
THORBURN ASSOCIATES INC.
Acoustic and Technology Consultants
Designing Quality Environments
ENewsletter

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In this issue:

- Greetings and Upcoming Industry Events
 - Focus on Acoustics: Acoustically Integrated aRchitecture (AIR)
 - Focus on Technology: How to Issue an RFP/RFQ
 - Project Highlight: City of Raleigh Wastewater Treatment Training Centers
 - Product Review: The Immersive Audio Experience at InfoComm
-

The Results are In!

Welcome to the August 2008 eNewsletter.

This November, the White House won't be the only place with a new president taking office. As confirmed by the TEA International Board last month, Steve Thorburn is now the president-elect of the Themed Entertainment Association (TEA). During the IAAPA Attractions Expo in Orlando Nov 18-21, Steve will accept the gavel from outgoing president Nick Farmer.

With the mention of IAAPA comes the realization that summer is almost over, but there are still plenty of events TA will be attending. Of course, we encourage you to visit us at any or all of these shows.

AIA-NC(American Institute of Architects-North Carolina), Charlotte, NC
August 21-24, 2008. Visit us at our booth.

SATE (Story, Architecture, Technology, Experience), Orlando, FL
September 18-19, 2008. Visit us at the conference.

DBIA (Design-Build Institute of America), Las Vegas, NV
November 3-5, 2008. Visit us at our booth.

As always, it is our goal to make sure that Thorburn Associates is your single point of contact for all your Acoustic and Technology Design services. If you have an idea, question or suggestion, please drop us a note at eNews@TA-Inc.com.

Focus on Acoustics
Acoustically Integrated aRchitecture (AIR)

For years, TA has worked to influence the building and construction trades by advocating for acoustically friendly design, and now we've given that practice a name: Acoustically Integrated aRchitecture (AIR).

AIR is a holistic best practice which, recognizing that the foremost purpose of buildings is to foster human community, seeks the optimal interface of disciplines for



a result that supports the specific intended uses of the building. Recognizing their mutual goals for the structure, the architect and building designer team up with the acoustician/systems designer at an early conceptual stage of the project to make the most of their complementary expertise.

In practical terms, AIR is applied by envisioning a structure and its systems as a whole. Within that whole, architectural elements are aesthetically and functionally integrated with the technical systems that are key components of today's buildings. Those components, while essential, also represent significant sources of noise: HVAC, mechanical systems, reinforced audio, plumbing. AIR practices minimize the possibility of noise fatigue by isolating or zoning areas of noise-generating components and activities from quiet areas, controlling the travel of noise from one area to the next, controlling the acoustic or reverberant buildup of sound, and controlling noise at its source. The desired result is a high-performing, human-made environment that facilitates community, communication and interaction – whether in an office, conference room, theater, house of worship, restaurant, family entertainment center, museum or medical office.

Another essential component of AIR is to take into account the acoustics, sightlines and lighting needs, and to design optimal presentation spaces within a building, with a view to the technology and audiovisual systems it will contain. Adding AV equipment to an existing space is often not as effective as taking an AIR approach and considering those factors as actually part of the building instead of a separate system.

TA manifests its commitment to AIR principles by actively reaching out to the building design and construction communities to share information and to assertively educate the industry about the role of acoustics. We do this through participation in trade associations, writing articles for online and print media, and conducting training and education sessions.

Focus on Technology How to Issue an RFP/RFQ

Over the years, Thorburn Associates has provided thousands of hours of training sessions at InfoComm conferences. One of the most popular sessions has been Lisa's informative presentation on issuing RFP's and RFQ's. To help everyone understand the issuing process, here are some of the key elements of Lisa's presentation.

The process of solicitation takes several forms and a variety of names. In order to fully understand their creation, you must know what they are and how they differ:

- Request for Quotation (RFQ): A legal document requesting pricing only, for a specified good or service.
- Request for Qualifications (RFQ): A legal document requesting the proposer to document qualifications to perform a specific task. This RFQ is typically used to generate a short list from which the owner will then solicit quotes leading to the award of a contract. Unlike the Request for Quotation, no pricing is provided.
- Request for Proposal (RFP): A legal document requesting that an offer be made by a proposer, which allows for negotiations after a proposal has been received but before award of the contract for goods and services is executed. The RFP should include both scope and price of the project.

- Invitation for Bid (IFB): A request for pricing for a specified good or service that has been advertised in some manner (ie, web, newspaper, personal request).

Designing an appropriate and goal-oriented document of this kind takes both time and planning. To get back the best and most accurate quotes or proposals, you must be willing to provide all of the information known about the project. This is no time to withhold facts – the contractor or vendor must be fully briefed on what you seek to accomplish in order to properly assess and communicate their ability and cost to complete your project. If you have drawings already available, even if they are basic sketches, provide them. The old adage, “an image is worth a thousand words,” really holds true during a design or creative process.

If you have a pre-existing facility, offer a walk-through so that everyone is able to see and assess exactly what will be needed and perhaps even uncover some potential problems that might cause cost overruns if not addressed initially. Even though this may be a time-consuming step, it is well worth it.

