

TRIO VIDEO

When it has to work, it has to be
Grass Valley.

**CUSTOMER:**

Trio Video
Chicago, US

APPLICATION:

Live sports and entertainment
production.

CLIENTS:

Comcast SportsNet Chicago
& WGN-TV.

BACKGROUND:

When your company is producing two to three live sports and entertainment events per day (and up to ten per week), virtually all year round, you don't have time for equipment failures or unhappy clients. That's why Trio Video, a premiere video production services company based in Chicago, Ill., relies on Grass Valley™ cameras, production switchers, and routers to keep their projects up and running.

Trio operates four "A" units ("Tango," "Rhythm," "Phoenix," and "Tempo") and two "B" support trucks ("Beta" and "Blues")—all high-definition capable, and all equipped with Grass Valley equipment. That's 40 LDK 6000 and LDK 8000 series cameras, four Kalypso™ HD switchers, four Trinix™ routers, and eight Concerto™ Series audio signal routers.

Due to its reputation as a reliable, state-of-the-art technology company, Trio Video now holds the production contracts for virtually every professional local sports team in Chicago with Comcast SportsNet Chicago and WGN-TV. This includes the NBA Bulls, NFL Bears, MLB

Cubs and White Sox games (both home and away), and the NHL Blackhawks. Trio's trucks also produce over 16 weeks of NFL football games for the FOX Network, as well as college football and basketball games for ESPN.

On top of that, for the last six years, Trio has been responsible for helping to capture and broadcast every major music festival in North America (the most recent being the famous Bonnaroo 2011 Festival where they used 25 Grass Valley LDK 6000 cameras, three Grass Valley production switchers, and four Grass Valley video routers on board its trucks to cover six separate stages).

Owing to its consistent high quality, Trio has one of the longest running production relationships with Major League Baseball (they've been working with the Cubs since 1994 and White Sox since 1984) of any production company in the US. That's why it's so important that the equipment they bring to each project is a good fit and does the job efficiently and right the first time. In live production Trio doesn't get a second chance to make it right.

Peter Kimball, Director of Program Development and Production at Trio Video, and a former technical director who's used Grass Valley switchers in the past, said the Grass Valley Kalypso (and more recently the Kayenne™) production switcher has always been the most sought after by clients and freelance technical staff, so standardizing the company's trucks on Grass Valley products was a smart business decision. Along with the Grass Valley cameras and routers, they keep the trucks rolling and the list of ongoing projects secure.

"We have multiformat capability on all of our trucks because we have to. The market demands that we be as flexible as we can. That's been a hallmark of Grass Valley's technology strategy for a long time and we couldn't agree more."

Peter Kimball, Director of Program Development and Production, Trio Video



“We also get great customer support from Grass Valley’s field office (in Salt Lake City, Utah), which is an advantage for our guys who are on the road all the time. With Grass Valley behind us, we have a highly beneficial relationship that we feel comfortable with and will grow into the future with. That’s why we keep coming back to Grass Valley.”

Roger Redensek, Director of Special Projects, Trio Video

Trio built its first HD truck in 2003 (“Tango”), when the Grass Valley LDK 6000 WorldCam was the only multi-format camera on the market. While that has changed, Kimball thinks the newer LDK 8000 makes the best pictures in the industry. And his clients wholeheartedly agree. That’s why they keep coming back.

The cameras are used on Grass Valley triax signal transmission links, which makes it easy to “plug in” to a stadium or other outdoor venue that has installed triax cabling as its main house infrastructure. In fact, the majority of stadiums and venues in North America are still based on triax cable. This is important for setting up and tearing down a project. As in most business scenarios time is money, so, for Trio, the less spent the better.

Using a camera, switcher, and compact router that can capture and manage the action in different HD formats is also key to Trio’s business, as they might be working with a project being shot in 1080i one day and 720p the next. In fact, the very first project Trio produced with its the new “Tango” truck was a 1080i job. Two days later its was used for a major sports shoot on ESPN in 720p.

Being able to use the same equipment for both types of productions (as well as for SD video, if required) brings Trio a fast return on its investment and the confidence of not having to decline jobs due to inadequate gear.

As Trio continued to build its other HD trucks, they found that standardizing on Grass Valley gear made it easy to communicate between trucks on larger productions. They often make use of remotely located Grass Valley 1 M/E control panels that work in tandem with the main Kalypso switcher on board one of its HD trucks. At the Bonnaroo festival, they set up six mini control rooms on-site that were all connected to the Trio trucks via fiber optics.

Using all Grass Valley equipment helps streamline Trio’s production workflows, because in addition to the main production gear, all of the tally and intercom systems work together. Trio doesn’t have to reinvent the wheel every time out. Pretty much, they plug things in and they all work together seamlessly. That’s the advantage Trio gets from going with a large single vendor like Grass Valley.

While Trio has made a name for itself in live sports production, it also is heavily involved with live entertainment shows. Among its noteworthy events, the company shot a rock concert by U2 in 2005 using the 23.98 format—which

emulates the film look that entertainment producers often favor. This was easily done with the Grass Valley LDK 6000 WorldCam HD camera, a capability that was not possible with any other camera at the time. Shot over four days in Chicago, the milestone production went on to be released as a successful feature film seen around the world.

Trio will often leave the LDK 6000/LDK 8000 cameras out on the field (with all weather covers) for an entire 14-day baseball home stand and never have a problem with them working each and every time. The weather can be brutal in Chicago whether its spring baseball at Wrigley Field or late fall football at Soldier Field as well as live hockey games in Canada in the winter, the Grass Valley gear continues to perform well.

So when producing a rock festival, two baseball games, and a live comedy special all on the same day—as Trio has done several times—the equipment your company is using better be up to the challenge. For Trio Video, the show must go on... and with Grass Valley live production equipment, it does just that, each and every time.

“The best part about the Grass Valley gear we use is that we don’t baby it and it stands up to the rigors of the road. This means we’ll get many years out of it. That’s important when operating a production company. We have to justify all of the equipment that we purchase and make sure it will stand up to the test of time.”

Peter Kimball, Director of Program Development and Production, Trio Video

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