

Custom Built Tables House Microphones in Aesthetic Corporate Boardroom

MFS Investment Management needed functionality and allure in their audio solution.

By Jonathan Blackwood

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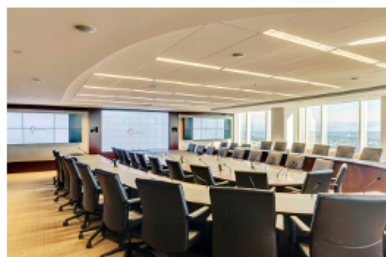
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At the end of 2012, MFS Investment Management completed the move of its headquarters to Huntington Avenue in Boston, MA. More than 75 meeting rooms on 11 floors needed a unified custom design in order to reach audio intelligibility for the many audio conferences that the company takes place in on a daily basis. With ten global offices across the world, it was paramount for the audio equipment used for the build to deliver clarity to communicate efficiently. MFS consulted with CMS Audio Visual Consultants to help them choose the right equipment for their needs.

"After we were retained we did some programming analysis, and one of the major pain points historically at MFS was audio sound quality via conference calls," says Michael Schuch, consultant on this project for CMS. MFS had been using wireless boundary microphones, and they were not happy with the quality of the audio they were getting on the far end or the fact that the voice-activated microphones were picking up extraneous noise in the room.



Microphones were physically built into tables to match the conference rooms they were created for.

The job for CMS then became providing MFS with options that made sense in their environment. The company essentially created a technical evaluation session for MFS. They created mock-ups for all options on the market that could work for them, whittled them down to a few of the best options, and allowed the company to demo them. Among those products demoed were TAIDEN conferencing microphones, which featured push-to-talk capabilities that wouldn't be bothered by the extraneous noise.

"TAIDEN was my preferred technology, primarily because in this environment with a lot of ambient noise, and other factors, goose neck microphones

always seem to give us the best audio quality," says Schuch. "After we mocked up the TAIDEN system, it worked so well at the initial board meetings that they used for testing that they decided to go with that system."

TAIDEN equipment was installed in MFS's existing facility for a test run while the new headquarters was being built. With TAIDEN equipment, the user has the ability to remotely adjust gain and EQ per individual microphone. Also, the microphone output can be zoned into eight zones, and each microphone can be controlled individually per zone.

After the trial period, it was obvious to MFS that the TAIDEN solution would be best. They even bought the demo equipment to keep in use until they moved into the new building. However, the install in the existing facility was done with no real regard for aesthetic, where the installs in the new building would need to be as crisp visually as was the audio provided. While MFS loved the technical aspects of the equipment, at the time they were not as impressed with the case, look, and feel of the equipment. With custom furniture, hand selected wood, metal, and custom finishes in very high-finish areas, it was important that the equipment fit in with the look of the rooms.

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“They wanted the product physically built into the table,” says Patrick Herlihy of [Media Vision](#), the exclusive distributor of TAIDEN products in North America. “Components and a cable harness allowed them to mount our components into a brass desktop surface. They cable harnessed down to an electronics box that lives underneath the desk that makes it a part of the main system.”



MFS needed the audio equipment to fit into the aesthetics of the high-finish boardroom.

After designing and creating a functional prototype, a run of 800 custom microphone elements custom made in China that needed to go into 800 specific locations in tables, all custom cut in a factory in Buffalo, was ordered. In addition, the tables needed to meet requirements set by MFS on color, mounting, speaker position, button position, and microphone length. While the task was daunting and far reaching, the end result produced beautiful custom tables with built-in audio equipment in each conferencing room in the new headquarters.

Media Vision checks in with MFS in Boston regularly, and the company has been impressed with the functionality, ease of use, and quality of the TAIDEN equipment. MFS enjoys the new audio equipment in their Boston headquarters so much that they are currently replicating the designs in other offices, including Sydney, Hong Kong, and London.

“They have come to me and said it is hands down the best sound they have ever had,” says Schuch. “We met our objectives from the client, to provide the best sound quality available. The compliment and acknowledgement that we did it came directly from the CFO and CTO. TAIDEN was a great help with that.” 🎧

About the author



[Jonathan Blackwood](#) - Site Editor

Jonathan Blackwood is an editor for Corporate TechDecisions, aimed at bringing important information to tech decision makers in the corporate world. Jonathan joined Tech Decisions in 2014 and specializes in technologies that help to innovate and improve business practices for companies of all sizes.