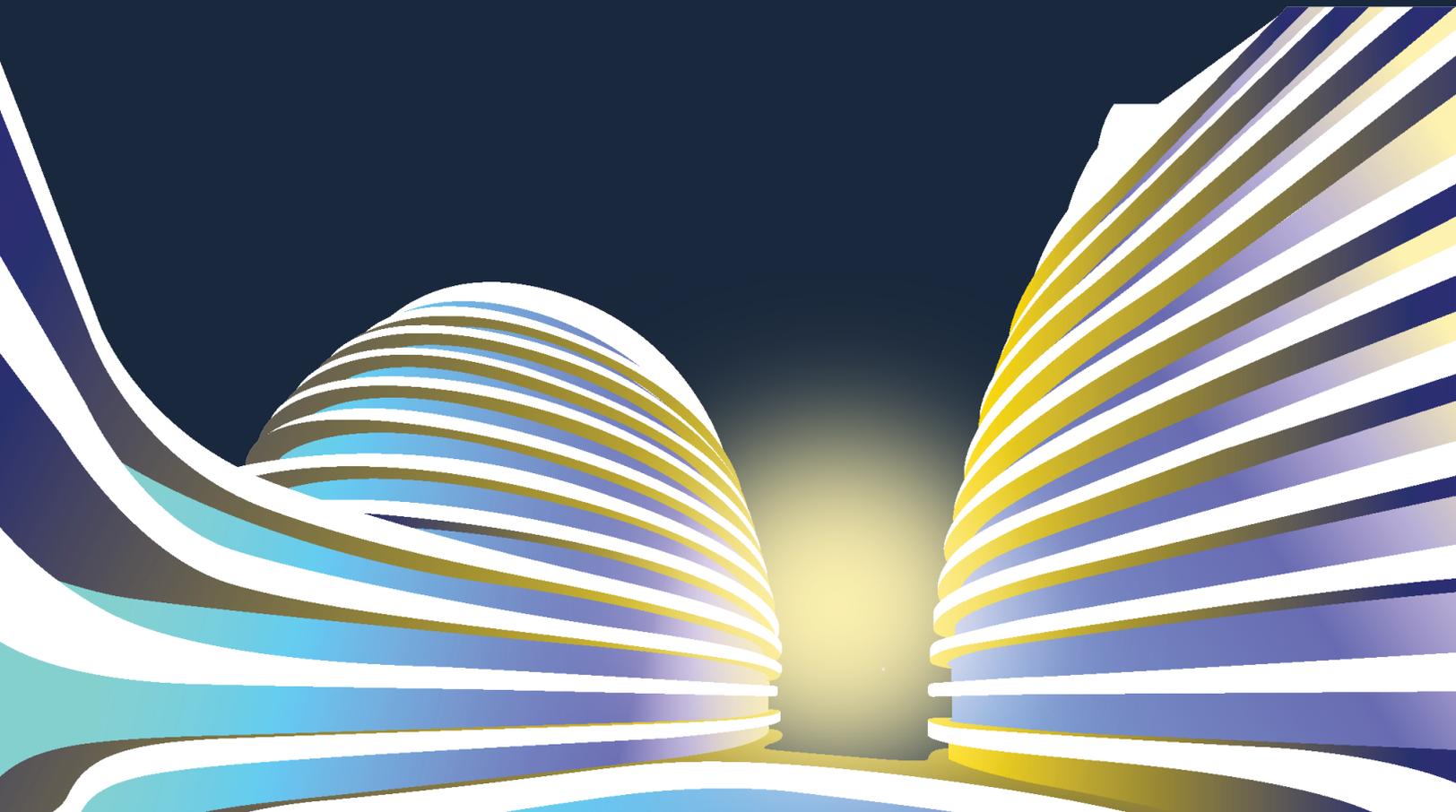


# The Guide to Refreshing Your AV Equipment



# Meeting Needs

**Y**ou may love working with technology, but that doesn't mean you have to enjoy juggling the tasks that go with it. From tracking warranty information, documenting maintenance dates, and balancing equipment lifespans with budget cycles, managing your AV equipment life cycle plan can be especially challenging due to unique requirements and quickly evolving technologies.

