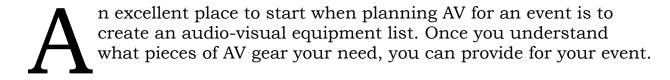If you've ever witnessed a striking presentation, moving speech or engaging video display that took a corporate or other event to another level, you can probably thank AV equipment. Audio visual equipment is the silent hero of many events: It ensures that a speaker's voice carries to the furthest reaches of the event space and provides mood-appropriate lighting for conferences and corporate workshops. Versatile and vital, considering audio visual needs is an important part of the event planning process. Explore our definitive guide to AV equipment and needs for several types of events, including easy-to-use, endlessly customizable AV checklists you can use to plan your event:

What is AV Equipment?

AV equipment is electronic media devices and equipment that includes both an audio (sound) and a visual (sight) component. AV items are vital to events that include presentations, speakers, music and beyond; Most events will require basic audio-visual equipment. What is considered "AV equipment" will vary from venue to venue, so it is important to consider the unique AV gear and services your event may require beyond a standard AV equipment suite.

For example, a corporate conference for which the company plans to project a custom logo light onto the event floor may require a certain type of lighting or specialty light rigging. An awards ceremony that features two presenters on opposite sides of a stage will require two podiums, two microphones, and so on.

Proper AV equipment can elevate an event or presentation by adding a level of professionalism and sleek, cutting edge technology. Sourcing, setting up and managing AV equipment at an event may seem like a daunting task to event planners, but connecting early with your venue and communicating clearly about your AV needs will help alleviate AV anxiety and provide you with the support system you need to execute your event.

An excellent place to start when planning AV for an event is to create an audio-visual equipment list. Once you understand what pieces of AV gear your need, you can provide for your event.

Audio Visual Equipment List

To get you started, here's a basic AV checklist for events, including considerations to make regarding specifications:

- **Microphones** – Wired or wireless, lavaliere, table or floor stands?
- **In-house lighting** – Adjustable in every room? Supplemental lighting needed?
- **In-house sound system**, or supplemental needed?
- **Portable sound system** required, or is in-house system sufficient?
- **Mixer board(s)** – How many?
- **Electrical supply sufficient**, or additional needed?
- **Video cameras** – How many?
- **Desktop** – Laptop computers? How many?
- **Podium** – How many? With or without microphone(s)?
- **Two-way radios** – Reception capabilities in all areas?
- **Projectors** – Built-in, or special order?
- **Technicians** – Camera, lights, sound, projection?
- **Screens** – What size? How many? What type?

AV For Meetings

Off-site corporate meetings are a welcome change of scenery from your company's tried-and-true conference room, but AV for meetings can require some special considerations. Your meeting AV checklist may include monitors, projectors, built-in LCD displays or screens, speakers, microphones and video cameras.

If the meeting will involve a large number of people logging into the venue's WiFi network, consider: Does the venue offer free WiFi, or is there an associated cost? Are there dead zones in the venue? Will the presentations be live-streamed? Will there be simultaneous events heavily relying on the same network that day?

A well-planned, thoughtfully-considered AV setup can solve many problems meeting attendees may face, from connecting devices and

sharing materials to ensuring the back of the room can hear presentations loud and clear.

AV For Conferences

Audio visual equipment for conferences often overlaps largely with AV for meetings, but on a larger, broader scale. That said, a conference room AV checklist will look very different from an event setup checklist for a multi-room or full-venue conference. Audio visual for conferences can get complicated as you factor in speaker-ready rooms, multiple presentations or speakers, or additional event days, but a baseline of knowledge regarding your venue's provisions and your event's needs can help mitigate confusion.

Conference room audio visual requirements may include one or more video display screens whether for video conferencing, presentations, or referring to materials on a computer. The exact visual system needed will depend on the scale of your conference. HDTV screens can work for smaller conferences, while a projector and screen work well for larger rooms and groups. You'll also need an audio system appropriate for the size of your room: For small conference rooms, a small self-powered speaker for clear audio from a computer or camera should be enough. For larger conferences, you may need to consider microphones and multiple speakers.

Again, context is key when it comes to AV event planning: The in-venue sound system for a dedicated seminar hall will be much different than what's available to you in a small conference room!

In a larger space, your conference equipment checklist will include more of everything: More speakers, more microphones, more display screens. You will also want to have a clear handle on the lighting capabilities of the space and the control systems that may be in play.

During a conference of any size, high-quality sound and visuals help to focus your meeting and get your messaging to your audience clearly. A thoroughly-planned audio-visual setup can help prevent distracting slips or glitches with technology that might otherwise irreparably harm the momentum of your meeting and your audience's experience.

