

CASE STUDY



Solutions360 Increases Visibility at AVI Systems

Client Profile

AVI Systems started 43 years ago as a small supply company in North Dakota, and has grown into a global provider of audio visual solutions with 15 offices in the U.S.

The company is unique in the AV industry, in that it is 100 percent employee owned, which contributes to a distinctive culture. As owners, the employees have a different mindset, and there is a strong team environment. *“With the ESOP, we are an open book business, and making data readily available to our people is a top priority,”* says Kendra Lettau, Process Management Architect at AVI Systems.

Revenue \$185M (2015); \$202M (2016); \$218.5M (projected 2017).

The Challenge

AVI Systems went live with the Q360 platform in September, 2015. *“At the time, we were focused on enterprise scalability,”* Lettau reports, *“We had been growing very rapidly and we needed a new platform to continue to grow and do it in a stable way.”* So, AVI decided to slow down, and prepare to become a bigger company.

“Going to the Q360 platform took away our silos by putting all our data into one database. This gives us much better visibility. Now anybody in the company can access current data quickly.”

As one of the largest systems integrators in the AV industry, AVI had solid processes in place, but the departments and software platforms were all operating in silos. *“Accounting was the driving force of the old ERP, and it wasn’t ideal to have an accounting system driving our behavior,”* says Lettau. *“We were trying to make our old ERP fit our business instead of the other way around. We did a lot of Excel spreadsheets that were on individual computers, and the spreadsheets were specific to a single department, so trying to analyze data was a big challenge.”*

Prior to Q360, AVI was using six software platforms and was looking to add a seventh. *“The turning point for us was we were about to deploy another silo and it seemed like we were just putting a band aid on a bigger situation.”*

AVI has a strong focus on the user experience and providing ongoing customer support. The beauty of this business model is the customer doesn’t go away at the end of the project. Rather, it marks the beginning of a long-term relationship that delivers ongoing streams of revenue. The project is merely a determinate period of time necessary to achieve the end result, but once you have the system in place, the project is no longer relevant.

“One thing that stood out to us is that Solutions360 understands our industry and our business, and could help us as business consultants at the same time. That was a strong selling point for us.”

What is important is how do you service the customer, and how does the service department know what is in that room? This is the information the service department needs. *“We were trying to build this system for the service department from scratch using a new software platform, but Q360 already has this functionality built in. This was the main point of interest that started our conversations with Solutions360.”*

AVI started talking internally that maybe they should take a look at a better overall solution. *“We aren’t trying to be unique in any fashion,”* says Lettau, *“We are just trying to run a solid business on a single platform and wanted to know what we could do out of the box.”*

The Solution

“Q360 takes quoting, ordering, resource management, time keeping and all the different aspects of an integration business into consideration,” says Lettau, *“It’s designed with our business in mind, so it’s a much better fit.”*

Having an end-to-end software package is desirable. Now AVI doesn’t have to add on a different software package for every single function of the business.

“It was desirable to work with a vendor that could understand us quickly. We interviewed other vendors that knew a lot about their software, but not how to apply it to our industry or our business. Solutions360 already understood what we needed.”

The Results

“We really wanted to focus on how we handed off work between departments, such as sales to integration, or

integration to services,” Lettau reports, *“We wanted to make sure that was solid.”* It used to be especially challenging for sales reps preparing for customer meetings. Before they had to go to each silo and research what was happening with their customers, but now all the data for a customer is in one place and easy to access.

“Q360 gives us visibility so our people can see what is happening with all departments, where previously they couldn’t easily do.”

AVI is getting data from Q360 on a daily basis, so they can understand all their projects in progress. It has been especially helpful for coordinating between the 15 offices, because they are all following the same software and the same way of utilizing the data. So there is more consistency when different regions need to work together.

“Going into this, each department had software and data that worked for them and did what they needed, but the full picture of the customer’s activities took time to put together. They used what was available and did a great job, then handed it off to the next person in line and lost visibility. There has been a definite adjustment period, but the appreciation for what information they have at their disposal and the results the customer gets in the end have been building over the last two years.”

“It took a while for our people to get used to the idea that the data was available, and to know what to do with it. But now the conversations that happen between the different roles are a lot more productive, and it is helping drive better business practices.”

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