



How Small AV Integrators Can Compete for Bigger Projects



Large AV firms may have more employees, broader geographic coverage, and deeper internal benches. But size alone does not win a project.

Clients also want responsiveness, clear communication, practical engineering, reliable procurement, and a partner who understands the details of their environment. Those are areas where small and growing AV integrators can compete: and often stand out.

The key is not to imitate a national integrator or take on unnecessary overhead. It is to build a scalable delivery model that combines your customer relationships and field expertise with the capabilities of trusted specialists.

With the right structure, a small integrator can confidently pursue larger conference room deployments, campus projects, healthcare installations, digital signage programs, and building-wide AV systems without stretching the business beyond its limits.

Start by Defining the Right “Bigger” Project

Not every large project is a good opportunity.

A multi-country rollout with dozens of locations, strict bonding requirements, and a compressed schedule may create more financial and operational risk than growth. A regional healthcare network, corporate campus, school district, or municipal facility may be a better fit: especially when the project needs local attention and specialized expertise.

Before pursuing a larger opportunity, evaluate:

- How strong is your relationship with the client or channel partner?
- Does the project fit your technical experience?



- Which capabilities are missing from your internal team?
- Can the schedule be supported with trusted partners?
- Will the payment schedule protect your cash flow?
- Is the project strategically valuable, or simply large in revenue?

A simple project scorecard can help you decide where to invest proposal time. Look for opportunities where your responsiveness, local knowledge, and service model matter: not just opportunities where the largest balance sheet wins.

Expand Capability Through White-Label Engineering

Engineering is one of the fastest ways for a small integrator to increase capacity without hiring a full internal department.

A project may require detailed AV drawings, reflected ceiling plans, rack elevations, signal-flow diagrams, equipment schedules, network coordination, acoustic considerations, or control-system documentation. You may understand the system and the client, but lack the time or specialized personnel to complete every deliverable in-house.

White-label engineering allows you to bring in those resources under an agreed delivery model while maintaining ownership of the client relationship.

Depending on the project, support may include:

- Needs analysis and site surveys
- System architecture and equipment selection
- CAD, Revit, and Bluebeam documentation
- DSP and control-system design
- Network and AVoIP coordination
- Bills of materials and proposal support
- Commissioning documentation
- Programming and troubleshooting

The client benefits from a more complete and professional delivery. Your team gains capacity without carrying the fixed cost of a large engineering staff.

The important distinction is that white-label support should not mean handing off responsibility. You remain accountable for coordinating the solution, reviewing deliverables, communicating with the client, and making sure the final design reflects the project's goals.

At [Simply Innovative Unified Communications](https://www.synovativeuc.com), our model is built around bringing together specialty experts across engineering, CAD, project management, installation, programming, procurement, and service.



Turn Your Process Into a Competitive Advantage

A small company can look highly capable when its process is clear and repeatable.

Large projects create more stakeholders, more handoffs, and more opportunities for confusion. A documented process reassures the client that the project will not depend on informal conversations or one person remembering every detail.

Your process should explain how you manage:

1. Discovery and requirements gathering
2. Site surveys and existing-condition documentation
3. Conceptual design and budget development
4. Engineering review and approval
5. Procurement and equipment staging
6. Installation coordination
7. Programming, testing, and commissioning
8. Training, closeout, and ongoing support

This does not mean every project should use the exact same design. It means your team should have a consistent way to move from one phase to the next.



Use templates for room standards, proposal narratives, equipment schedules, installation checklists, test plans, and closeout packages. A documented process reduces rework, makes partner coordination easier, and gives the client visibility into what happens next.

It also helps your business scale. When project information is organized, another engineer, technician, or project manager can step in without starting from zero.

Resources such as [D-Tools' guidance for small AV integrators](#) also emphasize how technology and structured operations can help smaller firms turn agility into a repeatable business advantage.

Use Trusted Procurement to Improve Your Position

Large integrators often benefit from purchasing volume. A smaller integrator may not be able to match that volume on every product, but it can still improve pricing, speed, and predictability through organized procurement relationships.

A reliable purchasing strategy includes:

- Concentrating volume with carefully selected manufacturers
- Working with distributors that provide project support
- Registering qualified opportunities when available
- Designing with products that have dependable availability and support
- Maintaining approved alternates for high-risk items
- Separating equipment decisions from vendor preference
- Tracking costs, lead times, freight, and substitutions

Procurement should begin during design: not after the proposal is accepted. A system that looks excellent on paper may become difficult to deliver if key components are unavailable, discontinued, or subject to unpredictable lead times.