Budget always plays a big part in deciding when to refresh your AV equipment. Fortunately, not all components need to be replaced at the same time. A total refresh can involve everything from fresh cables and connectors to new video walls. However, there's a big variation between the lifespan of a small display and an LED video wall, so how do you know what to refresh and when? There are several factors that can shorten or lengthen the time between planned refreshes.

This guide will share best practices and recommendations from PSNI partners to help you create an AV equipment refresh plan that meets your company's needs and budget.

---

# Contents

## Why You Need an AV Equipment Life Cycle Strategy

- > Overcome Common Challenges
- > AV Technology Lifespan

## How to Know It's Time to Refresh Your AV Technology

- > Change in Technology
- > Change in Needs
- > Planned Refresh
- > Industry Requirements

## Keeping Technology Updated on a Real-World Budget

- > Refreshing in Phases
- > Optimizing for Growth
- > Installing and Maintaining Equipment

## How to Create a Solid AV Upgrade Plan

### Tips for an AV Refresh

---

# Why You Need an AV Equipment Life Cycle Strategy

An AV equipment life cycle strategy will benefit both you and your organization. Here are some of the ways a plan will help:

- Maximize your budget by not prematurely retiring good equipment.
- Improve productivity by refreshing equipment before it stops working effectively and efficiently.
- Get newest functionalities as soon as it's financially practical.
- Prevent work disruptions by replacing equipment before it breaks down.
- Manage technology more productively by having predictable processes in place.

Once you've decided you need a strategy, you can then decide how and when to tackle the job.



# Overcome Common Challenges with an AV Equipment Refresh

Management of your AV equipment life cycle can be more complicated than that of other IT technology assets. AV solutions can include everything from network-based technologies to pricey hardware that requires ongoing maintenance. The lifespan of these solutions can vary greatly. And it's not always best to wait to replace them until they expire. Sometimes it makes more sense to refresh them when complementary systems are replaced or when newer technologies make them seem outdated or obsolete.

It's helpful to know the typical life cycle for AV equipment, which can vary by industry. For courts, it can be anywhere from 5 to 14 years, depending on the type of court and equipment used. Other government agencies have similarly long cycles. Higher education life cycles are around 3 to 5 years, while K12 institutions average somewhat longer timeframes.

Corporate AV technology life cycles recur as often as every 3 or 4 years. Companies at the forefront of their industries can't use outdated technologies because it looks bad and may hinder their competitive efforts. For example, while some companies are still adopting 4K displays, others are already purchasing 8K signage.

## Typical Lifespan for AV Equipment (in years)

	Minimum	Maximum
Video Codecs	4	4
Small and Large Displays	4	6
Video Cameras	5	6
Digital Signage Media Players	5	9
Audio Processors	6	10
Audio Amplifiers	6	10
Video Processors	6	10
Microphones	8	10
Loudspeakers	10	15
LED Displays	10	20

# How Do You Know It's Time to Refresh Your AV Technology?

PSNI Global Preferred Vendor Program (PVP) providers know all the factors that influence AV technology lifespans. Here are some of the most frequent reasons they say companies decide to replace or upgrade their AV solutions.

## Changes in Technology

This was a top answer among PSNI PVPs. Taking advantage of new capabilities on the market is important to many technologists. "Refreshing technology will help make their company more efficient and it shows their desire to stay on top of the current technologies, which in the long run should show up in their bottom line," said Dave Bertrand, National Sales Manager at [Williams AV](#).

## A Change in Client Needs

Changing needs can also play a big part in spurring a refresh. Executives may see a need to simplify and standardize solutions across spaces and locations. "Usefulness is relative to customer needs, and accurately determining needs is often the most challenging part of the sales cycle. What a replacement should be depends on not only how the system you're replacing was used, but the wide range of functionality that could be added during an upgrade cycle—and how impactful those features will be on the customer," explained Jeff Goodman, VP, Enterprise AV at [Anixter](#).

