Success Story: Anderson Productions

Eaton 9355 helps firm design a facility free of power problems

Product:
Eaton® 9355 UPS

Location:
Bristol, Conn.

Markets Served:
Production and design

"One outage occurred when we were preparing for a critical show … But nobody even knew about it. The best words you could ever hear from your editors are, 'oh, we had a blackout?"

- Mike Hannau, systems manager

Background

Imagination. Innovation. Creation. For more than 15 years, those guiding principles have driven the work of Anderson Productions, a leading-edge graphic design and post-production firm. With studios in Bristol, Conn., and Portland, Ore., the company offers video, animation, graphic design, sound design, audio editing and field production services to clients with high-profile networks, including ESPN.

Anderson Production's award-winning staff — dedicated to dishing out ingenious, new ideas — is supported by the industry's most innovative technology solutions. By relying on an impressive combination of tools, technology and expertise, the firm successfully sculpts visions, shapes ideas and develops a unique expression for each and every project.

Challenge

Imagine having less than an hour to edit a video segment that the world's largest sports broadcaster plans to air that same day. The Anderson Productions team is all too familiar with meeting those demanding expectations. Because staff members are committed to giving 110 percent, they require that same level of reliability from the critical systems used to execute their assignments. At the heart of that dependency is the need for continuous, computer-grade power.

"Downtime? Oh dear, that is our worst nightmare," reveals Mike Hannau, the company's systems manager. "We need all of our equipment up and running. We're editing seven days a week."

So when Anderson Productions relocated its Connecticut design/editing center to a brand new building in September 2009, the firm required a power protection solution capable of ensuring the highest level of availability to its essential systems, including numerous video servers, computers, graphic stations and network gear, plus a variety of devices housed within 10 editing rooms.

"When we started building the facility, a good, reliable UPS system was part of design," Hannau shares. "We had an older system in our former building that we could not bring with us."

A chink in the firm's uptime armor is the spotty utility power supply within the new building. "We'll take hits at least six times a year," Hannau reports. "They are sometimes minor glitches, but they're damaging enough that if we didn't have a solid system protecting us, I'd have to be restarting our main video server — and that would be a problem."

Not only can the process be time-consuming, but if certain data isn't stored at the time a power anomaly occurs, "We could lose hours of video, as well as editing time," Hannau points out. "It could literally take days to recover or recreate that."

In addition to requiring an uninterruptible power system (UPS) with unparalleled reliability, Anderson Productions was also concerned about the price point of a new solution. Equally important was a unit that would offer compatibility with the company's generator, which is responsible for ensuring continuous operations during an extended blackout.

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Solution

Considering Anderson Production's focus on innovation, it isn't surprising that the company selected a UPS with its own revolutionary approach: the Eaton 9355. The 30 kVA double-conversion, three-phase UPS completely isolates connected equipment from utility power to protect against all nine of the most common power problems, including outages, sags, surges, spikes, brownouts, line noise, frequency variation, switching transients and harmonic distortion.

"It's about more than just keeping our data alive," notes Hannau. "The editing systems have to stay up and running, as well."

The 9355 has accomplished both goals, already kicking in twice in its first five months of operation, when power glitches struck the post-production facility.

"One outage occurred when we were preparing for a critical show," Hannau recalls. "But nobody even knew about it. The best words you could ever hear from your editors are, 'oh, we had a blackout?'"

And it's not just internal employees that the 9355 is keeping satisfied. "When you have a client like ESPN where everything is about time, you just cannot afford to be down," Hannau explains. "We're working on promos that have to go on the air that day… telling them that we can't do it is not an answer I can give. That just doesn't fly."

Adding to the unparalleled reliability of the 9355 is the unit's innovative design, which offers an industry-leading combination of high efficiency, low input current distortion and high power factor. As a result, the UPS operates with maximum economy, adaptability and power performance. Additionally, its high 0.9 output power factor delivers more power than the vast majority of competitors' models.

