

UNIQUE SOLUTION AT UNILEVER RESEARCH

Just imagine yourself as the Audio Visual Manager of a major research company, with responsibility for over forty conference rooms, one of them being a fully-equipped 180-seater lecture theatre which is used for any type of presentation from a lecture to a theatrically-staged product launch.

The management calls you one day and says that the lecture theatre is to have a completely new lighting and sound system, and it has to be specified, ordered, delivered, installed and commissioned in eight weeks.

This was the task facing Dave Colley for the lecture theatre at Unilever Research's busy laboratory complex, set in 1100 acres of beautiful Bedfordshire countryside in England, last March. Dave's first priority was to hit the deadline, which was imposed to meet the annual staff briefing meeting. And the stopwatch had started. This was not an ordinary company staff briefing, for each year Unilever follows a policy of keeping all their staff informed of company progress and future plans through an organised series of general meetings. These have earned the nickname of OBJ's - "Oh, Be Joyful".

Dave knew what lighting he

wanted and where he could get it. His objective was to have a flexible rig which could be rigged and focused quickly and safely. The problem that existed was that in a permanent lecture theatre, with tiered seating, access to lighting positions was by ladder. Not only was it time consuming, but perilous. Dave knew someone with an answer - Brian Myers, Strand's Technical Sales Representative.

Brian knew Unilever Research well, as he had been involved in supplying equipment to the centre over the past 15 years and he knew the importance of getting the job done on time. Within a few days, and with the help of Eddie Souster from Show Contracts, Brian's lighting scheme was taking shape. Additional lighting bars were needed; dimming capacity would be doubled from 24 ways to 48, with an MX providing the control. To solve Dave's double problem of rigging and safety, Brian had a novel idea for a scheme of this size. Calling on the studio expertise of Vic Gibbs and Ian Sim, the additional lighting bars took the form of nine specially-made self-climbing hoists.

The result is impressive. Rigging and refocusing is now done quickly, simply and safely at floor level after each bar is electrically lowered.



Control Room (inset) and Self-Climbing Hoist at Unilever Research.

When rigged, the bar climbs up into the roof structure, clearing the sightlines of even the projection booth. Needless to say the system was installed and working on time for the OBJ. Dave was full of praise for Brian, Ian Sim and especially Eddie Souster and his team.

On 'The Day' all 1100 employees passed through the lecture theatre and adjacent meeting room (which had the presentation relayed by CCTV). Dave's final comment was, "Even if we had to do it all again, and were given six months this time, there is nothing I would change." A compliment indeed.

SHOWROOM TOURS - COME AND VISIT

Yes, there are some human beings at Strand! And to prove it, we are inviting groups of students, professional societies and amateurs to visit them in Strand's newly-equipped showroom at its UK head office in Isleworth.

The 1224 sq ft (115 sq.m) showroom has a 20 ft (6 m) grid, with a lighting gallery on two sides. On the gallery is a complete range of stage luminaires, plus a basic demonstration of a 2-preset manual control, and a memory system. Educational posters line the walls of the gallery.

The dimmer room, located off the gallery, is equipped with the latest LD90 digital dimmer racks which provide most of the dimming for demonstration lighting and house lighting. The 'brains' of the house lighting system - the Premiere processor - is on show too.

Hanging in the grid is hardware which makes both theatrical and television hearts pound. A basic theatre lighting rig is enhanced by six fully automated PALS units, intermixed with a comprehensive rig for a small TV studio. And to make it even more like a professional studio, the Strand showroom is equipped with the latest suspension equipment. Two self climbing hoists

are on permanent demonstration, as well as motorised and pole-operated pantographs.

Pull back the 65 foot (20 metre) long cyclorama, lit by a battery of studio and theatre floodlights, and you'll see a selection of Strand's extensive location lighting equipment, from Reporterlight Kits to a Quattro Quasar 4000W MSR spotlight. All are ready to plug in and use.

An EC90 rack at floor level complements the LD90 dimming installation. All dimmers are connected through a common multiplex network to a selection of lighting consoles; LX, MX, GSX, Gemini, Lightboard M, Galaxy Nova and Lightpalette 90. The Galaxy is also equipped to control the PALS rig of automated lights, and responds to dimmer status reporting information from the EC90 rack.

The showroom is open for viewing during working days, and special facilities are available for professional and amateur lighting designers, students, school parties and overseas visitors to Britain, by arrangement. If you are interested in visiting Strand Lighting's London showroom, please contact Richard Bunting on 081-560 3171 (fax 081-490 0002) to make an appointment.



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