

THEATRE WORLD

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GRAND CINEMA SUNSHINE: JAPAN'S LARGEST-IN-SCALE FLAGSHIP CINEPLEX

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Grand Cinema Sunshine: Japan's Largest-in-Scale Flagship Cineplex



This flagship property is one of the largest complexes in Japan to feature its advanced technologies and amenities to enhance the moviegoing experience. Located at a very popular commercial complex that offers strategically integrated shopping and entertainment, this superplex is one of the most technologically advanced cinemas with several cutting-edge systems. Having a candid conversation, *TheatreWorld* brings Takehiko Sasaki, Senior Managing Director, Sasaki Kogyo Co., Ltd and Dr Man-Nang Chong, Founder, Chairman and CEO, GDC Technology Limited to its dais to brief more on the property's luxe amenities. Here's more...

Grand Cinema Sunshine recently held its grand opening in Ikebukuro, Tokyo. With 12 auditoriums and Japan's largest IMAX cinema, the flagship cinema is one of the largest complexes in Japan to feature advanced technologies and luxurious amenities to enhance the moviegoing experience. Located at Q-Plaza; a very popular commercial complex that offers strategically integrated shopping and entertainment, the entertainment section consists of a large baseball centre and a theme park of PLAZA CAPCOM, which is operated by a famous Japanese game company best known for developing many classic games such as Street Fighter



and Biochemical Crisis. To ensure cinema management efficiency, equipment stability and flexibility, this mega cinema chose GDC Cinema Automation CA2.0 and the latest generation diskless media server. In addition, GDC's DTS:X immersive sound system was installed to ensure the highest sound quality.

How did your tryst with Cinema Sunshine begin? How did it all start?

Mr Sasaki: Grand Cinema Sunshine at Ikebukuro opened in one of the leading commercial area in Tokyo with a population of about 14 million. Compared to Shinjuku and other terminals, Ikebukuro's improvement of movie theatres was delayed. We have been operating a movie theatre company for about 70 years in Ikebukuro. We started this project because we believe that our mission is to build a movie theatre that Ikebukuro customers can be proud of compared to movie theatres in other areas. The concept is to open the best movie theatre, that's it.

I visited movie theatres in the US, China and other Asian regions to get a hint of 'What it is like to be in the best movie theatre'. In order to build the same, we not only prepared the

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latest screening equipment and sound equipment but also designed the environment of how customers can be integrated with the movie world.

Brief us a little about Grand Cinema Sunshine

Mr Sasaki: Grand Cinema Sunshine consists of 12 auditoriums of different sizes from 4th to 13th floor of the building and offering 2,443 seats in total. The largest auditoriums has 542 seats, with the screen size of 25.8m×18.9m. Auditorium No.7 and No.8 are the smallest auditoriums, each has 79 seats and a screen size of 7.1m×3.8m. Other auditoriums have 100 to 400 seats. Luxuriously decorated with comfortable seats, all auditoriums feature an aesthetically pleasing atmosphere perfect for watching movies.

What has been the impetus behind this superplex project in Tokyo?

Mr Sasaki: By making the flagship cinema so well-known in Japan, Q-Plaza has also become a new popular landmark for shopping and entertainment. Located in Q-Plaza, Ikebukuro, Grand Cinema Sunshine is the 14th cinema as well as the flagship cinema under the brand. Ikebukuro, is a leading commercial and entertainment district in Tokyo, attracting large crowds of people with a demanding taste for quality entertainment. To attract moviegoers, Grand Cinema Sunshine

chose projection equipment from leading world providers to meet the demand of the higher-end consumers. In addition, delivering enhanced audio and visual experience, cinema management efficiency, as well as equipment functionality and reliability, were major concerns of the investors.

Tell us about the ornate architecture and the luxurious designing of the cinema

Mr Sasaki: As the investor, Sasaki Kogyo introduced the latest cinema technologies to make moviegoers feeling special, including IMAX, ScreenX multi-projection experience that extends the screen to the auditorium walls and 4DX which allows a motion picture presentation to be augmented with environmental effects such as seat motion, wind, rain, lights, and scents. The acoustical reproduction system features 7.1 sound as well as Dolby Atmos and DTS:X respectively in auditorium No.5 and No.6. In addition, all 12 auditoriums are deployed with Christie RGB laser projectors with GDC's SR-1000 Standalone Integrated Media Block with CineCache and GDC's innovative Cinema Automation 2.0 (CA2.0). The luxury configuration, state-of-the-art technologies, quality and novel projection effects, avant-garde decoration and comfortable environment have maximized the movie experience to the greatest extent.



