



In Focus

Visitor & Training Centre Audit+

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Visitor & Training Centre Audit+

In 2008 Caterpillar opened its Visitor & Training Centre in Desford, Leicestershire. The Centre is designed to give visitors a first-hand experience into the world of Caterpillar; introducing their wide range of solutions and product line up. The Centre also provides the Caterpillar dealer network with solution and product based training.

To effectively demonstrate their products and provide training for their customers, Caterpillar have utilised a range of audio visual technologies across the Centre. It is therefore essential that these systems are operating as desired and at peak efficiency. To ensure this was the case, Cinos were approached to conduct an Audit+ Survey of the Visitor & Training Centre.



The Overview

The Audit+ service from Cinos is designed to present organisations with an accurate picture of their technology estate. Through providing a detailed breakdown of the existing architecture, Cinos are able to advise how current systems are performing and provide recommendations based on future requirements.

Once a detailed understanding of an organisations expectations has been established Cinos undertake a comprehensive site audit to ascertain how the systems are currently performing. Based on the findings and with a clear understanding of current and future requirements, Cinos are able to advise how the existing technology could be better distributed and/or condensed to deliver the functionality required.

Where possible Cinos will undertake system improvements whilst performing the audit and supply additional proposals for any areas which require a greater degree of attention.

The Survey

The initial stage of the Audit+ Survey involved Cinos and Caterpillar discussing what systems are in place and how these are used across the Centre. This understanding allows Cinos to undertake the survey with Caterpillar's objectives in mind; performing necessary minor remedial works to ensure the existing technology is fit for purpose, as well as recommending how cost effective improvements can be delivered to enhance the Centre's capabilities.

One of the main areas of concern for Caterpillar was the sound level from the microphones in their outside demonstration area. This area is used by Caterpillar to demonstrate their latest machinery which naturally creates a lot of noise. It was therefore important to ensure the microphones were at the correct levels so customers could hear presenters comfortably over the machinery.

Cinos worked with Caterpillar to re-create the exact conditions experienced during product demonstrations; with more than 4 machines running at once. At this point the Cinos Audio Specialists corrected the microphone levels so that customers could clearly hear the presenters whilst viewing the machines at work.

Inside the Centre, Caterpillar have additional demonstration and conferencing facilities which consist of two meeting rooms and a café. When required, partition walls can be removed to deliver a multifunctional space for group presentations and customer training. Within the meeting rooms Caterpillar utilise AMX Touch Panels for control of the projectors, displays and sound systems. When performing the Audit+ Survey the Cinos AMX ACE Programmers noted that the touch panel designs were out of date both in terms of design and functionality.

To ensure the touch panel system worked as expected, Cinos spent time with Caterpillar discussing the various design and layout options available. It was agreed that the current layout of the touch panels was over-complicated and could lead to users spending too much time trying to operate the system. To deliver a visually appealing solution that was simple to use, the Cinos Programmers removed any buttons or functions that were not required and updated the touch panel design to match Caterpillar's latest brand guidelines.

In addition to the audio and touch panel improvements Cinos identified areas where the cabling infrastructure needed attention. The café, meeting rooms and demonstration areas utilise audio visual equipment racks. In each area Cinos tidied the cables and secured all items inside the rack. The outside demonstration area equipment rack can be seen by customers, so making this more presentable ensured the professional image of Caterpillar is maintained at all times.

In the ground floor training room Cinos found that presenters were experiencing audio feedback issues. This was having a detrimental effect for meetings and training as participants could not clearly hear the presenter. Cinos inspected the audio system, identifying the cables utilised by the microphones and speakers in order to remove all obsolete cables. Removing these unused cables resolved the feedback issues and ensured presenters could be heard clearly within the room.

By routing cables correctly in all of the racks Cinos have also ensured that replacing or adding equipment to the system and identifying any faults in the future will be a much easier and quicker process. This will allow Caterpillar to resolve future issues in a timelier manner; minimising the disruption to the training and demonstration facilities.

The Benefits

The Audit+ Survey has provided Caterpillar with an in depth understanding of their technology estate. As well as benefitting from the various improvements made on the audit, Cinos delivered further recommendations on how existing systems can be better utilised to improve the Centre's capabilities and enhance the overall customer experience.

One of the key recommendations from Cinos concerned the demonstration and conferencing rooms. These areas utilise movable partition walls to create a larger space for group meetings and presentations. Whilst this functionality delivers a flexible solution for both Caterpillar and third party businesses, the technology did not adapt to the various room scenarios and therefore the user experience was adversely affected.

Further recommendations were provided for the VIP meeting room. The Audit+ Survey highlighted that the connections to the projector were not easily accessible and did not deliver high definition video quality. This would pose problems for users who want to share content with their team in a timely manner.

As well as having a clear understanding of the current architecture, the Audit+ Survey has highlighted how improvements can be made to the Centre's demonstration and conferencing facilities. Cinos were therefore invited to undertake a project to upgrade the suggested areas; making them more effective for staff, customers and third party businesses.

