

THE UNIQUELY NETWORKED MULTIPLEX

Alamo Drafthouse

Alamo Drafthouse Transforms the Cinematic Experience with Q-SYS

📍 Los Angeles, CA

[Alamo Drafthouse Cinema](#) has single-mindedly set out to create the ultimate cinematic experience in the backyard of the world capital of the film industry. Its unique bill of fare pairs a memorable culinary experience with the most enriching new release, family, and independent international films, as well as Alamo Drafthouse's signature repertory programming. Alamo boasts over 40 theatres nationwide committed to presenting the best in food and drink alongside an equal focus on quality on-screen and auditorium presentation. Of these, the jewel in the crown is the newly-equipped 12-screen Alamo Drafthouse Downtown Los Angeles. With new Q-SYS audio, visual and control as well as a state-of-the-art Q-SYS audio system the Alamo portfolio is one of the most unique and technologically advanced cinemas not only in the U.S., but in the world.



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Mark Louis

Senior Director of Presentation, Alamo Drafthouse

Challenges



Limited Available Space

The physical constraints of the building, such as a limited projection booth and mezzanine space and small closet spaces, posed a challenge since it was not designed as a movie theatre, requiring sound racks to be combined to supply multiple auditoriums.



Sound Isolation

Alamo Drafthouse DTLA is located in the Bloc, a complex with retail stores, restaurants, and entertainment spaces, so the sound design had to consider noise levels to prevent it from disturbing other theatres and stores.



AV Customization

Alamo desired a versatile, functional, and compatible audio and video system that could present first run, second run, and alternative content (e.g. public, community, and special events) in the form of Digital Cinema Packages (DCPs) or Blu-ray discs, and enable streaming services.

Finding Solutions for Unusual Complications

Alamo Drafthouse prides itself on exceptional presentation standards, giving rise to its self-styled mission which is as true now as it was since its inception: ‘good food, good beer, and good film, all in one place’ – and that is why every movie must not only look good, it must above all else sound the best it can for every event or occasion

Alamo’s Senior Director of Presentation Mark Louis was clear that he wanted equally high standards of audio performance for the new DTLA venture, and looked to Fountain Valley, CA integrator [Moving Image Technologies \(MiT\)](#) for an integrated audio and control system from a respected manufacturer that he knew and trusted. “Q-SYS is currently the only equipment manufacturer that meets all of our brand standards for presentation,” he reflected. “When considering the most consistent and best sound quality systems, Q-SYS is the only option.”



MOVING IMAGE TECHNOLOGIES

Readily accepting the challenge of implementing an admittedly ambitious technological brief, equipping Alamo Drafthouse DTLA presented MiT with several unusual complications.



Solutions

Achieving High Standards in a Limited Space

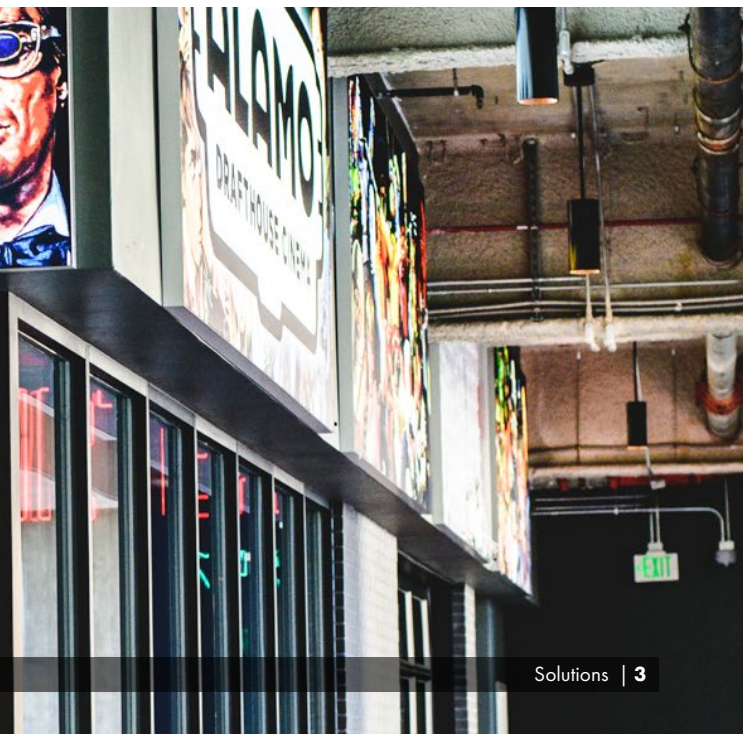
The lack of available spaces to use for the AV equipment was a major obstacle, but Q-SYS's network capabilities and its use of standard CAT6 network cabling helped lessen the impact of the building's physical constraints. The sound system components are distributed throughout the building wherever space could be found, typically located in small closets near the auditorium entrances, and networked over a standard IT network utilizing Q-SYS. The amplifiers' high channel density contributed significantly to reducing the overall amplifier count and rack space, with each equipment rack housing sufficient amplifiers to easily supply two to three auditoriums – rather than a more traditional but less flexible one-sound-rack-per-auditorium configuration. This approach also freed up storage space in the facility while still keeping speaker cable runs short and economical.

