



Electro-Voice speakers cover the outdoor courtyards

# Changing roles

Venuetech has built its reputation as a distributor, but, for one high-profile client, it has needed to change its business model and provide the full service. **James Ling** reports

**VENUETECH IS ONE OF THE VERY** familiar names in Dubai's distribution community. With a range of equipment from the likes of Sennheiser, Active Audio, Televic, SGM, Robert Juliat, ELC and Link on its roster, it has supplied a variety of projects across the region. While it regularly offers design services and after-sales support, it likes to leave the integration work to its clients. This business model changed for a high-profile project at Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque.

'Our aim as a major distributor is to never do an installation by ourselves,' states Elie Khairallah, technical director at Venuetech. 'But due to the nature of this project, we had to take it on by ourselves. We were invited directly by the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque committee. The system we proposed is a complete solution.'

Having designed a solution based on the client's requirements, the company was awarded the contract and given seven months to supply and install new audio solutions for the main prayer halls, courtyards and call to prayer system.

This saw Active Audio SA450P+, SA300P+ and SA230P+ column speakers with SB115 subs installed in the main prayer hall, an Electro-Voice XLD line array system to cover the large outdoor courtyard area and MC2C weatherised speakers from Active Audio for the arcades. Up in the minarets, Electro-Voice EVH speakers



have been installed to provide the call to prayer. At the other end of the signal chain, eight channels of Sennheiser's 2000 Series wireless mics are distributed through the prayer halls, while a wired e965 condenser mic provides the source for the call to prayer. Meanwhile, ELC has provided a large number of Ethernet switches as the backbone of the audio network. Cabling includes a large volume of custom-built solutions from Link that needed to be air freighted in early in the project, and a Yamaha CL3 mixing console completes the solution.

The design and supply was an easy enough task for Venuetech, after all, this is what it has built its reputation on. But the installation aspect provided some new challenges. 'We had to do all the civil work as well for the installation, such as pulling cables,' recalls Mr Khairallah. 'We

an operational iconic project,' admits the technical director. 'Every day the mosque is open for visitors.'

'In phase one, most of the work took place at night and then during the day it had to be in operational condition, keeping in mind that prayers are broadcast live five times a day,' he continues. 'Inside the prayer halls, it is a very delicate issue to match the colour of the new columns with the marble. Another challenge is to install all our equipment and keep the old system working. The existing system was working until the time came to switch over.'

Following the successful switchover, Mr Khairallah is happy to reflect on a different challenge that has added to the company's skillset. 'We are extremely happy that we were able to fulfil all of the client's requirements. We did it on time and we fulfilled all of the technical specifications. It has been a very challenging project but the whole team is happy with what

they have done. The most difficult part for us was the civil work because this is something done by others and you need to really worry about other people's performance.'

Most importantly, he feels the mosque now has a solution that it deserves. 'The whole mosque system is really state-of-the-art for everything, from the loudspeakers to the microphones. The client wanted the best of everything. The audio side of the mosque had been its weakest part, now the job is accomplished.'

[www.venuetech.ae](http://www.venuetech.ae)



A Yamaha CL3 controls the audio



Sennheiser wireless systems have been put to use

had three sub-contractors, one for cables and electrical work, one for the marble and one for all the mechanical parts. They were to fulfil the complete package along with our proposed system.'

Such a high-profile project provided its fair share of challenges for a first-time installer. 'The most difficult task was to work in the mosque in



The committee made a specific request for subwoofers for the project