

DWR assists Empower Church with a professional audio solution

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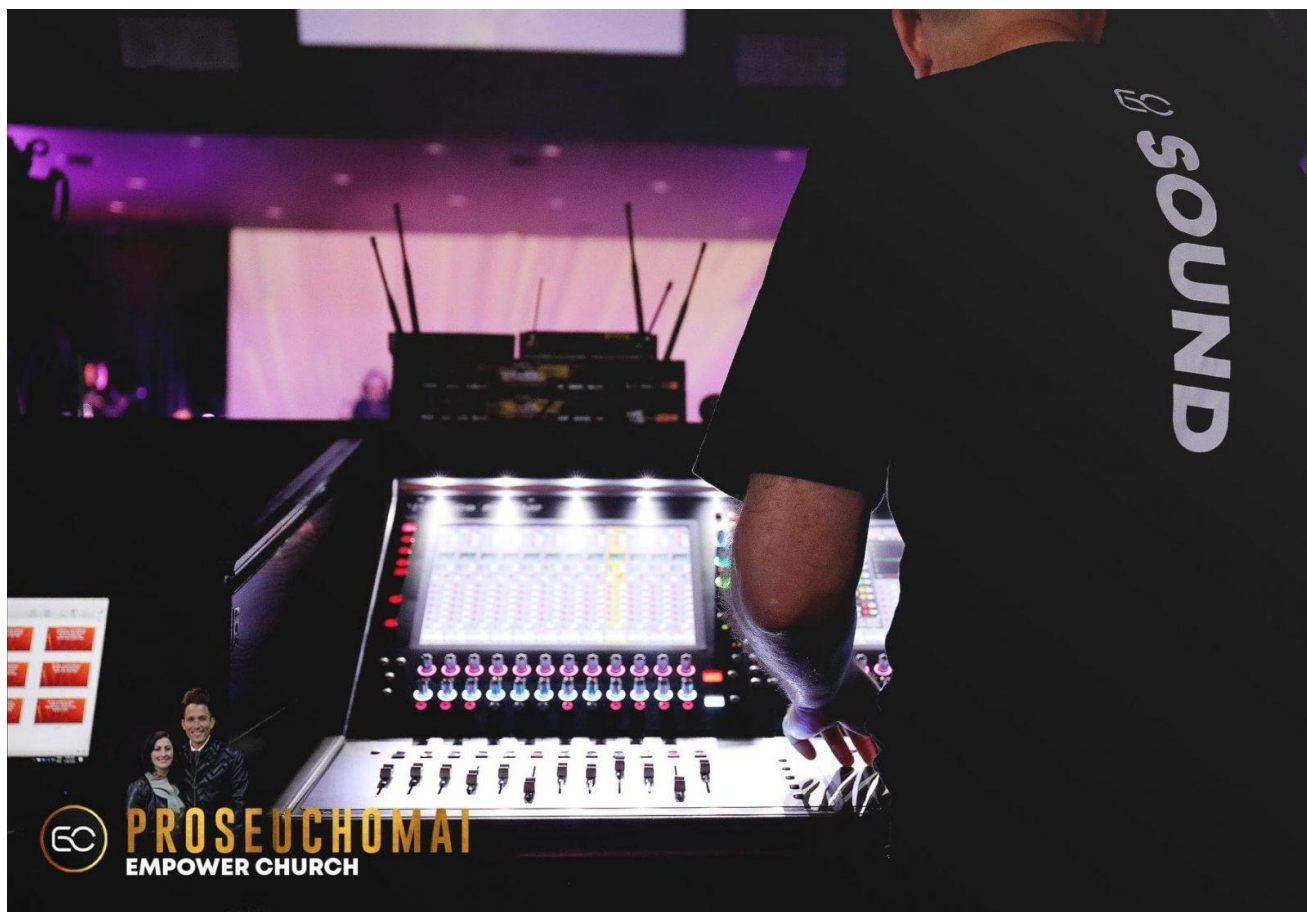


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The Covid-19 restrictions on houses of worship in South Africa has seen many churches move to on-line services and upping their skills to deliver a professional broadcast. Empower Church in Pretoria recently invested in a Waves LV1 System with the addition of Audix ADX51 for crowd microphones, and along with their vibrant in-house audio engineer, Kgosi Rankhumise, a positive result has been achieved for those watching the service from home.

“Over a year ago, the church took a big leap forward in upgrading their existing audio system with the purchase of a DiGiCo SD12,” explained Jaco Beukes of DWR Distribution. “They have really enjoyed the console and what it offers the engineers at Empower Church. We also supplied L-Acoustics loudspeakers comprising of six X8 front fills, two X8 monitors and three Kiva delay speakers installed with amps. This combined with the existing PA system has proven to be a tremendous upgrade and help achieve better audience coverage across the venue. In regard to the delay boxes, the audio had never been able to reach the audience sitting in the back corners. The Kiva has done exactly what it was designed to do. The units are hung on rotating brackets, designed by DWR, which enables the speakers to be pointed in a certain direction. They are covering a large majority of the area.”

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Empower Church has been broadcasting their services for a while now, but really jumped into the full swing of things with the Covid-19 lockdown.

