

Baselight goes 'Remote' with Nice Shoes

FilmLight

Nice Shoes has been one of New York's top post production studios for 20 years, with an excellent reputation for both its talent and its technical backbone.

The studio has worked closely with FilmLight since adopting the Baselight platform in 2008. Its team of colourists, now joined by Sal Malfitano and Oscar Oboza, has five Baselight suites in New York, along with two more in Chicago and Minneapolis to cover a broad range of work, focusing largely on high-end commercials.

The US market for top-end work is diversified around the country, but grading with the calibre of Nice Shoes' Baselight-equipped colourists is hard to find. With budgets tightening, producers and directors find it increasingly tough to justify the trip to New York to finish a project. To address this gap, the company has come up with a solution that takes full advantage of its Baselight systems.

Nice Shoes Remote Services leaves the colourist in New York with the Baselight system, while the client is at his or her preferred local facility. Currently Nice Shoes has partner facilities in Atlanta, Austin, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis and New Orleans, with more to follow.

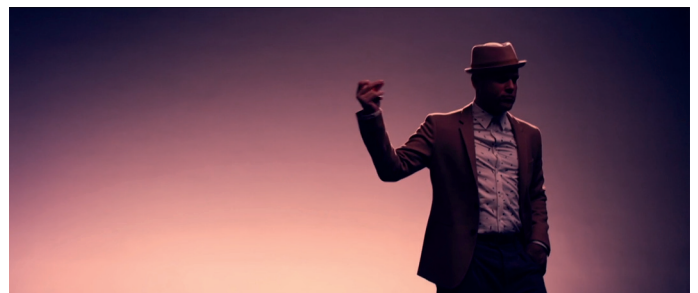
These partner facilities are creative post houses in their own right, perhaps concentrating on editorial or VFX.

"The driving force has been finding partners that are independent companies like us, with similar cultures," said Chris Ryan, Nice Shoes colourist and partner. "Many of our competitors are part of larger networks of companies, and we wanted to think about a different way to work, to expand in a smart way, with a consistency in the experience for our clients."

The service is simple. The colourist operates a Baselight system in one of the colour suites at Nice Shoes. A live link between the two facilities ensures that the same high quality image that appears on the monitor in New York, Chicago, or Minneapolis also appears on the screen in the remote grading room. The monitors and connection have been calibrated by

Nice Shoes' engineering team to ensure pixel accuracy and that both parties are seeing the exact same colour grade.

Latency-free two-way conversation via an enterprise-quality telepresence solution is also enabled, so the client and the colourist can talk about the grade just as they would in any session, and the client sees the requested changes instantly.



Olly Murs 'Wrapped Up'

Malfitano, who recently joined Nice Shoes with over eight years of Baselight experience at The Mill, commented: "It's exciting to have joined Nice Shoes at a time of expansion. The company has a stellar reputation and an incredibly loyal following that continues to grow. It has been a great fit culturally with the team in New York, and with the companies we've partnered with throughout the country."

This collaborative workflow model, envisioned by Nice Shoes, is easily supported by Baselight's open architecture. It is grading as we have always known it, except the client and the colourist may be a state, a country, or a continent apart.

"Clients are amazed with the speed at which we work on the Baselight system and the tools available right at our hands. It is like being a chef, creating something incredible in front of their eyes," commented senior colourist, Oscar Oboza.



Arby's 'Both Bacon'

Working together

The remote programme is great for facilities that can now add colour grading services for their clients, via Nice Shoes, giving them access to a unique combination of the studio's talented roster and Baselight's high-performance solution. The remote locations are provided with a grading monitor and a decoder box by Nice Shoes. The only requirement on the partner company's end is a dedicated Internet connection of 20MBS or higher.

At Optimus in Chicago and Volt Studios in Minneapolis, Nice Shoes has installed a full grading room and staff colourist. Long time Nice Shoes employee Ron Sudul moved out from New York to launch the studio's Chicago presence, and Oboza moved home to Minneapolis after a period of working in Chicago. In each case the room is equipped with a Baselight TWO system to match the facilities in New York.

"What's really impressive is that Nice Shoes is investing in the infrastructure of the Minneapolis market," said Oboza, based at Volt Studios. "They constructed an amazing new Baselight suite for me to work in, built to the same exacting standards of their colour rooms in New York, including a brand new Baselight TWO with Blackboard 2."

The Remote Services system allows the grading rooms in Chicago and Minneapolis to be connected to any of the partners just like the New York suites. Colourist Ron Sudul is based out of Optimus in Chicago, but can work with any of the clients he's established during his time in New York or at any of the company's other remote partners across the country.

"We have an opportunity to build off the reputation that we have established in New York," commented Sudul. "I'm really proud to be representing Nice Shoes in Chicago, and of the level of care that's gone into crafting my colour suite here at Optimus. I'm working with a whole new group of talented

people, while also collaborating with my clients in New York, Miami, Dallas and the other cities where we've established Remote Partnerships."

The business model is a true partnership between the companies. "It's a two-way street," explained Ryan. "Our partners bring in customers that they can now service from end-to-end, and they also get clients that simply want access to our colour grading services via their location - it just works really well."



'Heaven Knows What'

Style

Apart from the obvious benefit of being available in multiple markets, the concept of remote collaboration means Nice Shoes can build up a roster of great colourists, each with their own styles and ways of working. So if a client sees a look that he or she particularly likes, they can be paired with the right colourist without the need to travel to them.

"We definitely do not have a house style as we want to offer our clients options," said Ryan. "We need the consistency in quality and workflow that Baselight delivers, but colourists work in their own style. We encourage that, and so does Baselight."

Clients clearly appreciate the convenience of accessing the best colourists and working with Baselight, the market's preferred grading platform, without the need for tiresome plane journeys.

"Nice Shoes is persistent in pairing the best artists with the best technology and we are delighted to have the support of the FilmLight team," concluded Ryan. "They are highly reliable and willing to innovate constantly - something that is very important to us and our customers."

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