Willis was traveling through an airport and found himself in a conversation with two key end-users of a project for which he specified Utelogy. When talking with the clients, they raved about the solution and how it operated their video walls, war rooms, and Team rooms seamlessly. “An unsolicited endorsement of the system that you designed and deployed that everybody uses and is pleased with it...That’s very satisfying to the technology design consultant,” Willis added.