

## WALTHALL & ASSOCIATES | PENSACOLA, FLA.

“ IF I CAN HELP ONE PERSON UNDERSTAND SOMETHING THEY DON'T FULLY UNDERSTAND, THEN I HAVE HELPED MEET THEIR NEED.”

Chuck Walthall, owner, Walthall & Associates, Pensacola, FL



WALTHALL & ASSOCIATES | (850) 478-9002 | [www.walthall.biz](http://www.walthall.biz) | [www.soundmadesimple.com](http://www.soundmadesimple.com)

By Deidra Blackmore

**When Chuck Walthall was 12 years old he wanted to become part of his church's youth choir. But Walthall didn't sing or play an instrument. So, he started hanging out with the engineer in charge of the choir's simple sound and light system and became his fully devoted apprentice. By the 12th grade Walthall had built his first mobile disco system and was gainfully employed in the A/V business. After earning a degree in communications (1983), he went to work for a systems contractor where he fell in love with the design-build process.** In 2000 he completed his master's degree and started his own design-consulting firm, Walthall & Associates ([www.walthall.biz](http://www.walthall.biz)), based in Pensacola, Fla. Walthall says his company becomes an advocate to the facility owner, working with them to define and develop budgets based on need and desires. He evaluates their size, ministry and vision and helps them develop a realistic budget for audio, video, lighting, broadcast, acoustics and all things technical. Walthall generates program and budget reports, blue print designs and equipment specifications. He then

facilitates the hiring of a contractor and oversees the installation process on the owner's behalf.

Another of Walthall's passions is audio and acoustics education and training. He has developed and taught college classes in audio and acoustics and he is the author and publisher of Sound Made Simple ([www.soundmadesimple.com](http://www.soundmadesimple.com)), a CD ROM-based training curriculum that teaches the fundamentals of audio and acoustics. He believes there is a desire by sound operators to understand the basic fundamentals of audio.

Walthall has been in the technical system industry for 25 years. Sixty-percent of his company's projects are religious facilities. *Church Production Magazine* talks with him about the market's past, present and future.

**CPM: Tell us why you started Walthall & Associates.**

**Walthall:** In short, it was a divine directive. I had spent the previous 16 years in a design-build contracting business and thoroughly enjoyed it. There was no doubtting the conviction, circumstances, counsel and scriptural confirmation to step out and start Walthall & Associates.

**CPM: Explain your passion for audio education and what prompted the Sound Made Simple products.**

**Walthall:** My passion to educate is based solely on meeting the needs of others. I'm inspired by my peers and challenged by the growing need to understand technology. If I can help one person understand something they don't fully understand, then I have helped meet their need. When we look at the basic fundamentals (root cause and affect), much of the unknown evaporates, much like a fog lifting and the sun shines through. SMS iCD is a passion project we developed in 2006; a training curriculum available to those looking to gain knowledge (Proverbs 9:9). I wish there had been something like SMS iCD in the 1970s and 1980s.

**CPM: You've been with the industry since its infancy. You say we're in the adolescent phase today. Can you explain?**

**Walthall:** When you're a teenager you always want the latest and the greatest. I just reviewed a digital console that does everything but make a cup of coffee. It's one example of the latest and the greatest. However, technology has the potential to far exceed many people's ability to understand

the basic concepts of audio. It's almost scary how far we have come in the past 10 years. Fortunately, the basics of audio are the same in both analog and digital worlds; gain, busses, filters, on/off, etc. Technology is advancing so fast though, it can be hard to keep up. Just because my 11-year-old son wants the latest video game platform doesn't necessarily mean he needs it!

**CPM: If this is adolescent what does adulthood look like?**

**Walthall:** I think the challenge still lies in grasping the basic fundamentals. Digital equipment can make audio easier and lots of fun. We have to bridge the gap between analog and digital and understand the fundamentals that apply to both. Like transitioning from a typewriter to a computer, it's scary at first but there are more advantages to using a computer to type a letter. This is why, in my opinion, training is the rage right now. So many people want to fully understand digital and grasp the available technology. This begins to explain the groundswell of desire to learn. The market is responding. WFX (Worship Facilities Conference and Expo, www.wfxweb.com) is a prime example.

**CPM: What are your goals for Walthall & Associates?**

**Walthall:** My goal has always been to be a small firm, with three or four top drawer associates, that provide personal attention and attention to detail for each client we serve. We enjoy what we do and like to go the extra mile. I don't want to be so busy that I can't see my client as a person with specific needs. We enjoy meeting people's needs.

**CPM: What advice do you have for churches planning a new facility or an A/V/L upgrade?**

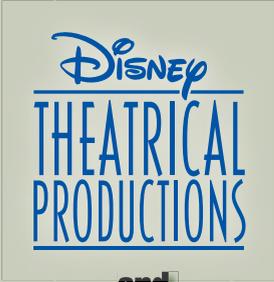
**Walthall:** Evaluate your needs. Consider your desires. Look forward, into the vision of the ministry. Seek counsel to ensure well-made decisions. Incorporate a training curriculum. The key to any successful audio, video or lighting system, in my opinion,

is transparency. Ministries are to promote the Gospel, not technology. Ministries should use technology as a tool, but the technology itself should not be the focal point! My family and I love Disney World. I'm impressed by the technology they use.

However, the characters, shows and the thrill of the ride is what Disney sells.

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