

## Challenges

- Expand the reach of the organization's rich education programs beyond local schools
- Double revenue from private events rentals at the SFJAZZ center
- Stay lean as a nonprofit while ensuring a high-touch customer experience
- Continue pushing creative boundaries

## Value Created

- Videoconferencing removes geographic limits on the organization's education programs.
- Interactive meetings reduce cost, enhance its own board meetings and give SFJAZZ an attractive offering for private events rentals.
- The nonprofit saves thousands of dollars annually on phone costs.
- SFJAZZ sets up temporary box office lines in minutes to handle major upswings in its call volume when a new season goes on sale.
- Box office staff members personalize the customer experience with heads-up information about incoming callers.
- SFJAZZ can host artist-to-artist collaboration – virtually.



# San Francisco's SFJAZZ: Trumpeting Jazz beyond the Bay Area

## Nonprofit Devoted to American Art Form Picks up the Tempo with Videoconferencing



In the 1940s and '50s, dozens of jazz clubs sprung up in San Francisco, hosting legends such as Billie Holliday, Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis. Today, it's only fitting that the City by the Bay is leading a West Coast jazz renaissance.

The organization that's single-handedly driving this unique American art form: SFJAZZ. With roots in the 1980s as a weekend jazz festival, SFJAZZ now has a state-of-the-art performance space and has become the nation's largest presenter of jazz, with well over 300 events annually.

The San Francisco-based nonprofit isn't stopping there. The organization has an ambitious mission to continue expanding its live performances,

educational programs for all ages, and opportunities for collaboration for artists.

*"We want to engage artists, audiences, donors and the community in jazz, because jazz is an engagement enterprise,"* said Donald Derheim, CEO, SFJAZZ. *"We have to create an engaged, quality experience with people, otherwise we'll just be like everybody else who just didn't quite get it right."*

“We want to blow out of the wall, to blow out of the physical, and reach people virtually to provide more access to the knowledge and culture that’s here. Videoconferencing opens up levels of communication and nuance that aren’t possible with just voice.”

— Tom Porter, Manager,  
Corporate Partnerships,  
SFJAZZ

## Concert Hall Meets Jazz Club

Jazz has always been about pushing boundaries and bringing people together. It was in that spirit that SFJAZZ built a permanent home in 2013 in the heart of San Francisco, after three decades of borrowing performance spaces citywide.

Ten years in the making, the \$64 million, 35,000-square-foot cultural landmark serves simultaneously as performance venue, educational facility and inspiring space for private events rentals. It’s the only stand-alone facility built specifically for jazz in the United States.



In a single structure, the SFJAZZ center merges the acoustics of a great concert hall and the relaxed intimacy of a jazz club. Since opening, it has re-ignited the city’s jazz scene. Within 18 months, the nonprofit grew from 2,500 members to more than 10,000, and now touches more than 200,000 people annually.

From the first blueprints, every decision about the facility has centered on collaboration and innovation – only fitting for a structure located at the epicenter of technology ingenuity. It’s one of the most technically advanced venues in the country, from the lighting to acoustics to green design. The center recently achieved LEED® Gold Certification for energy usage, lighting, water and material usage, and other sustainable strategies.

## Rock Solid

The SFJAZZ center also chose technology to control the nonprofit’s costs and enhance relationships with members, artists and the public.

Deployed from day one, Avaya IP Office, a voice-over-IP phone system, coupled with Avaya IP Contact Center (IPCC), saves the organization thousands of dollars annually on phone costs and adeptly handles vast fluctuations in call volume.

*“You can imagine that every aspect of our customer service system relies heavily on a rock solid voice system,”* said Tom Porter, Manager, Corporate Partnerships at SFJAZZ. *“We chose Avaya IP Contact Center for the flexibility to scale up and scale down as our call volume changes and our membership grows. To direct those calls efficiently to the right places – without fail or interruption – is critical.”*

When SFJAZZ opens ticket sales for a new season, call volume spikes. The organization sells more than \$1 million worth of tickets in the first week of a new season. Handling that upswing requires SFJAZZ to add phone lines and staff, while still delivering personalized customer service, especially to members.

