HRS Control's UDC Provides Custom Control For Alford Media Services

When a large, high-tech client posed a challenge for staging its annual meeting, Alford Media Services, Inc. found an effective custom solution in HRS Control's Universal Device Controller (UDC).

Based in Coppell, Texas, Alford is known for its forward-thinking approach to supporting the AV needs of a variety of clients. For this project the client wanted to reset their massive general session ballroom into six circular, stand-alone breakout pods during a lunch break. And once the pods were in place each presenter needed to have full wireless remote control of AV playback in the pod.

"The client wanted to convert the ballroom into individual breakout rooms without walls or dividers," says Rich Tate, director of marketing and creative at Alford. "They wanted six draped circular pods to come down from the ceiling; 40-50 seats were set up for each pod. Presenters had to have iPad control of the projector, screen and speakers in each pod and all the playback equipment backstage."

Alford rigged each fully-equipped pod on a circular truss that could be quickly lowered from the ceiling. The self-contained set up permitted a fast turnaround of the ballroom but the issue of playback control remained.

"The head of our video department was familiar with HRS Control's UDC," says Tate. "We're always on the lookout for innovative remote control solutions; we do a lot of iPad and IOS mirroring."

Alford IT Specalist Cy McCormick used UDC software to build a custom iPad interface for the presenters that would wirelessly control centralized AV gear backstage from each pod. The presenters could not only control their slides, videos and audio levels, they also could instantly switch between primary and back up equipment if needed.

"Each pod had unique content with AJA Ki Pros and computers used for playback and graphics," Tate explains. "We could talk to the playback devices very easily with UDC's AJA Gang Control feature."

Tate designed the graphical interface and buttons on the presenters' iPad controllers. "It was cool to do custom buttons in custom sizes and put things on the screen wherever we wanted them – there were no restrictions," he notes. "We even used a custom background, client colors and brand logo."

He reports that "everything worked like a charm" at the meeting's breakout sessions where the pods were a big hit. "The client was thrilled with UDC's custom control solution. We want to develop UDC for more clients and are eager to have the opportunity to use it again."