

News Release

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HITACHI Z-HD5500 Cameras Enable ‘Amazing’ Live Production Quality for Sardis Events

Progressive-scan cameras with advanced sensor technology capture stellar-quality images against LED-driven backdrops while speeding on-site setup time

Woodbury, NY, July 23, 2018 — As experts in delivering world-class corporate events and conferences, Sardis Events often works in production environments with dynamic lighting and background conditions that can be challenging for video cameras. When the company expanded its video equipment roster to support rapid business growth, they purchased three Z-HD5500 studio and field production cameras from Hitachi Kokusai Electric America, Ltd. (Hitachi Kokusai) to provide the exceptional image quality they were seeking.

Based in Gurnee, Illinois, Sardis Events was formed roughly 18 months ago as a division of 20-year-old production, AV installation and rental company Sardis Media. Sardis Events provides services from staging and set design to multi-camera image magnification (IMAG) and live webcasting for Fortune 500 companies including Baxter, Discover, Motorola Solutions and many more, as well as a variety of professional associations. Sardis produces events across the U.S. and internationally with audiences ranging from hundreds to thousands of attendees, and with their project volume growing to nearly 100 jobs annually, they started evaluating new cameras last year.

“We owned 1080i cameras from a different manufacturer, but as we got busier our jobs started overlapping a lot more,” said Nate Aguilar, technical director at Sardis Events. We found ourselves renting additional cameras and equipment a lot, and it reached the point where it made sense for us to ‘go big’ and build a second camera, switcher and routing system of our own. We wanted fiber connectivity to go longer distances, and we wanted to upgrade to 1080p so it would look great on big screens and for webcasting.”

The ability of the new cameras to handle LED-based backgrounds was also critical to Aguilar. “We do more and more LED video walls as backdrops on stages, and we needed cameras with global shutter sensors to acquire video without the visual artifacts

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that LED displays can cause,” he explained. “We read that the HITACHI Z-HD5500 was optimized for challenging LED environments and natively 1080p, so it sounded like a great fit. Then we saw it in person in front of an LED wall, and it looked unbelievable. Finally, the cost-effectiveness of the camera was also in the equation, as it lets us be competitive on the price of our services while still offering a great-quality product.”

Sardis deploys the Z-HD5500 cameras on tripods, handheld or on a jib depending on the needs of each project. The cameras are connected via fiber to HITACHI CU-HD1200 camera control units mounted in one of two pre-wired racks that Sardis moves from show-to-show for easy setup. One rack houses the CCUs, camera shading controls, shading monitor, recorders, scopes, and Ross Carbonite Black Plus switcher frame, while the second rack hosts the switcher control surface and primary monitoring.

The pre-configured racks combine with the Z-HD5500s’ fiber connectivity and ease of deployment to speed on-site setup times. “Live mobile productions often require quick turnaround,” said Kurt Hafferkamp, project lead and video technician for Sardis Events. “On many events, there simply isn’t time for anything not to work. Even when we have longer setup times, it’s great knowing that the Z-HD5500 cameras are going to just work, and I don’t have to worry about them. They’ve proven themselves time and time again.”

For Aguilar, the most important benefit of the Z-HD5500s is the quality that they deliver. “My number one thing is how good the cameras look right of the box, without even doing any painting,” he praised. “Plug them in, do an automatic white balance, and they look amazing. You can always fine-tune them with the controller, but in a run-and-gun setup where all you have time for is auto-white, they consistently look great.”

Aguilar and Hafferkamp both point to the distance and flexibility benefits of the cameras’ fiber connectivity, as well as the inherent quality advantages of the 1080p60 video format, as “game-changers” for their productions. From a business perspective, Aguilar also notes the cross-rental opportunities with companies Sardis partners with. “We have vendors who own HITACHI cameras, so it’s easy to cross-rent, and it’s really easy for us to integrate the rentals into our respective projects. I hope to add more to our inventory in the future to further support that aspect of the business.”

The HITACHI Z-HD5500s have similarly impressed Sardis’ camera operators. “Our operators honestly love them,” said Hafferkamp. “While we still use our previous cameras as needed, they prefer using the Z-HD5500s. They’re lighter and easier to handle for handheld operation, and the users love features like return video and tally.”

“Nobody has to talk me into buying more HITACHI cameras,” concluded Aguilar. “I would love to add more of them, and they’re at the top of our list as we expand or cycle out our other models.”

About Hitachi Kokusai Electric Inc.

Hitachi Kokusai Electric Inc., headquartered in Tokyo, Japan, is a company that

manufactures broadcasting systems, security and surveillance systems, wireless communications and information systems. Fiscal 2017 (ended March 31, 2018) sales totaled 171,791 million Yen. For more information on Hitachi Kokusai Electric Inc., please visit the company's website at <http://www.hitachi-kokusai.co.jp/global/en/index.html>.

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