

# HOW MSPs CAN TAP INTO THE MID-MARKET CONFERENCING SPACE

As businesses adapt to a changing workplace landscape, particularly with the return to office and hybrid work, their focus has shifted towards ensuring seamless operation of their systems. There's now a heightened emphasis on upgrading meeting room technologies to enhance collaboration and productivity.

Businesses are prioritising the reliability and ease of use of conferencing technologies, aiming for uninterrupted functionality across multiple locations. Historically, audio visual (AV) systems might have been a lower priority, but the new directive makes AV mission critical and demands that these systems be as streamlined and easy to manage as any standard IT equipment.

This was a key discussion point at a recent roundtable hosted by IT Europa and Shure, a renowned leader in audio technology, at its Experience Centre in London. The event gathered Managed Service Providers (MSPs) to deliberate on the evolving roles of managed services and audio visual (AV) solutions within the channel.

Even though only four out of fifteen attendees currently offer managed services for AV, there was a unanimous agreement among attendees on the strategic importance of delivering AV management solutions.

## OPPORTUNITY IN THE MID-MARKET

One of the attendees from a London-based MSP highlighted the potential in the mid-market for AV managed services.

He noted, "We work with some rather large AV companies on big projects. I don't think that's ever going to stop because we need them... But that middle space, I think, is a lucrative opportunity if we have easy-to-install options, so we can make a bit of margin. Hence why we're here [at this roundtable] to look at the products and see how it works."

Echoing this sentiment, a delegate from a Cardiff-based IT and communications provider added, "The opportunity in the SMB space is significant. I think we can capture new business by offering services that clients might not realise they need, and that's where the real value of AV lies."

Further discussions indicated that AV integration partners are also now expanding their efforts.

"We do a lot of business with AV integration partners. They are traditionally focused on large and complex installs like boardrooms but are now moving down the



room pyramid by targeting medium-sized spaces,” the delegate explained.

This transition includes exploring ‘AV as a service’ (AVaaS), with a few firms already implementing it. “While many are considering this shift, only a handful have started,” he noted. “We’re seeing a shift: the AV channels are looking at how they can start to wrap a service around what they’re doing, and the IT channel is going in the total opposite direction.

“We’re in the desktop space and asking, ‘How can we move upwards into the larger meeting rooms?’ So, we’ve got this kind of transition of AV going down and IT going up.”

### **AUDIO-QUALITY OFTEN OVERLOOKED**

At the luncheon, MSPs were asked about the vital significance of high-quality audio in meetings. Attendees unanimously rated it 10/10, underscoring its importance, despite being often overlooked by clients.

“Audio is priority number one for effective collaboration,” Craig Collin, Senior Manager - Conferencing Sales at Shure UK, said. “However, it’s one of those things that

people don’t realise how important it is until it’s not there. People don’t think about that as much.”

A delegate from a London-based MSP concurred, highlighting that sound quality is vital, and that consistent problems with poor outgoing sound and network quality can lead to communication breakdown.

“If there are ‘core quality issues,’ that becomes a major problem, particularly when it comes to video conferencing,” he noted. “During COVID, the majority of our sales meeting and prospect interactions were conducted virtually, using the very solution we were pitching.”

“Encountering video glitches due to low bandwidth are an annoyance but poor audio quality and disruptions are much worse and can severely hinder a meeting, especially if it involves the head of a business. Selling this solution while simultaneously suffering from these issues outside the office paints a poor picture.

“It doesn’t ‘look good’ from a client’s perspective when the technology we advocate for fails to perform as expected,” the speaker further elaborated, emphasising the critical nature of reliable audio communication tools.

“This is why it's important to have room-to-room demos,” Collins added, “to properly reinforce the need for fit-for-purpose solutions and making people aware of the critical role of audio equipment.”

“It's all about trying to educate them that, instead of spending on that new, specked-up 100-inch screen, if you spend it on an 85-inch device, that saving and budgeting would give you enough money to allocate to the audio side. That would mean that the room is an all-around positive experience.”

## **BUILDING MEETING ROOMS**

During dessert, MSPs were asked whether they see an opportunity to take ownership of building meeting rooms, from the design to implementation and ongoing management.

One of the attendees began by highlighting a frequent mistake in office setups: “We have media clients with beautiful meeting rooms where they've simply installed a 100-inch TV and believe the rest can be handled by their laptops.”

This scenario is a starting point to emphasise that such setups, while visually appealing, frequently lack adequate functionality, especially in audio quality, since “the built-in speakers on televisions are there because of necessity, not because of the quality,” he says.

This oversight offers a rich opportunity for MSPs to step in with managed services. “Beyond just the installation, MSPs can manage ongoing system maintenance and troubleshooting, transforming basic setups into sophisticated, fully functional meeting environments.”

“They can maintain technological efficiency, using examples like the need to “download the config, upload the config, [and] reset things.”

Collin agrees, but emphasises that for MSPs, room design is also just as crucial as technical installation.

He stresses that “design and technical setup are distinct but equally critical elements. Depending on the room size and the type of microphones needed, both elements must be meticulously planned.”



Craig Collin

## **WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF SHURE'S CHANNEL COMMUNITY IN THE UK?**

Concluding the roundtable Collin said: “Shure is taking a proactive approach by partnering with MSPs to bring our state-of-the-art Teams, Zoom and Google Meet certified products to a wider audience through established IT channels.

“Shure's partner program is designed to offer not only healthy margins, but also a robust product roadmap that prioritises long-term value over short-term growth. Registered partners receive a range of core benefits, including access to a dedicated customer support team, comprehensive sales and marketing resources, free training, deal registration, and the opportunity to demonstrate products to clients at Shure Experience Centers.

“Unlike other vendors who offer all-in-one units that include audio, Shure is a renowned expert solely focused on audio, setting us apart in the industry. This dedication allows the channel community to rely on Shure as a trusted partner in resolving your clients' collaboration pain points by providing flawless audio experiences in all conference rooms throughout their organisation.”