

Conquering Cannes

Simon-Pierre Delord, Cinema Product Manager at Volfoni, relates the company's coal-face experience as an exclusive partner for its 3D systems at last year's Cannes Film Festival. So, might we expect all red carpets and glamour-filled days? Yes, but it's maybe not what you'd think.

Becoming an official partner of the Cannes Film Festival remains a significant event in the international film community's calendar. This was very much the case for Volfoni, too, and was welcomed by our whole team in 2016. Of particular note was the enthusiasm of our R&D people, particularly, when comfortably settled in and overlooking the sea, and all just 30 minutes away from the fabled Croisette. Just the idea of being able to climb the steps of the famous red carpet would fulfill more than just one dream for us; while all 3D-screenings for the 69th Official Cannes Selection were also being entrusted to Volfoni, of course.

For Volfoni, our involvement was mainly to provide and oversee the 3D-screenings following our equipment's installation. As the requested 3D-systems for this year would be active ones, we were to organise the logistics: 5,000 pairs of active glasses and associated transmitters. Concurrent with this, would be the selection of our integrator-partner for the festival's duration. But there were significant constraints. For instance, it is necessary for the integrator to mount scaffolding in the mythical Auditorium Louis Lumière, the principal festival theatre with its two levels and 2,300-plus seating capacity. This is important because



LIGHTS, CAMERA, VOLFONI!
The world's biggest-selling 3D triple-beam system – Volfoni's SmartCrystal Diamond, ready for action

glitz and the glamour, we got to discover the labyrinthine extent of this most sprawling organisation and its meanderings, along with the race for accreditations and invitations. Of course, the super-heightened security measures did nothing to simplify matters. That being said, the Festival backstage was nothing short of amazing.

Back to the event, and the nearer the fateful day and the time to perform loomed, the greater the agitation, and the more the stress became palpable. There are people and crowds *everywhere*. One crosses oneself, but without even speaking. There is no lightweight 'Hi' anymore – instead each is fully-engaged and fixated upon his own assignment. We regularly undertake installations for key events within the Cinema

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scaffolding is necessary to install and position the transmitters correctly but any improvisation is strictly *verboten*.

So, at Volfoni, our dedicated team reported for action and the planned installations were carried out correctly, thanks to the expertise of Decipro, whilst also under the expert, vigilant eye of the CST. Decipro has been the major technical player on the Festival for many years now and is indeed expert in the field. In fact, the collaboration between Volfoni, Decipro and CST remained first-class throughout. For everyone, the tension surrounding the event could be cut-with-a-knife, right from the moment of arrival to the very last minute of its end – you can be neither complacent nor blasé about last-minute or technical hitches and must always be on guard. Volfoni's team, comprising, in turn, members of our R&D team was on '24/7 stand-by' throughout the festival – and, for them, the festival's end, without any unexpected problem or glitch would come as an immense relief. Certainly, to hope to avoid any major technical problems.

