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Company Profile: All Pro Sound, Pensacola, Florida

By Alison Istnick

Over 25 years ago, the vision for All Pro Sound began when founders Richard and Cathy Couture came to realize that the same equipment being used in local night clubs was also increasingly in demand from a growing church market. What started with three employees and one truck has grown into a corporation with more than 90 employees and 20 vehicles.

In the fall of 2007, a new chapter turned for All Pro Sound when a long-time employee, Bobby Taylor, took the reins as president/owner/CEO with John Fuqua as vice president/COO.

All Pro Sound's service encompasses three areas: commercial audio, video, and lighting systems integration, equipment sales, and custom residential design/build integration. Not to be overlooked is the 23,000-square-foot distribution center stocked with sound, video, and lighting products. "Our tremendous buying power allows us to pass on significant savings to our customers. Churches further benefit from our special discount program," notes Fuqua, who set time aside recently to share with CPM readers an inside look at All Pro Sound.

CPM: Tell us more about All Pro Sound, your goals, and the services your company offers.

Fuqua: All Pro Sound is one of the largest and most forward-thinking companies in the audio visual industry. We offer complete audio, video, lighting, and acoustical design/build services for all types of commercial projects. Technology never stops and our reputation for quality and providing the client with the right system for the particular application is always our greatest concern.

Because we are a three-pronged company, we have to be cognizant of all aspects of the audio, video, and lighting market. From design/build integrated systems to packaged portable systems or a complete custom home system, we have to remain on the cutting edge of technology. Each area is managed by individuals who understand the need to "get it right the first time" and maintain the relationship with our customers, vendors, and employees. We also have a great relationship with many of the top consultants in the systems integration field and provide complete installation services for their projects on a national basis.

CPM: The Couture's had a strong connection with the house of worship (HOW) market; how will Taylor's experience help him continue moving All Pro Sound forward in this market?

Fuqua: Bobby Taylor started with the company in 1994 and worked as a commercial systems designer for many years, eventually moving into a management role. Bobby's background before All Pro Sound was based in management and church audio for one of the mega churches based in Pensacola, Florida. Olive Baptist, where Bobby grew up, built a 4,500-seat main sanctuary several years ago and All Pro Sound has helped to

upgrade all the technical systems over the past few years. Line array technology, presentation video switching, and new wireless systems are among the latest upgrades.

CPM: What is All Pro Sound's relationship with the HOW market?

Fuqua: "Relationship," you said it—that is our approach. Churches are where we have the most experience and where we provide the quality desired for every application. We understand that every system is different—there have never been two systems that are exactly alike. From construction to denominational differences, every project has certain nuances and needs that are unique. As always, we strive to establish and maintain relationships.

CPM: What are notable projects you've been called to be a part of?

Fuqua: All Pro has been fortunate enough to be called on for some large projects such as Bryant-Denny Stadium sound system renovations at the University of Alabama as well as projects at Auburn University, Boston College, and Troy University. We have also completed literally hundreds of house of worship projects throughout our nation. We apply the same principles of quality and integrity to a small church project as we do a 100,000-seat stadium. We are constantly looking inward to see where improvements can be made to get the best result for every project. Our commercial systems design teams utilize every tool available, such as acoustical modeling, CAD drawings, and our experience to bring the very best to each client. You can call us, whether your need is a microphone cable or a complete systems design for your new or existing facility.

CPM: In your opinion, what differentiates All Pro Sound from its competitors?

Fuqua: What sets All Pro apart is our dedication to our clients. We look at every one we deal with as a long-term relationship. There are many companies that do a portion of what we do. There are very few that have the multi-faceted approach of All Pro Sound. We are able to pass equipment cost savings on to our clients by virtue of being able to have a good stock of most items. We feel that when a client calls us they are seeking the best solution for their project. We will make every effort in our power to provide the answers they seek and to be there the next time they call. As we grow, we must maintain this 'relationship-based' approach. It's the only way we know and the only way we will do business.

CPM: What do you see as unique challenges when addressing the HOW market? And how are you managing those challenges?

Fuqua: The HOW market is continually changing, with those involved becoming more educated as to how best to integrate technology and use it as a ministry tool. The churches that are grasping the understanding of information technology and integration are the churches that are seeing the most growth.

We are working with many congregations that see the emphasis must be placed on the family unit. How to reach those families and minister to them is very complex. Internet, iPod, text messaging, blogs, streaming services, youth facilities, flexible service schedules, concert-quality audio, video, and lighting capabilities—these are some of the technical tools that must be explored today.

We have seen a growth in understanding of technology in recent years and the realization that [technologies] must be budgeted for. For many years, church building committees would cut technology first and leave only enough for limited capability. We are already involved in many such projects where the emphasis is much more on the content and system capabilities than on the beauty of the carpet. Our approach never changes though. We establish a relationship of trust with the client and make sure we deliver. Our motto, design, build, perform, applies to every aspect of our business.

CPM: What developing trends do you see influencing your services to the HOW market in the next several years?

Fuqua: New technology such as LED lighting, digital snakes and consoles, brighter projectors, and better switching equipment along with high definition video is all impacting the HOW market now. We are already involving these in our projects and are looking ahead at how to further integrate cutting-edge technologies into our system designs.

Of course, budget, building trends, and the explosive growth of technology will shape the face of the HOW market. Just as we did when we first explored IMAG or digital audio, we will take the same approach. Gather the information, train and inform our team, and then be ready to provide the most effective solution for the customer. We have been doing that for 27 years and we are just getting started.

As always, the basics do not change: quality, attention to detail, and establishing a relationship of trust with our clients. These are the golden rules for All Pro Sound. You can get equipment or services from many different outlets. But our customer relationships last and weather the test of time—and in this case technology.

Alison Istnick is a regular contributing writer for Church Production and Worship Facilities magazines. She can be reached at aistnick@churchproduction.com.