

Transformable Spaces: A Clear Investment in Future Business



When you step inside the Swiss Tech Convention Center in Lausanne, Switzerland, the spacious amphitheater is ready to welcome 3,000 guests. Hard to imagine that just 15 minutes earlier this same space was divided into three distinct conference rooms, with their own stages, and that, later in the same day, it will become a banquet hall for 2,000 seated guests. Between each event, the rows of seats pivot, the floors raise and lower, stage elements appear or disappear, all in a choreographed mechanical ballet handled by just one operator. The automated change-over is a performance in and of itself, created and developed by Montreal-based, Gala Systems.

TOP | Swiss Tech Convention Centre, Lausanne
 BOTTOM | Edinburgh International Conference Centre



The vision of Gala is to create completely multifunctional spaces, whose configurations and capacities can be modified within 10 to 15 minutes, and it's clear that the venture has paid off: from the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Center, to the fully modular floor system of the EICC in Edinburgh and the future Baku Convention Center in Azerbaijan, the concept of a transformable space has convinced architects and venue managers the world over, that there is a strong economic logic to creating such flexible spaces.

It has been more than 30 years since Gala began supplying performance and conference halls with automated transformation systems to increase a space's modularity, such as stage lifts, orchestra podiums and rotating seats using patented Spiralift units (ultra-compact lifting units originally designed for auditoriums and stages). In all, the company has participated in some 1,500 projects around the world.

"From an architectural point of view, it's a revolution that blurs the boundaries between the arts and business," explains Robert Heimbach, Vice President of Business Development. "The same space can now host a classical concert, a corporate meeting, a rock show, a teaching seminar or an exhibition space. From an economic standpoint, it's a high performance solution that increases a space's rental rate, by targeting a larger and more diverse clientele."

For the audience or visitor, it's impossible to tell the difference between a traditional fixed venue and a "transformable" one. This is what makes Gala so attractive to architects and venue managers, who expect the highest standards when it comes to design, materials and finishes. Because Gala venues are custom designed, they can be integrated into any auditorium, from modern to historic, from construction projects to large renovations or extensions.

As for how the system works, the answer is simple: with just the press of a button! A remote equipped with a control screen allows a technician – just one person – to modify the entire configuration of a space.

Most transformations can be completed in less than 15 minutes... in silence. "With their fixed structure, traditional venues are limited to a few events a week," notes Robert Heimbach. "By contrast, Gala venues can meet the needs of all types of presentations and audiences often accommodating two or three events within the same day. This system ensures the flexibility to host any client and guarantees a proper modular space for future opportunities."



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