The pandemic also accelerated the need for digital transformation in many companies, illustrating how circumstances can alter budget plans.

## Issues with Product

It's time to replace a product when it's affecting productivity and the quality of work. This may include equipment breakdowns or slowdowns, as well as the realization you need to upgrade from consumer-grade products to enterprise solutions. Many professional solutions have come down in price, allowing companies to upgrade. David Hutton, Senior Manager, Display Division at [Samsung Electronics](#), said, "What has happened is that we have broadened our line and now the lower end of our line can compete with consumer and be cost effective."

Other issues may involve malfunctions, non-supported devices, end-of-life dates, expired warranties, or devices no longer being supported by the manufacturer. Clint Hoffman, CEO at [Kramer North America](#), said it's time to replace a product "either when it is glitchy or they know they want to do something that the current system won't allow or provide for."

## Planned Refresh

Most technology managers plan to replace equipment at regular intervals based on what budgets allow. However, factors like heavier-than-anticipated use can upset those plans. Business growth and increased demand can also create a need for a refresh sooner than you planned.

## Industry Requirements

The type of industry you're in will affect lifespans. For example, a hot or dusty environment can shorten the equipment's life. Industry standards may change and require upgraded solutions. Jon Roberts, VP, Enterprise AV (Global Channel) at Anixter, said, "One of the most recent reasons for a refresh/upgrade is that many manufacturers continue to upgrade products and or services as technology advances."



# Keep Technology Up to Date on a Real-World Budget

When you want modern AV technology but don't want to refresh all your solutions when a new technology appears, there are ways to strike a balance.

## Refresh in Phases

One common alternative to a complete technology overhaul is to refresh AV equipment in phases.

"Upgrading equipment can be done in a phased approach for tight budgets," said Beth Peterson, [Vaddio](#) Product Marketing Manager. "Audio is the easiest and most important part of successful collaboration in today's hybrid working environment. Consider upgrading microphones and speakers in conference rooms to allow for people using their laptops for videoconferencing to plug into audio systems that can support larger groups."

## Optimize for Growth

A knowledgeable service provider can take the growing pains out of expansion by choosing solutions that are easily scalable. This way, you're just adding to your existing technology without needing to revamp your systems at every stage of growth.

## Professionally Install and Maintain Equipment

It's important to professionally maintain AV equipment to extend the lifespans of solutions as much as possible. Professionals will also know how to maximize your budget. They can recommend affordable alternatives for certain technologies, and they can help you simplify and scale projects to help you save. One example is cabling.

