

Hard Rock International

A Blueprint for Standardization



Introduction to Hard Rock International

As a premier hospitality brand with music as its foundation, it's no wonder that Seminole Gaming and [Hard Rock International](#) have infused customer experience with quality sound. Every venue under the Hard Rock International brand, from the smallest Cafes to massive resort-casinos, is dedicated to providing an experience that causes patrons to want to get up and dance. So when the team embarked on a project to standardize their control, audio DSP, and video distribution across the entirety of their Cafes, hotels, resorts, and casinos, choosing a partner was a high-stakes decision. Kyle Richford, Audio Visual Program Manager for Hard Rock International, explains their reasoning. "We needed a system that could scale, period. This is an immense project, and having a solution that would allow a 'rinse and repeat' methodology across locations and space-types was essential. Q-SYS is that solution."

“We’ve saved money by buying into the Q-SYS Ecosystem. Once you have a program that works and is efficient, you don’t have to pay to recreate the wheel every time. The efficiency of the system in man-hours alone is phenomenal.”

- Kyle Richford

Audio Visual Program Manager

Challenges

A Project That Spans the Globe

With Hard Rock Hotel and Casino properties successfully updated in Northern Indiana, Cincinnati, Rockford, Bristol, and Sacramento, one could think that Kyle Richford was nearing his project's endpoint. This might be true for a less ubiquitous brand, but Hard Rock International features hundreds of locations globally, and the outlook for the next five years is an exciting one. Prior to this initiative, every location sported a different legacy system, each with a unique design and build. Aided by AV Consultants [KMK Technologies](#), the mandate to streamline and modernize is well underway, dictated by a series of key priorities that define the process by which Hard Rock International is standardizing.

Priority One: Build a Reliable Framework

Architecting a "default" structure that can apply to many different locations is not a minor undertaking, and begins with a combination of reliable products, reliable support, and reliable partners. This includes internal partners such as Franck Fuziol, Director of Hard Rock IT Infrastructure, who helmed the merger of IT and Q-SYS within this mega-initiative. This relationship between AV and IT is essential to develop at scale. Kyle describes his methodology: "First of all, the Q-SYS Cores just work. We can't have failing equipment, and knowing you can trust the product is step one. Next, the Q-SYS support team has consistently shown their reliability. They've always had our backs, and stood by their product. I know I can call those folks up, and things get done. The final element is the reliability of the partnership. We paired with [Forward Thinking Designs](#) and [Clair Global Integration](#) to build custom plugins, which means we just plop them in there and move on. It's incredibly efficient, and we know when we go over to the next property, it's basically already done. It's just a matter of different peripherals."

Priority Two: Train Your People

With so many properties standardizing on Q-SYS, providing team members with the tools to understand and troubleshoot the system was pivotal. "At the end of the day, it's my responsibility to support our property techs and make sure our AV systems are as successful as possible," explains Kyle. "With Q-SYS, the knowledge is so accessible and fun! You don't have to be a part of a special distributor network to access great training. The level one certification is completely online, and you can knock it out in a weekend. There are also awesome resources like design files for reference and the [Q-SYS Communities for Developers](#), where if you can't get something to work, you can connect with others and get answers from around the world. Building this knowledge base among internal teams also allows for continual sharing and improvement." Kyle continues, "The plan is to bring different property staff together at an event like a summit and allow people to not only learn but also share what different teams have implemented. We always want to find better ways to do things."

 Photos provided courtesy of Hard Rock International



Solutions

Priority Three: Innovate to Optimize

Q-SYS is renowned for its flexibility and openness to third-party providers, and this has resulted in users continuing to break new ground on what is possible. Hard Rock International took advantage of this to achieve their goal of encouraging simplicity, specifically around COM3000, the video source for their video distribution system, Tripleplay. “There’s so much demand in casinos and hotels for dynamic channel changes. Previously, folks would need IT to log in, manually select the drop-down and then change the channel. The old way took up a ton of rack space, money, and network use. Using Q-SYS, we’ve eliminated all of that by communicating directly to COM3000—no more encoder or decoder. This innovation using Q-SYS has made our lives a lot easier, and that’s the point of reducing layers of complexity,” Kyle concludes.

The Journey Has Just Begun

With the Hard Rock International plan encompassing hundreds of locations across the globe, their journey has just begun. Their approach strikes a balance between creating a template and allowing for customization, as well as enabling success and learning from past experiences. These qualities of reliability and imagination are ones that Q-SYS has fully embraced as well. Kyle describes the benefits as follows: “Q-SYS can be as big as we want and as small as we need. If we can imagine it, then we can make it happen. Most importantly, we’ve saved money by buying into the Q-SYS Ecosystem. Once you have a program that works and is efficient, you don’t have to pay to recreate the wheel every time. The efficiency of the system in man-hours alone is phenomenal.”

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