

ANDY  
ATTWELL

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY



# GOING THE EXTRA MILE



When it came to updating the studio at the University of Surrey, Andy Attwell was looking for manufacturers that would offer more than just a great product.

It sounds like a dream job. With the funding secured to update the studio in the Department of Music and Media at the University of Surrey, Guildford, it was time for Television Studio Manager, Andy Attwell to go shopping. "The Department's new Film and Video Production Technology degree started in 2016 and as part of that we took the opportunity to give the studio a revamp, bringing it up to date in terms of technology," he tells us. "It was an HD studio at the corporate video level, but one thing that the Department has always done, particularly in its Tonmeister sound recording programme, is ensure that students have access to professional quality equipment, so when they go out into the world to start their careers they're familiar with pro level kit."

To bring the facility up to scratch, Andy embarked on an 18-month process of engaging with different manufacturers and suppliers to find out what the options and costs were. He chose Panasonic UC3000 broadcast cameras, but then came the tricky decision of deciding which lenses to attach to them. "I knew we were going to need some lenses to match the cameras' high quality output," Andy explains. "Originally, I was looking at the entry level lenses from Fujinon, but I wasn't sure whether they would be suitable, which is when the guys at ProAv suggested I got in touch with Chris Williams, Fujifilm's Broadcast Accounts Manager."

That proved to be very sound advice.

"Chris came in with a wide choice of lenses and spent a day in the studio with the camera and the guys from Panasonic. It was incredibly valuable; to have the ability to test lenses back to back was quite an eye opener," Andy enthuses. "We were looking to see what the chromatic aberrations were like, any distortions - the hardest test was putting them on a black & white star chart and seeing what colours we were getting at the transitions from black into white. After the day of testing, we chose to invest in three ZA17x7.6BRD lenses."

Naturally, the quality of the lenses impressed Andy, but just as important was being able to forge a relationship with a manufacturer. He wasn't just buying boxes, he was looking for a complete service, which is where Fujifilm stood out against its key rival. "As a result of the service I have every intention to continue to work with Fujifilm in the years ahead," says Andy. "I'm likely to invest in additional lenses. It was all about building a relationship that then continues."

Often the hallmark of great service isn't just about the pre-sale process, it's equally important to make sure that post-sales support is up to scratch and Andy has nothing but praise for the Fujifilm team on that basis,

with one particular example really standing out for him. "Supply chains being what they are there meant that I didn't get all three lenses we ordered at once and I found myself with a university open day coming up and a camera without a lens," Andy reveals. "I could have put an older lens on it, but that wasn't really ideal as I wanted to give prospective students a taste of the kit that was on offer. But after a quick email to Chris he offered to lend me a lens. He sent it by courier and let me hang on to it until the last lens turned up!"

It's a similar story if Andy ever has any issues or questions about the lenses he bought for the university; Chris Williams and the Fujifilm team have definitely got his back.

"Working on a consultative basis is how we differentiate ourselves from the opposition," confirms Chris. "I like to find out exactly what the client wants and then get the right piece of kit for them. From the initial stages it's about finding out the size of the studio, what the client wants to achieve and then giving them options. We don't want to just sit there and take orders, we want to work with people."

"Going into the studio for a day is great for the client as they get to try the kit, but it's also great for us as we get to know the customer," Chris continues. "I take lenses from entry level all the way through to top end. We'd love the opportunity for other educational establishments to work with us in the same way as the University of Surrey."

Naturally, with a host of new kit to play with there was a buzz around the students on the course when they got their hands on the Fujinon lenses. "They noticed the quality straight away and were full of enthusiasm to get hands on the servo controls. The fact that they can preset zoom positions and then hit a button to select them, made them like children with a new toy," jokes Andy.

In this day and age where products from different manufacturers offer very similar levels of performance, brands need to find other ways to set themselves apart from competitors. By offering an unbeatable pre- and post-sales service in addition to a fantastic product, the Fujifilm team has introduced a key point of difference that's sure to appeal to many in this growing and competitive sector of the market. "If I've ever had any questions, I was able to talk directly to the manufacturer," concludes Andy. "That is priceless." ■