

RE: Could you share your thoughts on Media Merge, please?

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Please see below for my responses:

From: Janet English [mailto:JanetEnglishWorks@msn.com]

Sent: Monday, March 20, 2017 3:08 PM

Subject: Could you share your thoughts on Media Merge, please?

My name is Janet English and I'm chair of trustees for Spanish Fort United Methodist Church on Mobile Bay in Alabama. **Greetings from a fellow Alabamian—raised in Hunstville/Madison and served two churches there.**

We are considering a Media Merge proposal to upgrade our audio/visual in our traditional sanctuary. We have both a traditional and contemporary service.

We have heard nothing but praise for Media Merge's expertise, ethics and followup. **Counting the multimedia upgrade project they are doing for us this week, MediaMerge has done three A-V install projects for us in the past 15 years, two of them major projects that ran into hundreds of thousands of \$ each. I can tell you that MediaMerge has earned my trust, which is a HUGE thing since I knew that the success of those A-V projects would have a direct correlation on how much trust the people of this church afforded me to make competent decisions about our A-V systems. And as a side note and proof that MediaMerge isn't just about selling gear, the first thing they addressed in both of our buildings were the acoustics of the room. Their exact words (or as close as I can remember) were, "The highest quality sound system will fail to live up to its potential if the room isn't acoustically sound."**

Because of the scope of our project (meaning it's pretty expensive), we wanted to reach out to several churches to dig a bit deeper into the reaction of the congregation to the project from churches like yours. Ken McKibben gave your name as a reference.

So I have a few questions that I would greatly appreciate your helping with.

-- Was there any quantifiable result after you completed the project? ie, increased attendance? **The main quantifiable result was that the sound in our Worship Center and our Family Life Center (which includes a 700-seat concert hall) improved rather dramatically, especially in the sound coverage for the room. There were no more "dead spots" in the room—the sound was the same for someone sitting in the corner of the balcony as it was for someone sitting in the center row "sweet spot" of the room. It was never a goal of ours to have increased attendance as a result of any of the installs, but rather, to provide the best A-V experience possible for whomever did attend.**

-- Did you find participation in choir, band, presentations increased? **Well, the year after our FLC project, as a result of that install we were able to do a 4-night large-scale Christmas pageant that brought over 2,500 to our church that would not have been possible if not for the A-V install. Plus, we have done probably 25 – 30 concerts in our FLC since I have served here, and again, many of those would have been unfeasible if not impossible without the concert-quality sound system. Regarding your specific question, I have found that when a church has an excellent music program and state-of-the-art A-V systems, that does tend to attract good musicians and skilled A-V techs.**

-- What, if any, general feedback did you get from the congregation? Could they hear/understand the speakers better, for example? **Many positive comments, including a number of people who shared that they could hear the pastor and music clearly when they were not able to prior to the install(s). It really was a rather shocking difference between our old sound systems and the new ones.**

-- Was there anything you wish you had done differently? **Yes ... for our FLC install, due to budget constraints we had to cut back on a portion of the acoustical work that really needed to be done in that building, and as is often the case when something gets put "on the back burner," the extra acoustical work never got done and to this day I regret not pushing a little harder to make sure that we completed everything up front.**

-- What was most surprising after completing the project? **As always, many of those who attend church and don't live in the same world that most worship pastors live in are shocked and dismayed when you tell them that it's going to cost \$175k to do a major A-V install (this could even be said of other pastoral staff members). However, now that several years have passed since we completed our two major installs, I never hear anyone say, "I regret that we spent that much \$ on our A-V systems." Rather, most people are reminded of how great an investment that was every time they hear an ensemble, or a soloist, or our choir sing or our pastor preach.**

We really appreciate if you can shed any light on this. **May God bless your church and give you wisdom as you make these decisions. Hope I have helped. I can tell you without reservation that MediaMerge has earned my trust (and that of the church) to the point that if/when we ever do another major A-V project here, there is no doubt in my mind as to who I will call.**

Janet English