

System Integrators have an Ongoing Role

November 2015

Many broadcast companies are aware of the advantages of using a system integrator (SI) at the outset of a new build or refurbishment project to review requirements, develop specifications and to manage the selected vendors through to delivery of the project. But perhaps fewer are aware of the advantages that an SI can bring after commission and during the routine maintenance and upkeep of mission critical systems. Tom Swan, Sales and Marketing Director of leading SI dB Broadcast here discusses some of the elements of a support agreement of the type that dB is increasingly asked to provide.

dB offers customised support packages to meet customers' specific needs; these include support services needed during training, go-live and on an ongoing basis for both the supplied hardware and installed cabling. An important feature is being able to fix problems and to provide technical support and project enhancements for the lifetime of the system.

The first advantage of a support agreement is that the client has a single contract to manage, taking some of the management burden away from the client's internal team, providing greater productivity and reducing costs. dB keeps track of the various hardware vendor support contracts, expiry dates and what they cover – a sometimes complex task. Budgeting and planning are then made much simpler as ownership costs are more predictable. All charges for the provision of labour for fault finding, diagnostic work, fixing and all other activities associated with the maintenance of the facility are included in the Annual Service Charge.

Consolidation can also realize efficiencies through multi-year contracts and through synchronizing the expiry dates for those contracts.

dB Broadcast places no limit on the amount of telephone and email support available, and the company is the first point of call for all issues relating to the system operation including products and dB system build. They will analyze any problems and work with the client and the vendors to resolve the issue.

An alternative is remote diagnostics and monitoring of the system via a VPN. This will allow engineers to dial in and run remote diagnostics and checks, and in this manner, many simple faults can be quickly resolved.

Monthly fault management reports are often provided, and telephone, email and remote access support can be available 24 hours every day as part of a service level agreement. An initial fault investigation will be followed by a fix or a plan for further investigation including the engagement of third party suppliers. dB will also recommend a work-around to maintain operation of the system. Having a single point of contact obviates any lack of clarity over who is responsible for what aspects of an issue, and therefore who is responsible for the fix.



Article by dB Broadcast

Other benefits of outsourcing system maintenance to an SI include leveraging long term vendor relationships to gain a better standard of support, and in many cases better pricing. The client benefits from dB's strong knowledge of their vendor's products and solutions across all the assets.

Confidence is further achieved through preventative visits, perhaps involving a scheduled annual service review attended by the SI and the customer. The agenda will include an annual performance review of the facility, a review of new technology that would enhance the effectiveness of the system and any further training requirements.

"Our clients can sleep better knowing that they have expert help on tap to keep their facilities up and running", says Tom Swan.

Written by Tom Swan, Sales and Marketing Director, dB Broadcast

System integration from studio through to transmission