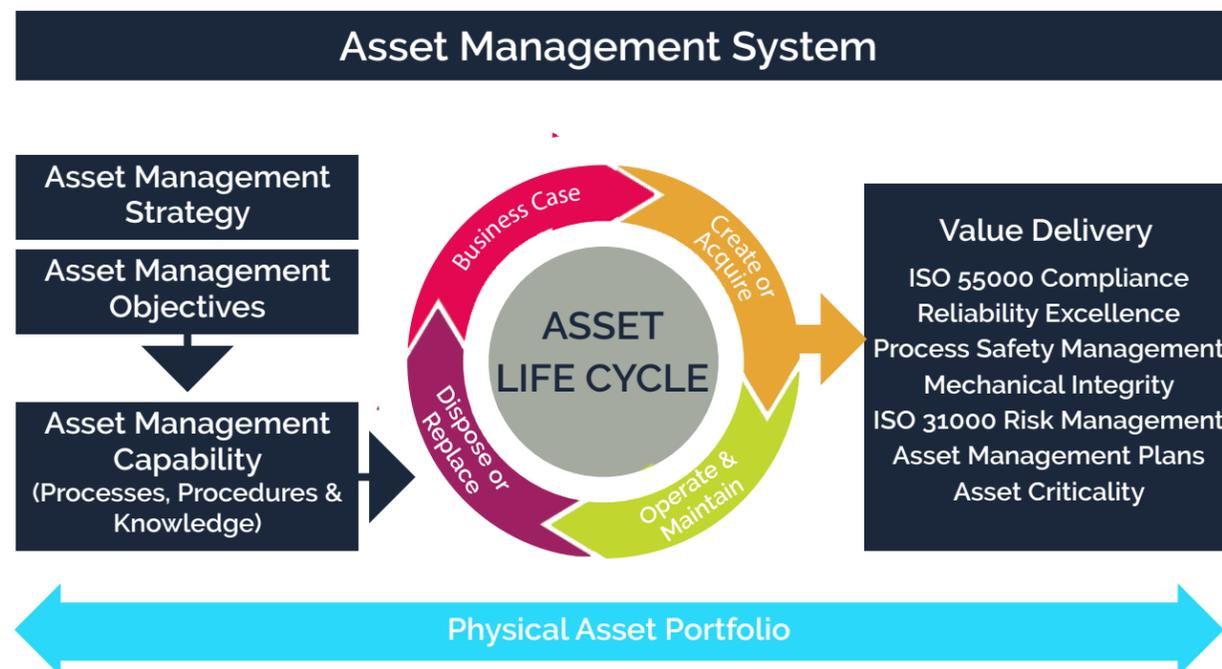
"[Cabling infrastructure, if done correctly](#), can have a tremendous life cycle and support multiple upgrades to active system components," explained Bob Ferguson, RCDD, CTS-I, Channel Accounts Manager of Broadcast, Audio and Video Division at [Belden](#). "The right cable system can offer one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to future proof. The cabling portion is only a very small cost of the overall system, however cabling from a labor aspect can be one of the most costly items to change. Changing cabling can also be very disruptive to customers as it involves modifying the pathways throughout the building. Therefore, it makes sense to invest in a robust system that will support not only today, but potential future systems."



# How to Create a Solid AV Equipment Upgrade Plan

The key to an affordable and effective equipment refresh is to start with a plan. Begin by aligning your budget with your asset management cycle, which looks like this:

1. Planning: Research and complete the decision-making process.
2. Acquisition and deployment: Purchase and deploy equipment to users.
3. Operation and maintenance: This is the use and care phase of the life cycle.
4. Disposal and replacement: You get rid of the old equipment and start the planning and procurement cycle over again.



Start creating your plan by assessing your current technology. Ask yourself and your teams these questions:

- Are your current assets adequate for the users?
- Which are underused?
- Are some in short supply?
- Do they perform what you need them to do?
- Are they all maintained to manufacturer recommendations?
- Do users want other functions?

Then you can begin formulating your plan by documenting:

- Every asset, including hardware, middleware, applications, and operating systems. Also note dependencies.
- The location, owner, and business process for each asset.
- A log of previous updates and maintenance.
- Due dates for reviews and refreshes.
- The expiration dates of technologies and support agreements.

To determine when your AV technology needs an upgrade, consider:

- How soon does it need to be done?
- How much has to be done and when?
- Is it feasible within our infrastructure?
- What will it cost and can we afford it?

Once you've assessed, documented, and addressed these points, you'll be able to determine the best timing for your technology refresh so you can maximize technology use and minimize spending.

---

# Follow These Refresh Tips From PSNI Technology Providers

If you're still not sure if it's time to upgrade, PSNI partners offered their advice.

## Update Tech When Updates Fail

"If equipment is unable to be updated with a new operating system, or if the equipment's features and capabilities are not keeping pace with the times, it's time to rip and replace," said Ann Holland, VP Marketing, [BrightSign](#). "AV equipment especially, needs to keep up with new technology introductions. If equipment isn't network connected, this can be quite difficult."

## Prepare for the Future

John Henkel, Product Marketing Manager at [NETGEAR](#) explained that it pays to be aware of up-and-coming technologies so that they're prepared if they need to expand their network. One way is to design [switches to accommodate future growth](#). "We try to look as far forward as possible when designing projects because we recognize our relationships with you is a partnership. We want you to be aware of changes in technology enabling you to take advantage of new features and benefits offered by a technology refresh."



"If there's one thing recent events [pandemic] have proven, it's that AV is very, very important in keeping the lights on in your enterprise and keeping communication going..."

