When Virgin Active started on their showcase health club in Collins Street, Melbourne, DRM Audio Visual were selected to provide a comprehensive AV solution. As Virgin Active Health Clubs are in the top-segment in their industry when it comes to quality, DRM were very excited about the prospect of designing and installing an audio-visual system.

“The end-user was very clear with their expectations when it came to AV systems. They wanted a simple, straightforward solution that was easy to use,” said Jarrod Bell, from DRM Audio Visual. “The audio system was designed to be seamless. We aimed to ensure that there is no loss or gain of volume as you move around the room.”

Jarrod noted that the club has multiple levels and very different spaces, acoustics and sound requirements for various activities. This meant that the choice and number of speakers in each zone and their amplification had to vary to suit the room and its use. It also meant that zoning and control over audio were critical. One of Jarrod’s key aims was to develop an AVC system where the volume of ambient noise would automatically adjust the volume of the sound system in that particular area.

“Each audio zone in the health club has different volume settings. In addition microphones have been used in conjunction with the Electro-Voice speakers. These microphones pick-up the level of ambient noise and adjust the decibel output of the speakers to ensure that the audio can be heard over the sound in the zone. We have also programmed a maximum decibel threshold to ensure that the audio volume does not go too loud.”
In the reception area, as you enter the club, the first speakers that can be noticed are the uniquely-shaped Electro-Voice EVID 4.2 4-inch surface-mount speakers. These serve to provide audio in the entrance hall while smaller halls and corridors use Bosch LBC 3951. The same Bosch speakers have also been employed in the toilets and washroom areas due to their moisture resistant characteristics. Industry favourites, the EVID 4.2 ceiling-mount speakers have also been used in larger areas. A paging system has been installed in reception to allow staff to access the audio systems across the club and make voice announcements if required. An Apple iPad serves as the touch control panel.

On the second level, Electro-Voice ZX1i-100 8-inch loudspeakers are featured in the open workout area. These hard-hitting horn speakers were chosen to ensure audio would be heard across the large open space, even when full with club members.

A number of specialised activity spaces are located on this level including the cycle studio. Audio here is provided with the help of two Dynacord TS400 vertical arrays and a 2000 W EV ETX 15-inch powered sub-woofer, which is neatly incorporated into the wall. The speakers were chosen specifically for their high-quality and performance. The TS400 vertical arrays are well known for their throw and are well suited for the depth of this room, while the powerful ETX sub provides the thumping low frequencies to get legs pumping.

The cycle studio additionally features a Panasonic projector for video projection and an AMX control pad that allows the trainer to select the music source and control the volume. “The AMX keypad has been configured and programmed by DRM Audio Visual and it ties in with Virgin Active’s MyRide system which is being used in this space,” explains Jarrod. “The keypad allows
the trainer to select the source music at the touch of a button or plug in his own source using the Aux-in port. The provision of this keypad takes into account the client’s desire of having a simple, straightforward and easy to use system."

A number of group exercise studios are also scattered through the gym. These feature a stage area at the front and a large area for classes such as BodyPump, BodyAttack and Kickboxing. High-energy audio in three of these spaces is handled by four EV Innovations EVF 1122s 12-inch speakers, with 60 degrees by 40 degrees dispersion with ZX1 speakers serving as monitors for the stage. EVF speakers are usually found in larger installations such as churches, exhibition halls and performance stages, but were used here to cope with the required sound volume and projection.

Jarrod talks about the choice of speakers: “The audio system was designed to be seamless. We aimed to ensure that there is no loss or gain of volume as you move around the room. For this reason we chose the Electro-Voice speakers as their dispersion was best suited for the space.”

The entire audio system at the Virgin Active Health Club is controlled from a single control room. This features three Electro-Voice EV NetMax N8000 DSPs for processing. Amplification duties are performed by Paramus 1225T and 1240T amplifiers. Electro-Voice EV CPS 4.10 amplifiers are also employed where necessary.

Wireless mic communication for instructors is covered with Electro-Voice RE 2 belt-packs integrated with Fitness-Audio instructor sets. Six Electro-Voice RE 2 wireless receivers manage the signals in the rack room.
Additionally an AMX NetLinx NX-2200 is used for control together with software modules programmed by DRM. The AMX product and the EV NetMax DSP System Controller work together in tandem.

EV, Dynacord & Bosch Loudspeakers:
- 13 x EVF112S64 60X40 1X12 2-Way Loudspeaker System
- 2 x TS 400 Vertical Array Cabinet
- 1 x ETX-15SP Powered Subwoofer
- 28 x ZXi1-100T 2-Way Loudspeaker System
- 4 x EVID 4.2 4-inch Ceiling Speakers
- 31 x EVID 4.2 Surface Mount Speakers

EV Wireless Mic Systems:
- 6 x RE2-BP Wireless Beltpack Systems

EV & Dynacord Amplifiers & DSP:
- 6 x PCL 1240T 230 V Power Amplifier
- 8 x PCL 1225T 230 V Power Amplifier
- 4 x CPS4.10 220-240 V Power Amplifier
- 3 x N8000 230V NetMax System Controller (DSP)
- 2 x MI-1 N8000 Microphone Input Module
- 6 x 1 N8000 Analog Output Module
- 4 x MI-1 N8000 Microphone Input Module
- 3 x DM-1 Dante Network Card

Other:
- Foxtel Distribution Boxes & Nightlife Music System
- Panasonic Projector
- AMX Novara Keypad
- HumanTechnik Hearing Loop
- Sennheiser Call Station

From all accounts the project satisfied all parties including club patrons. Jarrod states: “The installation is complete and operational. We think we have met the brief set forth by the client and have not had any complaints.”

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