

Da-Lite Helps Integrators Thrive Solving Customers' Lofty Challenges

Riga Motor Museum in Latvia had an off-centered request for displaying screens and acrylic panels above its vintage vehicle exhibits, but the Da-Lite Design Center drove home a solution.



It's not easy

Typically, there's a catch 22 involved with delivering customers a mind-blowing, completely original solution.

From an integration firm's perspective, however, "completely original" and "easy" don't have to be mutually exclusive concepts. That's why projection screen provider Da-Lite created its Design Center – to turn completely original but sometimes not-easy-to-execute requests into turnkey solutions for integrators.

SOLAVI, a Latvia-based integration firm, can attest to Da-Lite's problem-solving ability. Its customer, Riga Motor Museum, is a large antique car museum in Riga, Latvia, with "the largest and most modern exposition of vehicles and vintage cars in the Baltics," explains SOLAVI's Ints Berzins.

The exhibition is extremely visual – all about showcasing vehicles, motorcycles and bicycles – and the government-funded client wanted the items complemented by just-as-dazzling multimedia solutions, Berzins says.



"The [customer aims] to create the radically new, innovation exposition of vintage vehicles with interactive and multimedia solutions, Berzins says. "The visitors get to know this story from modern, varied multimedia and design, and participating in different interactive activities."

As such, SOLAVI deployed high-resolution projectors coupled with video-mapping and blending. The project also includes media servers, video displays, touchscreens, audio systems and content management.

To be clear, the Riga Motor Museum was “one of the largest AV projects across the Baltic region last year,” says Robert de Jong, director of product marketing, EMEA, for Milestone AV Technologies. The museum exhibition area alone is over 4,500 square meters, but there is also the museum entrance; a large cafe area; an outdoor parking area that features audio and video; a conference center with large and small auditoriums; and an administrative building with several meeting areas.

Where the project got particularly challenging, however, was in exhibit area where the customized display of projection screens and acrylic panels seem to dangle in an artistic array from the ceiling above some of the vehicle displays.

Enter Da-Lite’s Design Center

Again, completely original, but not necessarily easy.

The concept behind Da-Lite’s custom-tailored Design Center service is that an integrator comes to it with an idea and walks away with a blueprint for making that idea a reality.

Of course, there’s more to it than that, says Aaron Silveus, who was managing the Da-Lite Design Center at the time of the Riga Motor Museum project. But Da-Lite deals with the hard part before providing an easy-to-implement solution.

“The Design Center is basically a way to exceed our standard product offerings,” Silveus says.

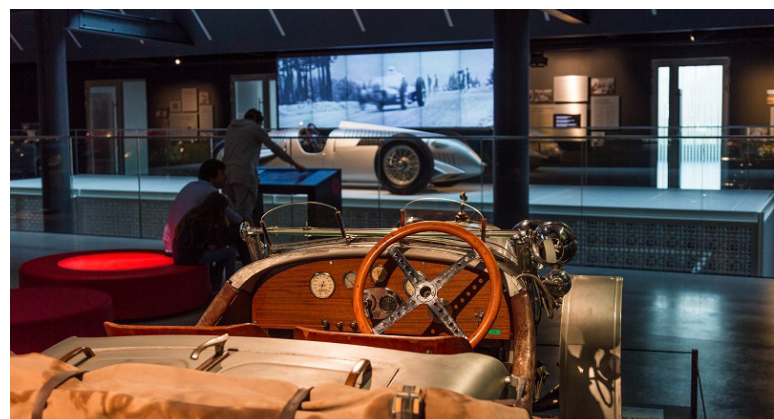
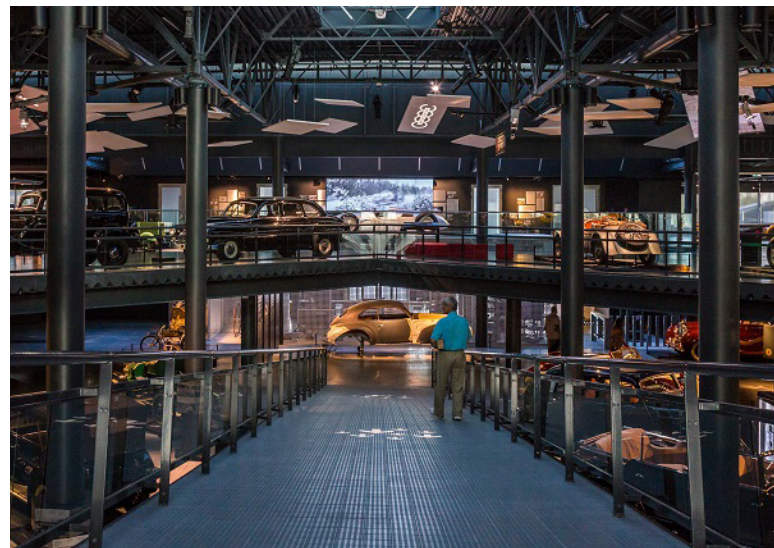
For instance, maybe instead of a standard-shaped screen, a given customer might want a screen shaped like a star. No problem.

In SOLAVI’s case, the customer wanted screens and panels positioned in a way that standard brackets don’t support. No problem.

