

KVVU (FOX5)

Grass Valley Ignite helps Sin City station increase local news

CUSTOMER:

KVVU (FOX5), Meredith Corporation, Las Vegas, US

APPLICATION:

Local news production

EQUIPMENT:

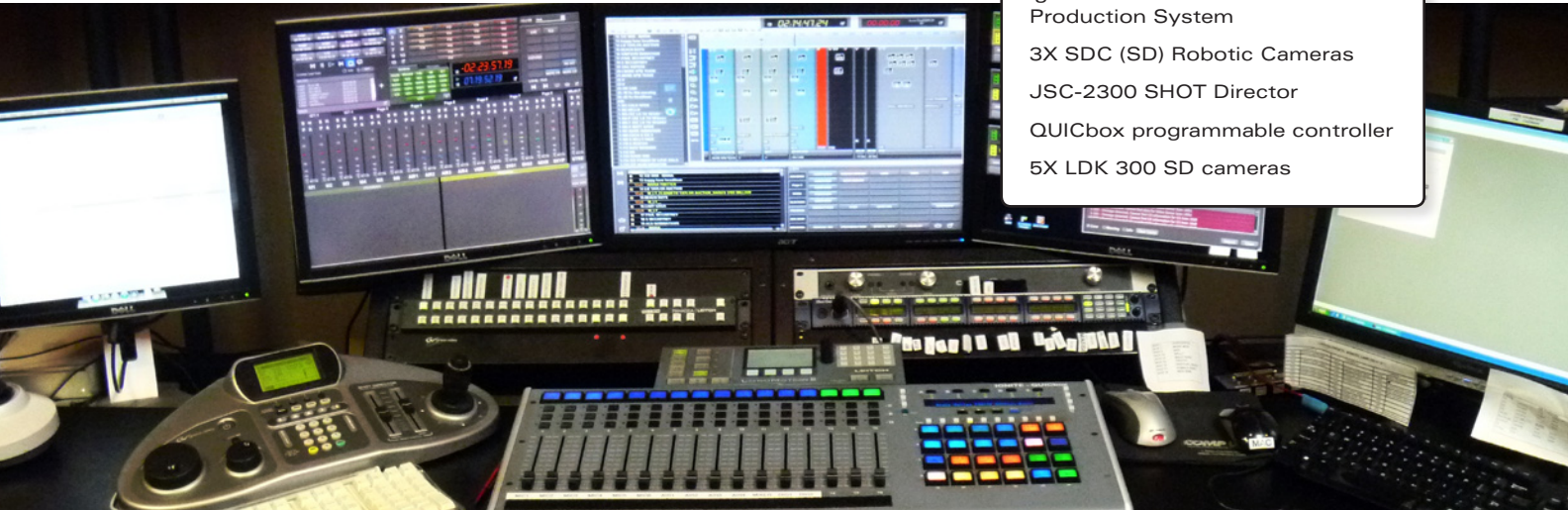
Ignite Scalable Automated Production System

3X SDC (SD) Robotic Cameras

JSC-2300 SHOT Director

QUICbox programmable controller

5X LDK 300 SD cameras



BACKGROUND

In June 2009, when Meredith Corp. management decided to turn over the newscasts of KVVU (FOX5), the local FOX affiliate in Las Vegas, to a Grass Valley™ Ignite™ scalable automated production system, the move was met with a bit of apprehension. At the time, the technology was still fairly uncharted waters for a small station like KVVU and it was clear that to make the transition work, all of the staff would have to be on board. Yet, if they were successful, they'd be able to work smarter and produce their newscasts in a very different and efficient way.

"Two years later, we couldn't be happier with how well the system has performed and how easily our staff took to it and made our newscasts better," said Gary Prager, Production Manager at KVVU. "Because of the Ignite system, we are now able to do more than before we got the system—an additional full hour of news."

MORE IS BETTER

Anyone familiar with the news business knows that more on-air news means more revenue. Prager said that the Ignite system has allowed them to now produce 8.5 hours of news per weekday and 2 hours on the weekend.

"This has been made possible because we prepare shows faster and can add new elements to update our news coverage as the day goes along," Prager said. "Viewers appreciate that and it keeps them tuned in."

The station is currently broadcasting in standard definition (SD) digital and, according to both in-house staff and viewers in the nation's 40th DMA, its on-air signal has never looked better. They are using the Ignite system, three Grass Valley robotic SDC cameras, a SHOT Director, a QUICbox™ programmable controller, as well as five Grass Valley LDK 300 (12-bit processing, 16:9/4:3 switchable) SD cameras. They've also installed a Wheatstone console to mix, what Prager calls the cleanest stereo audio in town.

"Back in the old studio," according to Prager, "we had to have multiple people available to do one job. We'd say, 'okay I need you to run cameras, or be a TD, or mix audio.' Also, when a producer asks for a breaking news feed or some new element to be added to the newscast, we now have a single person [TD] to communicate that direction to. That's very powerful in terms of getting things done quickly and efficiently. I know the newscasts run much more smoothly."

The system has also cut down on-air errors tremendously. "With one person in control, we can quickly assess the situation and keep it clean, stay focused on air, and keep the newscast on track," Prager said.

"For us, the Ignite system has been a huge improvement and has brought a lot of efficiency to how we produce our daily newscasts."

Gary Prager, Production Manager, KVVU (FOX5)



Nanelle Fellows, Technical Producer, KVVU (Fox5), who directs the station's local entertainment show several days a week and is the solo weekend director using TMX/IQT coding on the Ignite system.

“The Ignite system performs the same, error-free way every time. We don’t have to worry about a TD that might be sick that day or whatever and might miss a cue.”

Gary Prager, Production Manager, KVVU (FOX5)

The staff went through about six weeks of intensive training with Grass Valley when the system first arrived. After that training period, several of the staff really stepped up and embraced the system.

“We launched our first live newscast with Ignite on June 26, 2009 and the same technical directors are still using it today,” Prager said. “Grass Valley told us we had the cleanest, most successful launch of an Ignite system they had ever seen. Of course we agree with them.”

IMPROVED PRODUCTION VALUES

At KVVU, the shows continue to get better and better. And, the best part is that its growing audience loves the new graphic elements and other production values they’ve added thanks to the Ignite system.

For example, the producers have added new types of wipes and transitions that used to take the staff a lot more time and effort to produce. Previously, they had to put content through the stillstore inside their Grass Valley Kalypso™ switcher or send special triggers to their Vizrt graphics platform to get images to air. Now, with the Ignite system, that’s not necessary. Even on-air quad boxes look better than then they ever did before Ignite.

“In general, the real value has come with the fact that with Ignite, many of these things can all be done with one pre-determined action,” said Prager. “In many cases it can be a single keystroke, which is already built into the Ignite platforms. By not tying up our dedicated equipment, it can be used for other things that are running the newscast.”

According to Prager, KVVU was the first of Meredith’s West Coast stations to convert its newscasts to the Ignite system. Based on their positive experience, Meredith stations in Portland, Ore., and Phoenix, Ariz. have installed the system as well. Prager said that they would recommend the Ignite system to any station that is looking to improve efficiency without increasing staff or throwing needless money at other types of automation.

“We’re in the business of producing the best quality news product we can with the resources at hand,” Prager added. “We do that each and every day with the Grass Valley Ignite system... and our local competition is not happy about it.”

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