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Barco Clickshare Conference

First thoughts.....

When Barco announced the Clickshare conference range it was an exciting time within the AV industry. The ability to wirelessly display and conference with a touch of a button without cables was a massive step in meeting room technology. Over the last few years we have worked with many large corporate companies who have wanted to get rid of any cabling on the desk and have an all-in-one wireless solution. Until the Clickshare conference range was released this wasn't possible so we tried all ways to eliminate cabling and secure it to a desk position so nothing could be taken away leaving the next meeting without any cabling at all. Although this was a massive breakthrough in meeting room technology, I did have a couple of concerns in the back of my head. The first being this system is wireless, wireless isn't always reliable and sometimes a nightmare and to be honest I've always steered away from wireless as a hard-wired solution is a lot more reliable. The last issue was the dongle issued with the conference range, it looked and felt great, but I couldn't help but think this could easily be misplaced which would cause massive issues with no backup solution. Barco have since released an update which could eliminate this issue, I will cover this later in my blog.

Setup....

The ClickShare conference range is very easy to setup, power for the device, HDMI to your display and USB from your room peripherals. Upon first setup you will require an ethernet connection to setup and register the device, this also gives you an extended warranty. Once setup and your camera/mic are plugged in you can simply connect via the button or clickshare app and present/conference wirelessly.

Testing Clickshare conference for the first time.....

We received our demo unit right in the middle of the first lockdown, so we had plenty of time to test and put the conference unit through its paces. To be honest initial testing wasn't great I encountered numerous issues –

- Clickshare could see the MIC but no camera.
- The unit kept crashing in the middle of calls.
- The quality at the far end wasn't great.
- I was having issues with different devices connecting

I fed these issues back to Barco straight away and they assured me a firmware update was imminent which was going to get rid of a lot of issues. I wasn't expecting everything to be seamless straightaway as it is a powerful piece of kit and you are always going to get teething issues on launch. We did receive a firmware update a few weeks later which did make a difference. It didn't get rid of everything but it definitely improved the experience. We had a few clients interested in the Clickshare conference range and they wanted to utilise our demo system. I put them off a couple of weeks while BARCO sorted the last teething issues.

First demo.....

After a further firmware update and numerous testing in our office we were happy with the system and how it was performing, it was ready for its first demo. I spent most of the day before the demo doing testing in different scenarios making sure the ClickShare conference was up for the test and it never failed once. Fast forward to the demo and things were a little different, I tested the system on my laptop and everything was fine, we then ran into issues with the customer's laptop. The dongle when plugged in to a PC shows up in your CD drive, this was blocked on the customer's laptop and need routed through the security. We left the unit for a week as I.T were going to sort the security issue out. They did this the next day but still faced quality issues especially at the far end while using zoom. We picked the demo unit up and fed back to BARCO. They informed us that they were aware of an issue and another firmware upgrade was to be released in a few weeks. Once we had the new firmware and we were satisfied with the outcome, we offered the customer another week loan in which the unit performed great and the customer loved it.

Current firmware and exciting new features.....

Currently we are running version 2.9.0.3 which is the most up to date version, it's worth mentioning that Newlandmedia are now a BETA site for Barco meaning we get BETA firmware to test before it is released to market. New features released-

- App or button, Clickshare users can now fully enjoy the ease of wireless conferencing via the Clickshare desktop app instead of having to use the button.
- Clickshare presentsense functionality makes sure users can seamlessly connect to the rooms Clickshare base unit. When Presentsense is activated the Clickshare app will detect the Clickshare base unit in the room as soon as you walk in saving you searching through a list of nearby meetings.
- Use the complete pixel space of the rooms display to share your content thanks to Clickshare's theatre mode
- You can also extend your display so you don't need to worry about any emails etc. popping on when presenting

Final thoughts.....

To be honest when the conference range was released and we carried out initial testing I didn't think much of the conference range as we had encountered several issues and our first demo didn't go well, with the customer experiencing further issues. I'm happy to say months later with all the teething

problems resolved, after numerous installs I absolutely love the conference range its working great now and our customers are loving them. Just last week Barco released a new firmware update to allow conferencing from a virtual button (software on your PC) as soon as this was released I updated our demo unit and my laptop software and it works really well.

If you are looking at decluttering your meeting room, removing cabling and making the conferencing experience seamless I would 100% recommend the conference range.

Steven Ashley

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