"This one came highly recommended by our primary electrician," Hannau says of the 9355, "and the price was great!"

Another selling point of the 9355 was the unit's compatibility with Anderson Production's 125 kVA generator. Because the UPS's total input harmonic distortion (THD) remains below 5 percent without compromising overall efficiency, it allows maximum transfer of power between the power source and the protected load, making the model exceptionally friendly to generators.

"With the new system, if there's a power outage then the battery kicks in, the generator senses it, and everything works as planned," Hannau explains. "The relationship between the generator and the UPS is a wonderful thing. We need that battery to keep us moving until we can make the transfer."

The systems manager also values the space-saving design of the 9355, which occupies half the footprint of previous generation systems. In fact, the 30 kVA unit measures just 66 inches high, 20 inches wide and 34 inches deep, while the smaller 10-15 kVA models are only 32.2 inches high, 12 inches wide and 32.5 inches deep. Even more, the 9355's sleek tower configuration — which includes the internal batteries —delivers a higher power density per square foot than competitive units.

"It's a nice benefit," Hannau says of the footprint. "It gives us the space to add a second unit if we need to, and the architect didn't have to make the room any larger."

Using Eaton's signature Hot Sync technology, units can be paralleled for capacity or redundancy. So Anderson Production's 30 kVA unit can expand to support loads of up to 90 kVA, with N+1 redundancy.

"We liked the scalability and the ability to expand," Hannau acknowledges. "Plus, because of the small footprint, we can add another unit right next to the existing one if we need to. The footprint is a very useful thing. It makes life a lot easier."

Further enhancing Hannau's peace of mind is a subscription to Eaton's eNotify Remote Monitoring Service, which provides real-time monitoring of more than 100 UPS and battery alarms. eNotify delivers monthly reports to Hannau, which detail the status of the 9355, including information on voltages, loads, temperature and humidity. The report also summarizes the top 10 performance and environmental parameters, battery events, availability percentage, and comparative status against recommended specification. Even more, if any type of power anomaly is detected, Hannau is immediately notified via email.

With eNotify, Eaton service technicians remotely monitor both the UPS and batteries at all times, enabling many issues to be resolved remotely – often before a customer even knows a potential problem exists.

"If there's something that needs to be looked at, they will call me," Hannau explains. "That's exactly the peace of mind I want. It's all hassle-free. I don't need to worry about the solution."

That's a far cry from the company's previous UPS solution, which provided neither notification of issues nor automatic graceful shutdown of equipment. "If the building lost power at 2 a.m. and nobody was there and the battery ran out, that was it," Hannau recalls.

Implementation

Deployed at Anderson Productions within a standalone power room, the 9355 was extremely easy to set up. That's in part due to the unit's small footprint, which not only supports more location options but also facilitates fast and easy installation while lowering costs.

"They came in, installed it, and it worked on the first try," Hannau reveals. "There were no problems."

To ensure the UPS's continuous health and reliability, the company relies on an Eaton service plan, which provides preventive maintenance calls twice a year, plus an annual battery inspection. "I need to know if the batteries are all good," explains Hannau.

Results

Since implementing the 9355, post-production house's operations have remained constant. "We have to have everything up and running — there has to be no nonsense," says Hannau. "The 9355 is doing everything we were hoping for … In fact, it's already done it twice now."

With the 9355 in place, Anderson Productions is now able to:

- Achieve 24x7 uptime for critical equipment, while ensuring data integrity
- Keep all devices online until the company's generator kicks on
- Maintain a constant pulse on all power conditions and operating parameters with eNotify
- Ensure optimal UPS health and performance with an Eaton service plan
- Easily expand its power protection solution as needed, thanks to the scalability of the 9355

Eaton Corporation
Electrical Group
8609 Six Forks Road
Raleigh, NC 27615
Toll free: 1.800.356.5794
www.eaton.com/powerquality

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