Because the Bloc lacked traditional projection booths, many of the projectors and video equipment components were installed in lifts or cubbies at the rear of the room. MiT took advantage of Q-SYS drag-and-drop control programming to create custom User Control Interfaces (UCIs) that provide theatre staff with easy access to auditorium automation, sound system and projector controls on Q-SYS network touch screens located in convenient areas of the venue. The system design with its unified brand approach facilitated Mark Louis' sharp focus on audio quality. "Even more than video,

audio can be the most inconsistent aspect of a theatre," he affirmed. "If you allow for a variety of equipment from multiple brands, the quality will suffer."

Alamo equipped all twelve screens of the Cinema Complex with Q-SYS Cinema products, which include [SC Series loudspeakers](#), [SB Series subwoofers](#), and various [SR Series surround loudspeakers](#), giving them a complete system optimized for performance in every theater. Each loudspeaker is powered by a four or eight channel network amplifier as part the of Q-SYS platform. Thanks to a commonality of system components across the theaters, every room sounds the same, and as a further guarantee of quality, the Alamo complex is "[QSC Certified](#)."

Several touch panel interfaces are conveniently located in the food order entry areas and drink station server areas at the entrances to the auditoriums, allowing user-friendly remote access. There are also touch panels in the manager's office and TMS/control area.



Solutions

Integrated Solutions for the Cinema Complex









The key to MiT's success in overcoming the theatres' physical constraints was that Q-SYS combines audio, video and control processing in a single piece of hardware. As the facility did not have enough room for processors in each room, the Q-SYS Core processors – which can easily accommodate multiple rooms on a single Core – provided the only solution that could operate outside of a traditional projection booth concept.

Q-SYS Cinema team's support network provided Alamo and MiT with invaluable technical assistance and counsel on planning the layout of the audio system, as well as through continued involvement with the project, with further assurance of infrastructure and equipment reliability well into the future.





With an eye to the future, MiT's Q-SYS system design addressed the client's need for flexibility, and purposefully catered for expandability to adapt to Alamo's growing business needs. Increasing flexibility meant equipping the theatre for playback of alternate content which can provide an additional revenue stream, and more importantly, accommodating future technical changes in the cinema industry.



Q-SYS Equipment List

Model	Pcs Used	Description	Image
Core 510i (Discontinued, updated to the Core 610)	4	Q-SYS Audio, Visual and Control Processor Configurable onboard I/O via 8 open Q-SYS IO Cards slots Networked Channel Capacity: 256 x 256	
DCIO-H	12	Q-SYS Digital Cinema Inputs/Outputs Dolby Audio™ (featuring Dolby Digital Plus™ and Dolby® Surround 7.1)	
TSC-7w	16	7" Wall Touch Screen Controller 2 network ports for a connection back to the Q-SYS™ Core Can be used to control a myriad of third-party devices	
NS Series Network Switches	14	Pre-configured NETGEAR Network Switches Out of box, plug-and-play local Q-SYS networking solution Flexible Network Scenarios	
DPA Amplifiers (Discontinued, consider the CX-Q Series)	24	4-channel Network Amplifier, 700 W/ch at 4 Ω 8-channel Network Amplifier, 500 W/ch at 4 Ω	
SC-223	24	3-way 2 x 15" Screen Channel Loudspeaker Low-distortion waveguides provide highly articulate dialogue	
SC-2150	12	3-way 2 x 15" Screen Channel Loudspeaker Optimized design for smaller cinemas - up to 55 ft (16.6 m) in length	
SB-2180	14	Dual 18" Cinema Subwoofer Narrowest dual-driver subwoofers available	

Q-SYS Equipment List

Model	Pcs Used	Description	Image
SR-8200	72	2-way 8" Cinema Surround Loudspeaker	
SR-1020	16	2-way 10" Cinema Surround Loudspeaker	
SR-1290	4	2-way High Output Co-axial 12" Cinema Surround Loudspeaker	
AD-S4T	4	Pre-configured NETGEAR Network Switches Out of box, plug-and-play local Q-SYS networking solution Flexible Network Scenarios	



Q-SYS is a globally recognized manufacturer of audio, video and control (AV&C) solutions for huddle rooms to stadiums—and everything in between. Our systems make it easy for your team to design and integrate flexible, scalable solutions and deliver the native IT integration and standards-based technology your customers expect.

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