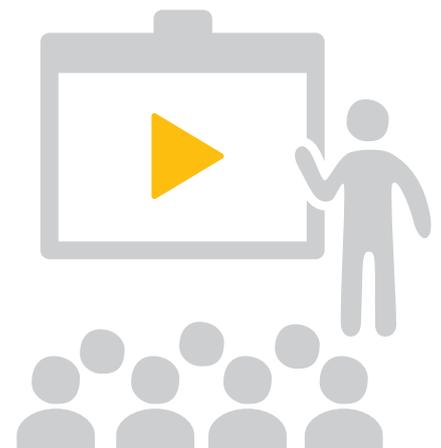




## MAKING AV Work for you

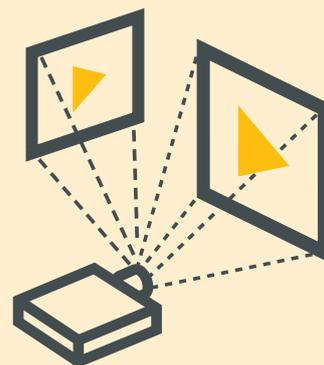
When you're preparing an AV budget for your event, there's a lot more to think about than simply how much money to allocate for theming, lights, sound and vision. An event manager now has tools available to them that require thorough pre-production work with their AV provider on a creative level. Happily, these same tools are transforming audience experiences for the better, lowering costs to the hirer and elevating events to an art form. To ensure you're getting the most value for money from your event's AV design, a solid knowledge of the capabilities of both technology and your AV company are essential.



## Your projections

When shopping for an AV provider, you traditionally seek service, price and reliability. All are good measures of a quality AV company, but to truly do justice to your event, creativity needs to be a central part of their product offering. Advances in projection and lighting technology mean that the old business model of simply hiring out and operating gear for a client is no longer an adequate level of service. Amongst many creative elements that drive audience impact, a key market influence has been the use of projection mapping.

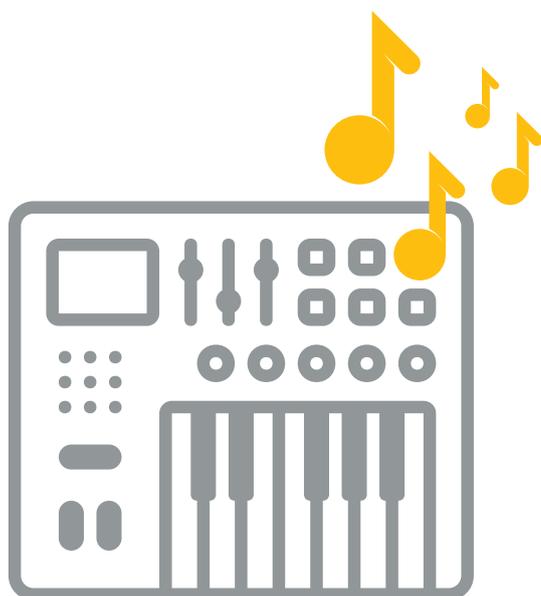
Projection mapping is the art of creating multimedia content for projection onto flat surfaces (2D projection mapping) or objects (3D projection mapping) and then using advanced computer and projector technology to bring that imagery to life. It has transformed major events, conferences and theatrical presentations the world over. While the technology is now commonplace, the creative talent to successfully use it is not.



## Forward-looking

Talk with your AV company about the design and creative support they offer. Can they digitally brand your conference with projections and then successfully transform the same space for a gala dinner? In-house designers should have the skills to shepherd you through the concept creation, implementation and delivery of just about anything your imagination can conjure. Entire ballrooms can be changed into another world, and the walls of an auditorium can ripple at the arrival of a new product. A custom built set design can be transformed into a living, breathing animal. Pretty much anything is possible, and an in-depth conversation with a design professional is invaluable to help direct your thinking in the planning stages.

Having a clear vision of the aesthetic and tone of the event is crucial at this stage of pre-production. Storyboard your event like a movie director, discuss themes and images with your key staff. Don't get fixated on what you have seen done before or know to be possible; a good AV company should be able to take on board any creative idea you have and translate it into a practical suggestion.



## Cue it up

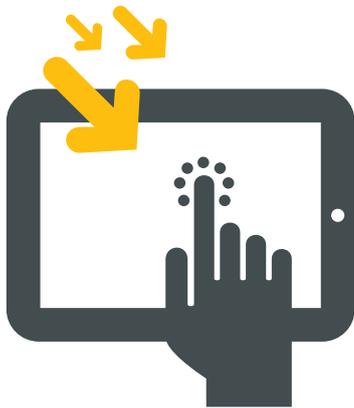
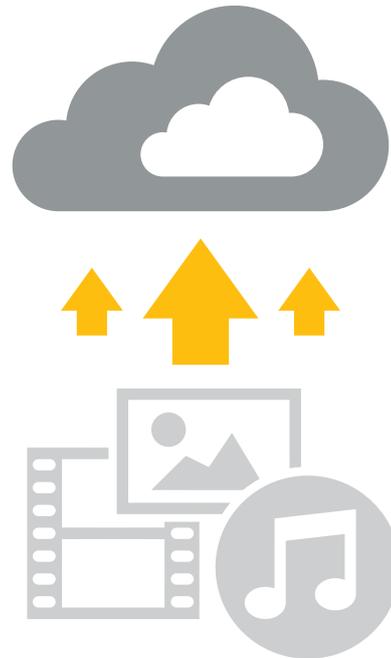
While the immersive visuals of projection mapping are the biggest attention-grabbers at an event, an integrated digital theme should also include audio. A background soundscape that matches the visual theme, walk-up music for presenters, stings and fanfares and an appropriate soundtrack for any custom video presentation should all be on offer. Supplementing pre-recorded cues with live musicians could also be considered.