The ability to identify incoming callers allows the SFJAZZ box office staff to tailor the experience for customers. Donors who are members of the Leaders Circle call direct phone numbers to reach their SFJAZZ concierge. IPCC identifies these members, empowering staff to customize the conversation. The organization can also quickly set up temporary seats on the box office to handle the large jump in calls.

## Blow Out the Wall

Now the addition of a videoconferencing system, with Avaya Scopia, uncaps the organization's potential to reach more people.

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*"Videoconferencing opens up levels of communication and nuance that aren't possible with just voice."*

In the past, the center used video to broadcast performances and classes online. But videoconferencing brings an interactive element that wasn't possible with one-way video. Anyone, anywhere can engage the way they would if they were at the center. In this, SFJAZZ sees enormous potential to advance every aspect of its mission: education, operations, private rentals, fundraising and more.

Already, the center provides year-round education programs for youth

and adults: the award-winning SFJAZZ High School All-Stars program, Jazz in the Middle for middle school students, and Discover Jazz classes, where fans take deep-dives into the history and culture of jazz. Videoconferencing promises to extend programs outside the center's local radius of influence.

*"In this age, arts education of all kinds is budget-challenged in most schools," Porter said. "One of the possibilities we see with a robust video system is reaching well beyond the dozen or so schools that we reach now."*

SFJAZZ hosts both long-term, in-residence artists and guest artists, who perform, collaborate and teach. Videoconferencing means that the public can take master classes virtually with contemporary names such as Terence Blanchard, Yusef Lateef, Ravi Coltrane or Ellis Marsalis. Participants can log in from anywhere, making those programs available to anyone in the world.

## Creative Engagement

Videoconferencing also changes business meetings and private events rentals. Traditionally, SFJAZZ board members who can't attend quarterly meetings have joined in via a voice-only conference line. Now they can have a richer experience - without battling Bay Area traffic.

*"We have board members who are 60 miles away," Porter said. "To be able to give them the option to be present*

*through a video experience adds significant value versus the voice coming out of a speaker."*

The same goes for meetings with artists or their representatives, potential donors and sponsors, and private events rentals. For the latter, the video system is expected to help SFJAZZ meet its goal of doubling revenue from event rentals such as company meetings, a significant part of the nonprofit's income. *"We can offer something that matches the production level of everything else they might experience in the building," Porter said.*

And why not videoconferencing for the type of creative collaboration that's a hallmark of jazz? Can it enable a virtual jam session or creativity across art forms?

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In the past, the organization famously paired guitarist Bill Frisell with cartoonist Jim Woodring. Woodring drew while Frisell played. Then there was the time that SFJAZZ built a half pipe inside the center, where pianist Jason Moran serenaded skateboarders, who in turn, were muses for Moran's music. In the future, those types of events can merge the center with artists anywhere.

*"We are a hub for creative activity," Porter said. "You can see where the technology would add to that. We can have an artist virtually participate with an artist who is already here. It's a money-saver for us and it's a way to, at the same time, enhance an experience."*

Like the art form it represents, SFJAZZ sees no limits to what's possible. The nonprofit is charging beyond the West Coast, well on its way to being a national, and international, force for jazz.

## Solutions

- Avaya IP Office
- Avaya IP Office Contact Center
- Avaya Scopia® Elite 5110 MCU
- Avaya Scopia® XT5000
- Avaya Scopia® Mobile
- Avaya Scopia® Desktop

## About Avaya

Avaya is a leading, global provider of customer and team engagement solutions and services available in a variety of flexible on-premise and cloud deployment options. Avaya's fabric-based networking solutions help simplify and accelerate the deployment of business critical applications and services. For more information, please visit [www.avaya.com](http://www.avaya.com).

## ABOUT SFJAZZ

Founded in 1983, SFJAZZ presents the greatest names in jazz, Latin and global music and nurtures the art of improvisation through its year-round concert, commissioning and education programs. The West Coast's biggest jazz presenter serves over 200,000 fans and students every year and has several award-winning resident jazz ensembles – the world renowned SFJAZZ Collective and the SFJAZZ High School All-Stars. For more information, visit [www.sfjazz.org](http://www.sfjazz.org).

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