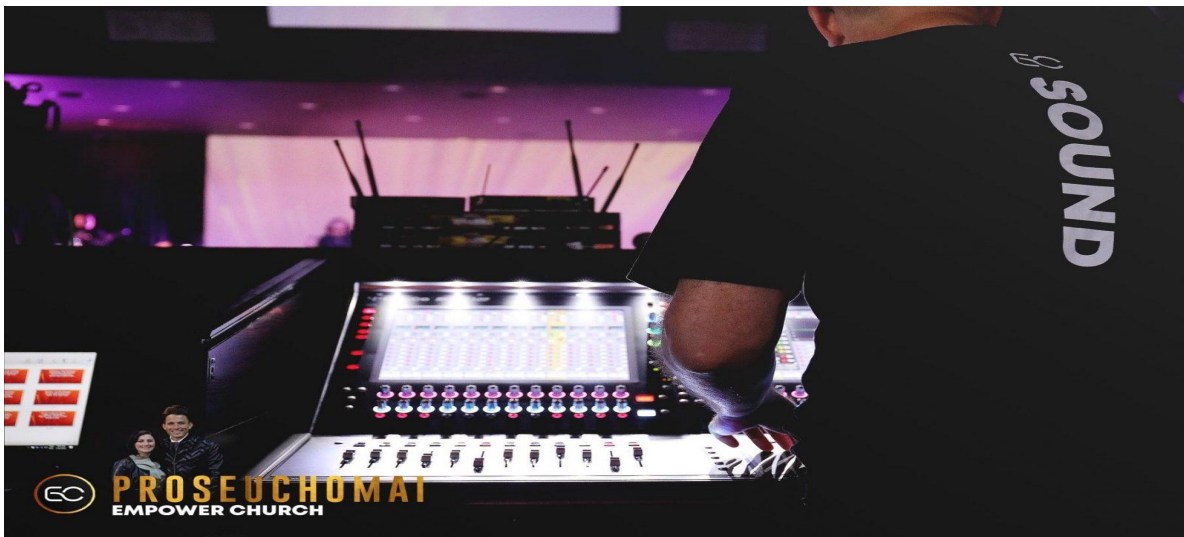
“Before the Waves upgrade we would send audio from FOH, standard left and right, and it didn’t really include worship,” explains Kgosi Rankhumise, who has been part of the in-house technical team for the past eight years and has had a passion for music since childhood. “We usually included the end of the last song and then went straight into the word. During the lockdown, we were able to use all our resources to make the on-line experience work. We pre-recorded everything and I played it back into the console and would start mixing while it was recording

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somewhere else.”

When the restrictions initially lifted to allow 50 people to attend a church service, Kgosi was faced with a dilemma. One of the biggest challenges was to be able to include worship online, and that is where the Waves LV1 system came into play. The addition of the Audix ADX 51 microphones hung above the smaller audience in the church, make the viewers watching from home feel as if they are part of the worship. “It’s just a beautiful sound,” says Kgosi.

“I always tell the technical team that you want to be able to work with equipment that is user friendly and a platform that will allow you to unleash your creativity. This has been accomplished with the DiGiCo and the Waves LV1. The guys were intimidated at first, just looking at the gear! The Waves LV1 screen looks like something a pilot should operate, but we soon realized that it had been built for ease of use, and I have really been able to express myself through it.”



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When Kgosi received the Waves LV1 he made a decision that no matter what, he was going to figure it out on his own and not call Jaco from DWR! “The first week was a bit tricky, but what I found so amazing were the dual screens, making it a pleasure to work on. The Waves LV1 is taking the concept of live and gives it a studio feel. Because I am isolated in a broadcast room, I really get to enjoy the ability to work things through. Having that attention to detail is phenomenal.”

Kgosi enjoys going through the plug-ins, listening to what each one does. Then, on a Sunday morning during worship rehearsal for front of house, he starts building his mix. “By the time we go live it’s just a matter of letting creativity fill in the blanks,” he says.

All sermons, though attended by a hybrid audience, are virtual. “We multi-track everything and it helps to be able to play it back during the following week to see how we can tweak a few things, and by the time we have the next rehearsal, I’ve made some mental notes. What is awesome is that I’m getting to a place, as I did with the SD12, where I can save some presets specifically for guys in the band with instruments, so that as I know for this person with his guitar, I have 1,2, 3, 4 and 5 on it and then I just load that preset. This has already given me quite a bit of leeway. Then it’s just the fine-tuning based on how they are playing on the day. Or maybe I’ve found a new plugin that makes them sound even better, and think, ‘You are going to rock this morning!’

While the worship team has noticed a difference in terms of their monitoring and requests easily being met, everyone has noticed the improved audio quality when watching the service online.

The transition has been described as easy for the technical team. “The one thing I’ve always highlighted to our team is that no matter what sound desk you use, whether its analogue or digital, the theory of working with a channel remains the same. It’s just the layout that changes. What’s significantly growing as the years go by is that the layout is becoming easier and easier even though the fundamentals remains the same. It’s simpler and a lot less complicated in many ways.”

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