The [SynovativeUC Partner Purchasing Portal](#) is designed to make this part of the process easier for integrators and channel partners. Approved partners can access custom pricing, engineer-validated bundles, instant quoting, saved carts, order visibility, and purchasing history.

The portal also supports pre-designed solution categories such as conference rooms, classrooms, clinics, town halls, and digital signage. This can reduce the time spent rebuilding equipment lists for common applications while still allowing substitutions and project-specific adjustments.



Build Strategic Partnerships Before You Need Them

Partnerships are most valuable when they are established before a project is urgent.

A small integrator may need different partners for different parts of a larger project:

- A design partner for drawings and documentation
- A programming specialist for advanced control or DSP
- A national labor resource for remote locations
- A staging or logistics partner for equipment preparation
- An IT or network specialist for infrastructure coordination
- A service provider for monitoring and lifecycle support
- A manufacturer or distributor contact for technical guidance

The goal is not to create a confusing web of subcontractors. The goal is to create a coordinated delivery team with clearly defined responsibilities.

Before involving a partner on a project, document:

- Scope of work
- Pricing and payment terms
- Schedule commitments
- Required certifications or qualifications
- Insurance and compliance requirements



- Communication and escalation procedures
- Ownership of documentation and intellectual property
- Client-facing responsibilities

Your partners should strengthen your brand, not introduce uncertainty. Vet them for technical ability, communication, professionalism, and follow-through: not simply their hourly rate.

A strong partnership allows you to say, truthfully, that your team can support the full project lifecycle while making it clear who owns each part of the work.

Make Support Part of the Proposal

Many integrators focus heavily on installation and treat support as an afterthought. Larger projects require the opposite approach.

Clients want to know what happens after the system goes live. Who responds when a camera stops working? How are firmware updates handled? Will users receive training? Is remote troubleshooting available? What happens if a room needs to be expanded six months later?

Create service packages that are easy to understand. For example:

- Business-hours remote support
- Extended-hours support
- Preventive maintenance
- Remote monitoring and diagnostics
- On-site response
- Spare equipment recommendations
- Annual system health checks
- User training and refresher sessions

Your service plan should match what your team can reliably deliver. It is better to provide a clear, sustainable commitment than to promise an unrealistic response time.

Good documentation makes support more efficient. Include final drawings, equipment lists, IP information, configuration backups, test results, warranty details, and user guides in the closeout package.



Protect Cash Flow as You Grow

Bigger projects can create bigger cash-flow problems.

Hardware may need to be purchased before you receive payment from the client. Change orders can extend schedules. Delayed construction can leave equipment sitting in inventory. A project that is profitable on paper can still put serious pressure on a small business.

Protect your position by:

- Requiring deposits or equipment prepayments
- Aligning progress billing with project milestones
- Reviewing vendor payment terms before signing the contract
- Including freight, storage, and staging costs
- Defining change-order procedures clearly
- Setting approval requirements for scope changes
- Modeling cash requirements before submitting the proposal

Do not pursue a project solely because the contract value looks impressive. The best opportunity is one that fits your capabilities, protects your working capital, and creates a path to repeat business.

Compete on Coordination, Not Headcount

Small AV integrators do not need to apologize for being small. They need to demonstrate how their structure benefits the client.

You can compete for bigger projects by offering:

- Direct access to decision-makers
- Faster communication
- Experienced technical leadership



- Specialty engineering when required
- Transparent proposals
- Carefully selected products
- Documented project controls
- Flexible partner resources
- Local accountability
- Long-term support

The strongest proposal does not simply list equipment. It explains how the project will move from discovery to a reliable, supportable system.

That is the real opportunity for a growing integrator: combine the personal service and agility of a small firm with the engineering depth, procurement access, partnerships, and process discipline expected on larger projects.

Ready to Expand Your Project Capability?

You do not have to add risky overhead to pursue more complex AV opportunities.

Contact SynovativeUC to discuss partner engineering, design, project management, procurement, installation, and service support. You can also [request access to the Partner Purchasing Portal](#) to explore custom pricing and engineer-validated AV/IT solution bundles.

With the right support structure, your next bigger project can be an opportunity to grow responsibly (not a gamble with your business.)