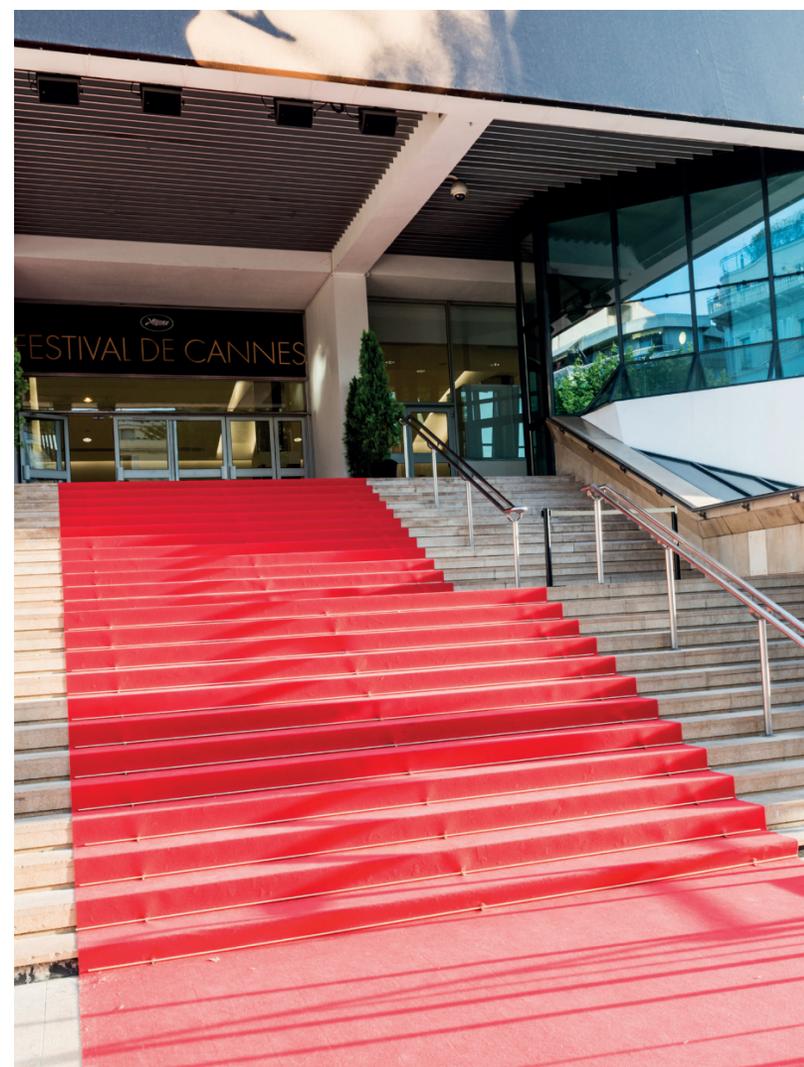
GLITZ vs. TENSION

Ultimately, though – and let's be frank here for a moment – the responsibility associated with becoming an Official Cannes Partner was never going to be trivial, especially for the first episode of our three-year term. Behind the

world, but, for sure, Cannes proved particularly busy and stressful amongst others, and often because of the late instructions.

INSPIRATION & REALITY

When we did emerge from our technical responsibilities, out from the darkness of the behind-scenes activity, there is then the festival itself. And it is only then that you begin to fully appreciate that Cannes' fame is beyond doubt. However, it's still surprising to note the extent of enthusiasm that the Festival inspires throughout the world. Be it from China, Russia, Turkey, or elsewhere, our customers all respond with the utmost fervour. It's because of where they are. But then further challenges emerge: this time in organising the reception and accommodating and accompanying our guests amid a Cannes now in full-effervescence. Of course, most all of the prestigious hotels and restaurants are full-booked a year in advance and you have to pay attention to *everything*. And it's an uphill battle, even with accreditations, to get a limousine; in fact, our race-to-host had, in the end, proven to be as complicated as organising the very technical reasons that we were there for!



And when the festival starts, everything becomes a 'timing' story; while you can see the celebrities from just a few metres away, you may also find yourself having to queue for an hour. With hindsight, we'd probably advise against being dropped anywhere 'directly' by limousine – unless, that is, your preference is to be mistaken for somebody important; or else to get photo-blitzed by crowds of strangers who – for a few seconds, at least – will also be wondering who you might be. No. Far better to be

during their stay in Cannes proved to be a real pleasure. The atmosphere was definitely unique, and actually must be experienced to be appreciated; and to celebrate our first year of participation, we treated ourselves to the ultimate must-do: the services of an official photographer. This allowed us to make exceptionally-memorable photos of our guests on the red carpet and they were delighted. In fact, there and then, some *already* wanted to attend next May's 70th edition of the Festival.



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dropped-off upstream and walk the rest of the way in the light atmosphere among all the guests kitted-out in their evening-wear. By car, it's impossible to arrive at the same time as the stars, because they're also conveyed to arrive or leave and, naturally, they're the priority and there's only one road in and out of Cannes. If you want to enjoy your time climbing the steps and your time with the paparazzi and to enjoy the atmosphere, it's much better to arrive at the appropriate time. And when time is of the essence, and you're directed quickly to the entrance, your moment of glory is brief – there is always so very much going on.

By way of summary – and despite all of the binding logistics and restrictions – accompanying our clients

We'd like to take the opportunity to warmly thank the festival organisers; also Decipro and CST, who greatly facilitated our inaugural participation. And, inspite of the various hurdles encountered with this type of prestigious international event, we're of course delighted to participate, shortly, in the 2017 edition of this mythical festival and will again be demonstrating our exclusive know-how of the 3D field dedicated to the service of festival-goers. **S**

Volfoni manufactures and distributes 3D & VR solutions, internationally, providing products for the home, education, museums and cinemas. Volfoni is best-known to consumers for its EDGE 3D VR glasses; it's also renowned within large global cinema chains for its SmartCrystal Diamond 3D system. Volfoni also owns an extensive patent-catalogue that its team seems to surpass each year, and thus enabling it to regularly win awards.

TOP LEFT: The magic of the Cannes Festival – Simon-Pierre Delord, Volfoni's Cinema Product Manager, on the red carpet
MIDDLE: Renaud Van Lith, Volfoni Chairman, and wife

BOTTOM LEFT: Alain Chamailard, Volfoni's MD (EMEA), and wife

TOP RIGHT: Christian Nkela, Volfoni's Logistics Manager

BELOW: Fabien Gattault, Volfoni's Deputy CEO, and wife

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