– PSNI Global Preferred Vendor Partner, Shure

---

## Create Flexible Spaces

"Sharing technology between rooms can be a great way to keep the AV quality without breaking the budget," said Ann Ewoldt, Product Marketing Manager at [Chief](#). "Integrating a [height-adjustable cart](#) off site with Vaddio-compatible camera shelves and speaker shelves can then be delivered contact-free. While the wide variety of Chief cart solutions available fit in many different applications from e-learning to conferencing, it's also a mobile option for elderly care facilities to provide communication with doctors and loved ones to their residents. Any existing display install can be easily and economically upgraded with accessories that enhance appearance and serviceability, meaning more uptime for the end user. Fusion™ pull-out accessories extend displays away from the wall, so [Proximity® In-Wall Storage](#) can be added to attractively house AV components on [Lever Lock™ storage plates](#) that conveniently manage and hide cables."

Although every technology has a life cycle, that of AV equipment can pose special challenges. It helps to view a technology refresh as an investment rather than an expense. While some enhance innovation, others improve communication and collaboration, which are necessary in the modern work environment of remote and dispersed employees.

As Jim Schanz, Vice President of Global Sales, Integrated Systems at [Shure](#), stated, "If there's one thing recent events [pandemic] have proven, it's that AV is very, very important in keeping the lights on in your enterprise and keeping communication going – maybe more so than a lot of companies really considered before."

---

## Looking for a Place to Start?

### We Can Help

1. Find your local [PSNI Global Alliance Certified Solution Provider](#)
2. [Subscribe to the PSNI blog](#) for regular insights delivered right to your inbox
3. [Contact us](#) any time

### About PSNI Global Alliance

PSNI is a global alliance of top technology integrators, manufacturers, distributors and service partners. Our network helps magnify each member's capabilities and expands the services they can provide. Clients can enjoy a wide variety of standardized solutions and support no matter where they are in the world.

A standardized, documentable approach across the network also means a PSNI Global Alliance integrator can deliver results faster, and you spend less time researching and coordinating with multiple vendors and integrators. Because of the power of the PSNI Alliance, you can even keep your local or regional PSNI technology partners while receiving global support.

PSNI's global reach also assures that you get service delivered the way you want it—including in your own language and according to the rules, regulations and requirements of your location. PSNI Global Alliance expands and improves your options for AV integration and support no matter where you are—and no matter what you need.

1. "The 2021 State of IT: The Annual Report on IT Budgets and Tech Trends." Spiceworks Ziff Davis.

<https://swzd.com/resources/state-of-it/>

2. Kark, Khalid. "Reinventing tech finance: The evolution from IT budgets to technology investments." Deloitte Insights. January 7, 2020.

<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/cio-insider-business-insights/tech-finance-technology-investment-budgeting-processes.html>

## Featured Tech



### Fusion Dynamic Height Adjustable Mobile Cart

Fusion mounts with dynamic height adjust capability create better accessibility to technology in the boardroom and the classroom. The height adjustable box provides ultra-smooth and fast vertical travel with almost no effort.



### Proximity® Large In-Wall Storage Box

The PAC526 simplifies flat panel installation by providing an organized, recessed space for routing excess cables and for attaching surge protectors/power conditioners.



### M4250 Series Switches

An entirely new series of switches developed and engineered for the growing audio, video over IP (AV over IP) market. These AV Line switches combine years of networking expertise with best practices from leading experts in the professional AV market.



Talk to a PSNI integrator near you



# PSNI GLOBAL ALLIANCE <sup>SM</sup>

**ANIXTER**

**BELDEN**  
SENDING ALL THE RIGHT SIGNALS

**biamp.**

**BrightSign**<sup>®</sup>

**CHIEF**

**CHRISTIE**

**DA-LITE**

**KRAMER** AV BEYOND THE BOX ...

**M**  
Middle Atlantic Products

**NETGEAR**  
BUSINESS

**SAMSUNG**

**SHURE**

**SYNNEX**  
CORPORATION

**vaddio**

**WILLIAMS AV**

**Winsted**  
Control Room Consoles

[www.psni.org](http://www.psni.org)