



5 Critical Things to Know Before Investing in AV Systems

And where most AV projects go wrong

Hello from CSAV Systems:

Investing in AV technology—like video conferencing, digital signage, or command centers—involves many non-obvious factors.

This guide highlights the five key areas where AV decisions succeed or fail, ensuring you get it right the first time.

At CSAV Systems, we design reliable, user-friendly solutions tailored to how your organization—whether a business, government agency, or house of worship—actually operates. If that's what you're looking for, you've come to the right place.



Start With Purpose Not Equipment

AV systems should be designed to support how your organization communicates and operates every day — via video meetings, announcements, digital signage, live events, safety systems and more. Effective AV technology isn't optional; it's part of most organizations' daily operations.



So, what matters most when choosing the right system? Two things: Purpose and Physical Space.

An AV system must match the specific goals of the space. For example, a small huddle room for quick video calls requires entirely different technology than a formal boardroom or a hybrid training room.

Physical space matters, too – as in, the size of the space and the composition of building materials used in the room. Example: A room with glass walls and lots of sunlight will affect sound and screen visibility. A large room may require multiple microphones and cameras to clearly capture everyone.

The mistake most people make: Starting with equipment without careful consideration for designing around purpose and the physical space

If It's Not Easy to Use, It Won't Get Used

AV systems aren't used occasionally; they're used constantly. And when AV systems are difficult to operate or unreliable, people will find workarounds or other ways and often stop using the system altogether.

Here's what "ease of use" looks like when it's done well:

- Meetings and functions start in seconds
- Content sharing and control are simple
- Interfaces are intuitive, eliminating guesswork



"Ease of use" isn't about fewer features or dumbing down technology. It's about better design, grounded in even better engineering and programming. Behind the scenes, complexity is addressed through precise planning and programming. HD cameras that track different speakers in a meeting, with comprehensive audio coverage driving the action, are a thing of beauty when they operate simply and intuitively. And they will only do so when the hard work takes place up front.

The mistake that many clients make: Deploying "off-the-shelf" AV systems or sophisticated systems that are not reliable or too complicated for real-world use.

Audio Matters More Than Video

People will tolerate average visuals, but they won't tolerate poor audio.

Sound engineering is a critical part of great sound systems and effective visual systems, too (think video conferencing or projection systems).



Here's what actually drives good audio coverage:

- Finding the right microphones and speakers for a given purpose and space
- Proper placement and distribution of mics and speakers
- Room acoustics and physical environment
- Level, tuning and well distributed audio coverage—not simply volume

The mistake we see over and over again: Underestimating the crucial importance of quality audio coverage — and overinvesting in visuals that don't solve the real problem.

How Physical Space Can Challenge a Great AV Experience

You can install the same equipment in two rooms or spaces and get completely different results. Why? Because the physical space matters more than most people expect.



What impacts AV performance:

- Glass, hard surfaces, ceiling height
- Lighting conditions and glare
- Table layout and sightlines
- Background noise, such as HVAC, lighting systems and more

Even the best technology can't overcome a space that hasn't been designed with AV in mind. (All glass walls? Granite table? Tile floors? You've heard the term "echo chamber?") This is how Purpose + Physical Space – not subjective selection of AV hardware – help us identify the right AV technology.

The mistake many people make: Simply not accounting for the impact of the physical characteristics of a given room or space on sound and video. Glass walls = not our friend. Granite table = pretty, but definitely not our friend.

Like IT Systems, AV Systems Require Investment

Modern AV systems are more like IT infrastructure than basic office equipment, yet client teams don't often see it that way.

Like IT systems, AV systems often require:

- Network connectivity
- Software updates
- Ongoing support
- Fast response when something breaks



AV systems, especially those designed for business or professional purposes, are custom designed and integrated. As clients think about the necessity to manage and upgrade IT technology on a regular basis, consider the same approach for AV technology – i.e., adequate capital planning and budgeting; ensuring you have access to AV technicians because IT and AV are not the same. Like computer systems, AV systems have.

The mistake we see clients make: Treating AV as “install it and forget it” type of technology, viewing AV as “off the shelf” technology that anyone can assemble and put together.

How Can We Help?

If there's one thing we hope you take from this guide, it's this: There are solutions.

The right AV system—designed thoughtfully and built around your needs—should be simple to use, reliable, and ready every time you need it. It should support your team, your communication, and your organization without getting in the way. In fact, you should come to a point where you power on every AV system with absolute confidence, so you can get to work and focus on achieving your objectives.



At CSAV Systems, we understand that OUR work enables YOUR work.

And we take this responsibility very seriously. We're invested in our clients' success. And we stand behind this commitment to our clients by providing our market-leading 3-YEAR warranty, covering all parts and labor, on every system we custom design and install.

If you're thinking about your next AV investment, or just trying to make sense of your options, call us. We're more than happy to discuss and there's no obligation to you. **Call us today at 732.577.0077.**