Be as thorough as possible in explaining how you will run the bidding and selection processes. Clearly laying out the steps the contractor will need to complete and the procedures you will take in reviewing bids will enable the contractor to more readily provide the information you need. Setting up a specific format for bids will standardize the bidding process and simplify the task of reviewing on your end.

Getting the word out in the first place is of primary importance. Some trade associations, such as TEA (Themed Entertainment Association) offer RFP posting services; check with those that serve your industry.

Once all the responses have come in, your selection process should follow a logical and ordered approach. Apply “bid leveling” first: vet each candidate’s bid by asking the following three questions:

- Was everything that was requested, provided?
- Did the bidder meet all of the qualifications?
- Is the price really based on the scope of work? In other words, did they miss something?

During the evaluation process you will likely be looking for the lowest responsible bid or quote. That will be the bid that offers the lowest cost (either in a total cost concept, or just solely based on price), while meeting all the specifications, terms and conditions of the request. However, don’t rely on numbers alone. Be sure to evaluate the financial and practical ability of the contractor to perform the work, based on past performance as well as their compliance with all your requirements concerning the purchasing process.

Once you have selected a contractor, your research and planning will begin to pay off as you move towards a successful and smooth completion of your project.

Project Highlight: City of Raleigh Wastewater Treatment Training Centers

CHALLENGE: The City of Raleigh sought to create three new training spaces at three separate wastewater treatment facilities. Two of the spaces were new construction,

while the third was a renovation of existing space. The city wanted each of the rooms to be set up similarly, though there were certain differences to take into account in how each room would function. Two of the facilities would need to be able to perform as a single, large room, as two medium-sized rooms, or as multiple small rooms. The third facility would always remain a single, large room. The AV systems had to be adaptable to the different configurations yet provide a consistent control interface. Additionally, the equipment had to be ADA-compliant.

SOLUTION: Thorburn Associates designed a system that could be applied to each of the three buildings with only slight modifications.

For the single-room configuration, and for the facility designed to always function as a single room, one main, portable lectern houses connections to which a presenter can attach a private PC or camera. A wireless touch panel has two docking positions, one on the wall and one in the lectern. This makes it possible for a single person to control the AV for the entire room from multiple positions. A remote controls the speech volume, audio programming and video switching. A ceiling-mounted projector allows input from the lectern connections, or from the DVD/VHS decks located in the equipment rack.

The client indicated that the most common configuration for the two sub-dividable facilities would be the two-room setup. TA designed independent audio systems that allow each room to run a separate presentation. Two sets of wireless and wired microphones are available, and all audio is processed through a digital signal processor in the main rack. The single projection system feeds media to the various screens in the two rooms. The system can also be expanded at a later time to include a second projector, if needed.

Control is through a second wireless touch panel. It allows the user to combine or separate the audio and video for two independent meetings. All the wireless touch panels have a similar interface so that an operator need only learn the one system.

Smaller configurations – one room being divisible into four, and the other into three - utilize portable AV equipment for ease and simplicity. To address the ADA requirements, TA recommended a radio-frequency based, assisted listening system that included a multi-unit charging stand for the assisted listening receivers.

Product Review InfoComm: Were You Audio-Immersed?

Nearly 35,000 AV professionals from almost 100 countries attended the 2008 InfoComm show in Las Vegas this past June - the largest InfoComm gathering ever, in fact. Thorburn Associates has had a longstanding presence at InfoComm as an educator. This year as last, we supplemented our slate of sessions with a special feature on the trade show floor, the 2nd iteration of the Immersive Audio Experience (IAE).

The IAE was done in partnership with InfoComm and co-produced with Frederick Ampel's company, Technology Visions, with the support of many generous equipment providers and sponsors. It is based on the concept that a well-designed, high quality themed environment with superior acoustics and first-rate audio and video produces an immersive setting that encourages the guest/customer to stay

longer (and spend more money). The result: happy customers and increased per caps.

Half of the IAE booth simulated an entertainment environment (The Antarctic Experience, a chic ice bar) and the other half a hip retail setting. These two multi-channel rooms were equipped with flat panel displays and lighting for demonstrating techniques to coordinate digital signage and video content, supported by audio and effects.

As our colleague and IAE co-producer, Frederick Ampel, says, "A truly enveloping audio experience matched with carefully produced visuals will help drive sales and showcase products. We are defining the concept of using multichannel audio to augment state-of-the-art video, and careful acoustic design to create a unique guest experience." In practicality that means understanding what environment you are working in, and how the technology can provide the desired result.

Technology Visions provided audio and event production for the Immersive Audio Experience. Thorburn Associates provided audiovisual system design. Other companies supplying equipment and services were: Audio-Technica, Biamp, Extron, Lab Gruppen, Middle Atlantic Products Inc., Omnivex, Pioneer, Rocking M Coding & Design Co., Sony, Stealth Acoustics, Tannoy, QSC, Westinghouse, Wohler and XYZ Audiovisual.

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