The sound system employed to deliver it should match the content. Important things to look for are adequate coverage of the room to ensure all attendees get crystal-clear speech as well as the full impact of any musical material. If you are employing high-energy music or cinematic sound effects ensure the system can replicate the full range of sound. An adequate amount of subwoofers need to be in place to maximise the impact of any low-end effects or bass lines.

**The bottom line**

Creating a multimedia event from the ground-up can seem to be a longer process than the traditional method of simply stating a theme and letting the staging company deliver, but the results represent a much better return on investment. Elements of digital branding or event presentations can not only be used at one specific event, but also transported to similar events or venues at no further cost. The same media can also be repackaged as web content where appropriate.

When compared to a themed event with heavy use of custom sets and props, a digital theme takes less time and effort to build and transport and less labour to set up and pack down. When looking at a repeated or toured event, the costs are thrown into even sharper relief. There are also venue specific considerations. Logistically, some venues are challenging to bring equipment in and out of, requiring more labour and higher costs to the presenter. Digital can eliminate many of those issues.



**Direct to device**

Another excellent line of enquiry when seeking an AV provider is to ask about their capabilities to incorporate the audience’s own devices into your event. Almost everyone now carries a video displaying, networked computer in their pocket, making them capable of not only absorbing your content but also interacting with it. An AV company should have a lot of fresh ideas on how to make this work for your event, extending your theme and offering greater engagement with your audience.

A key technology for presenters are apps to enable snap polling of audience members and instantly display aggregated results on a main screen. For attendees, important information such as timetables, maps and key messages should be easily accessible from an app or network. The power of the smartphone lets event managers get into the mind of their audience. Perhaps use an app to deepen information retention by triggering special ‘easter egg’ content when an attendee demonstrates that they have absorbed a key sales point.

**Ask the right questions**

So how do you know if the quote you’re getting really represents value for money for your multimedia themed event? If you don’t have a technical background, it may feel like it’s impossible to really be sure, but a couple of simple principles can guide you. Firstly, if you do not understand the need for or cost of a specific piece of equipment, question it. Secondly, if you ask about an innovative product such as projection mapping or second-screen engagement and the AV company talk down the idea as ‘too hard’ or ‘not something they see value in’, that’s a red flag. It’s very likely that they haven’t kept pace with modern presentation technology and are unlikely to possess the creativity to deliver a truly excellent event.

The respect should also run the other way. Charges for services such as custom content creation and digital integration are things that many customers are not yet used to seeing on their invoices, but are highly specialised tasks that are more than worth the investment. If an AV company is providing these services and not including them on the invoice, then the costs are built-in somewhere else, and that’s not transparent. Talk to your AV provider about their rates to create one-off media and your options for employing it after the event. Good creative talent is rare, and can be the difference between an event being merely adequate or excellent.





### Get the right answers

To really ensure peace of mind when selecting an AV provider, ask about their history in presenting similar events and their history at the chosen venue. Look at some examples of their work closest in scope to your event. If they have documentation of their work at your chosen venue, even better. There are also some very specific technical questions that you could ask at this point.

Questions about details are excellent for getting a sense of competence and good organisation. Is the PA suitable for speech reinforcement only or can it deliver loud, exciting music if you need it? What combination and numbers of lighting fixtures do they usually use – LED, moving lights, wash lights? Again, it's not necessarily the specific information that you need, but the assurance of their confidence in answering. If you're satisfied with that, then ask them what they recommend, or better yet, have always wanted to do given the opportunity. You'll be in good hands.

### Bringing it all together

Staging Connections realise that you have a unique opportunity to create an event specific to your audience. It's worth your time to work together with a creative AV company to bring an original vision to life that makes a strong statement about your organisation. It's also a mark of respect to your constituency. Your customers are already enjoying new types of audience engagement in both their professional and personal lives, either driven by large corporates or the entertainment industry. The increase in quality of experience means all content providers have to compete to cut through.

Your AV budget now has the potential to deliver results way beyond the date of the event itself. All of your customers are broadcasters, sharing their impressions, images and videos across their networks. Devoting time and creativity at the outset of your project planning can now pay off almost in perpetuity. Get to the heart of your message, envision the best possible shape it could take, and invest in bringing it to life in most effective way with Staging Connections.



Interested in adding extra dimensions to your next event? Contact your Staging Connections representative or call us on **1800 209 099** or email [marketing@stagingconnections.com](mailto:marketing@stagingconnections.com)