“For this particular project, it was essentially standard materials that we had, but the screens themselves had to be tilted at specific angles,” Silveus says.

“Our normal bracketry that we carry is meant to be more upright, not necessarily leaning or flown when you’re talking about acrylic panels.”

So Da-Lite evaluated the challenge and issued it to its engineering team.





"They're phenomenal," Silveus says of Da-Lite's engineering team.

"This team is the brain trust of the Design Center as far as the solutions they come up with and ways they find to meet our customers' needs. I sat down with a couple of engineers and talked about different things that we may be able to take from our standard raw materials and adapt them to this specific install."

From that point, the design process evolved quickly, according to Silveus. "We had pricing and drawings taken care of within a week. Then a couple of months later we found out the project was 'a go.' Once it was a go, we had everything taken care of within 15 business days."

Implementing a Solution

The customer, Riga Motor Museum, had a unique vision. It helped that Da-Lite's Design Center was able to wrap their collective heads around the vision because it allowed them to work toward the customer's goal.

Silveus had seen renderings, understood the dimensions and was locked into what SOLAVI was trying to accomplish. "It's definitely not something you see every day," he says.

"These panels are typically installed in-wall vertically. They're not typically angled toward the floor, held in different degrees or positioning. It's typically a straight up-and-down install built into a wall.

We [typically] use them to turn a room into a giant rear-projection TV."

In this case, however, "The trick was getting in there and figuring out what we have to do on the custom fabrication side using our engineers and our tool room staff to give them a bracket that was going to allow them to hold these specific angles."

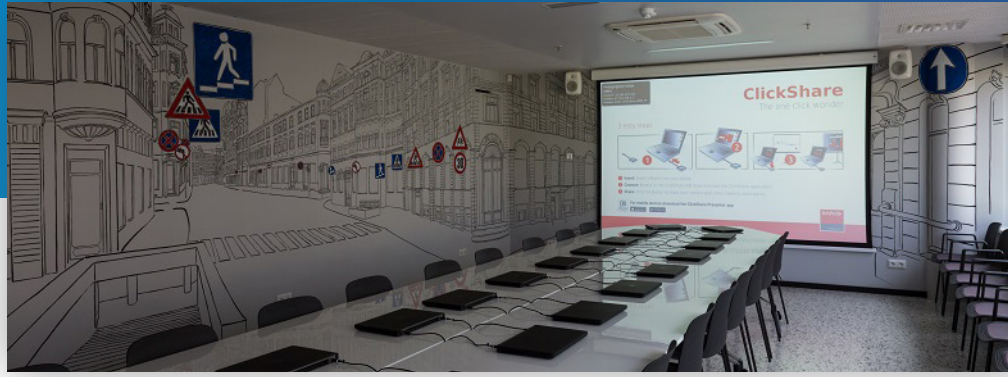
From SOLAVI's perspective it didn't miss a step despite the lofty custom design challenges, and that's thanks in large part to Da-Lite's engineering and quick turnaround.

While the museum exhibit is designed to dazzle, integration firm SOLAVI had to also focus on functionality and standards. In that regard it all came together seamlessly, according to Berzins.

"All parts are commonly seen, based on the exposition theme developed by the customer, content plan and confirmed concept of exposition design," he explains.

"In the exposition there are audiovisual hardware and materials which conform with high-quality, safety and technical standards. The exposition is equipped meeting the existing European standards and generally accepted audiovisual technology integrating standards."

While meeting standards might not deliver the "wow factor" of the perfectly placed panels peppered imaginatively throughout the exhibit, it was necessary to effectively solve the customer's unique



challenge. Meanwhile, SOLAVI was able to meet those standards thanks in part to Da-Lite's meticulous but creative engineering.

The formula for Da-Lite Design Center's success, according to Silveus, is adaptability. "I would say being able to be responsive and proactive to the needs of the customer."

In the case of the Riga Motor Museum project, Da-Lite was up to the challenge. "This particular project wasn't going to happen unless we could find a way to fabricate something that would hold this specifically vertical panel on-angle," Silveus says.

"I would say the biggest thing is just being able to adapt to the needs of the customer and to modify that standard product line in a way that's going to suit unique installations such as this."

So in the end the "completely original" concept is delivered.

It wasn't necessarily easy, but the customer doesn't have to know that.

'One of the Largest AV Projects in the Baltic Region'

There is much more to SOLAVI's Riga Motor Museum project than the artistic array of acrylic panels and projection screens in the exhibit area, even though they're understandably a focal point for many.

As Robert de Jong, director of product marketing, EMEA points out, the project was "one of the largest AV projects in the Baltic region last year" and, as such, he's pleased that SOLAVI specified a lot of Milestone equipment for it.

The museum's vast administrative and meeting spaces, for instance, can be considered a large project unto itself.

All in all, de Jong adds, it's "truly a highly innovative visitor attraction." Meanwhile, he points out that the museum hosts one of the world's largest antique motor collections and it was important that the technology would do it justice. "The AV interactivity and the fact that they've not just mounted flat panels to the wall and they've really integrated the higher end rear projection screens – I think that's fantastic and that really makes the museum work."