AV Checklists for Events

Any type of audio-visual event planning will almost certainly need a thorough checklist — or more than one! You may want to create separate checklists for each stage of your AV planning, from your first site visit at your venue to a day-of setup guide. Below, we've provided a few AV checklist template ideas you can use to create your own checklist. Add or subtract bullet points as needed to suit your event's unique needs!

AV Site Visit Checklist

During your site visit at your event venue, you'll want to confirm the venue's experience, their in-house AV equipment and capabilities, and their policies and capabilities regarding additional equipment and technology. Here's a few checklist items to get you started:

- Check that the actual room dimensions are suitable for needed AV setup
- Note any space obstructions that may interfere with your setup
- Review AV placement as it relates to event traffic flow
- Test any adjustable house lighting in each room
- Confirm high-speed Internet access and price, if applicable
- Confirm broadband width, satellite capabilities, etc.
- Review list of AV equipment provided by the venue, including:
  - Microphone availability, capabilities and types
  - House sound system, if any, and capabilities
  - Display screen availability and quantity
  - Projector availability
  - Laptop computer availability and quantity
- Review venue policy regarding a 24-hour hold of the space for AV setup
- Review the in-house security policy regarding AV equipment

Questions to Ask Your Venue or AV Company

- What does the venue supply itself?
- Does the site have a specific supplier contract? If so, do they allow outside vendors?
- Is there an in-house electrical supply available?
- What is the ceiling clearance? Are there any ceiling obstructions, such as chandeliers?
- How soundproof are the walls/partitions?
- What elements of the room can/cannot be blocked by stands, stages, seating, etc.?
- Are there any known spots where light sources or immovable components of the space (pillars, etc.) could interfere with a projection screen?
- Are there house lights, and if so, where are the controls?
- Any restrictions on stage lighting?
- If special lighting is needed, does the venue have rigging capabilities?

AV Event Setup Guide

It's the day of your event, and excitement is in the air! But before you can get swept up in the festivities, you'll need to facilitate the setup of your AV equipment. Here's an AV setup guide for events to get you started on building your own:

Questions to Ask Your Venue or AV Company Prior to Setup

- What is the expected setup timeframe?
- Is there an accessible dock and elevator for moving heavy equipment?
- Given our requirements, will additional electrical supply be needed?
- What backup equipment is available onsite?
- What are the onsite set-up/breakdown times and security policies?
- Are there onsite AV experts or technicians? How many? During what times?

Pre-Event Admin Tasks
- Review your AV order line by line
- Review your setup timeline with your venue
- Schedule an onsite rehearsal
- Set-up an AV matrix of equipment needs per day, hour-by-hour, room-by-room, including speaker name and topic, if applicable
- Once your timeline is finalized, distribute it to all applicable parties well in advance
- Assign volunteers/staff persons to attend or monitor each function, if applicable

AV Event Setup Checklist
- Meet with venue coordinator or contact to review the setup timeline and event program
- Oversee equipment load-in and setup, if applicable
- Orientation for any event volunteers/staff persons, including DJs, musicians, speakers/presenters, etc.
- Oversee rehearsal with AV techs and key players
- Check all AV equipment for each function
- Check speaker-ready rooms, if applicable
- Set all rooms and AV equipment for the top of the event

Speaker/Presenter Requirements Checklist
If your event will include speakers or presenters, it's important to touch base early and often with those individuals to determine their AV requirements. Build a speaker requirements checklist that includes a complete list of equipment needed for all speakers/presenters as well as a breakdown of equipment needed for each individual speaker, if applicable.

AV Tips For Planning Events

There's no limit to the ways in which AV requirements for events can differ depending on the type of event, hosting company or group, and audience. As such, here are a few additional audio-visual tips tackling topics we've not yet touched on:

- Some AV technology and gear can assist with promotion or networking opportunities, like interactive screens, live Twitter feeds, or specialty apps. Consider whether your event might be an appropriate opportunity to explore these exciting, engaging AV tools!

- Some events may necessitate AV considerations for accessibility, like on-screen captioning or other technology/gear for hard-of-hearing or deaf audience members, audio capabilities for seeing-impaired or blind individuals, and so on. Be sure to fully investigate what the AV accessibility needs of your attendees may be as well as what accessible technology/gear your venue can provide.

- If an event includes different presenters, each presenter may have different AV requirements. Be sure to touch base with each presenter and create a thorough list of their individual AV nee