Q-Plaza has 10 floors, and 4-13 floors are auditoriums of GDCS Cinema. The 12th floor is Japan's largest IMAX cinema.

Elaborate on the induced features of the property that make it stand-out in the highly competitive cinema exhibition market today

Mr Sasaki: Focusing on how to improve operating and management efficiency - By focusing more on extreme audio and visual experience along with cinema automation, Grand Cinema Sunshine stand-out in the highly competitive cinema exhibition market today.

Good location, well-positioned plaza - Located in Toshima-ku, Tokyo Prefecture, Ikebukuro is one of Tokyo's three major sub-centres. Also, Q-Plaza is a very popular commercial complex that integrates shopping and entertainment. Apart from Grand Cinema Sunshine itself, another highlight of the plaza is a large entertainment section consisting of a large baseball centre and a theme park of PLAZA CAPCOM. The theme park was run by CAPCOM, which has developed many classic games like Street Fighter and Biochemical Crisis. PLAZA CAPCOM offers diverse types of recreation



Cinema Sunshine's premium "BESTIA" (BEST IMMERSIVE AUDIO VISUAL) theatre in auditorium 5 & 6 have been equipped with GDC's DTS:X immersive sound systems

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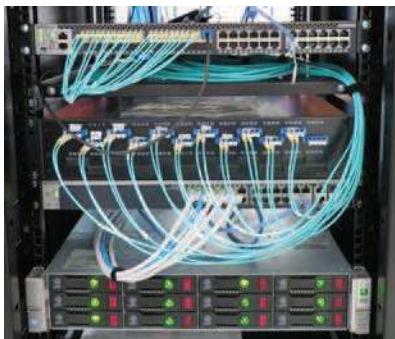
facilities and the latest VR games to customers at different ages. They can also enjoy game-themed food and beverages at a CAPCOM café.

What's your say on the innovative technology being deployed in the cinema

Dr Chong: One of the innovative technologies is GDC's CA2.0, which is a mature cinema automation solution incorporating an SCL Series Centralised Playback Server capable of live streaming up to 2,000 DCI movies to each auditorium installed with GDC's SR-1000 Standalone IMB with CineCache. CA2.0 also features automatic content management with auto-show playlist generation; and intelligent cinema equipment management of pre-scheduled equipment power supply and screening quality testing and analysis.

Why GDC products were selected?

Mr Sasaki: Sasaki Kogyo is the first company in Japan to install GDC products such as media servers and the immersive audio system. It has been nearly 10 years since the installation of GDC products. The superior technical capabilities and high reliability of GDC products have always streamlined the operation of our movie theatres. Another important reason to use GDC is that we have built a long-term relationship and deep trust with Dr Man-Nang Chong and other employees over the past 10 years. After we learned about the technology at different exhibitions such as CinemaCon, CineAsia and



GDC CA2.0's SCL centralized playback server and switches



GDC's SX-4000 and XSP-1000 at projection room to deliver DTS:X immersive sound.



other trade shows, we decided to install immediately because it is a great solution that could change the way movie theatres operate in the future.

Dr Chong: CA2.0 and SR-1000 were developed from our 20-year knowledge of digital cinema. By providing the ultra-reliable technologies, it allows GDC to constantly work with our valuable partners, such as Sasaki-san. The automation design of Grand Cinema Sunshine does not only offer cost efficiency but also improves the screening quality.

Elaborate on the multiplexes run by Cinema Sunshine around the country.

Mr Sasaki: Cinema Sunshine is developing cinema complexes throughout Japan with the concept of 'creating community-based cinemas'. We installed the most

actively advanced screening systems such as IMAX, BESTIA, 4DX and SCREENX to deliver the best movie experience to our customers. In addition, Cinema Sunshine has developed an original smartphone app that allows moviegoers to go from ticket purchase to admission without printing a paper ticket.

In order to create a more comfortable environment, we are pursuing a high-quality movie experience that customers can only experience at Cinema Sunshine.

Talking of growth trajectory, how would you sum up the secret of moviegoing experiences demanded today?

Mr Sasaki: In addition to receiving opinions directly by e-mail, we have recently made it possible to visualize customer opinions and requests via SNS etc. We try to make use of these opinions that can be handled immediately, such as staff's response and programming. We are working on long-terms to reflect as much as possible about contents that we cannot respond immediately, such as systems and operations.

Any expansion plans for the future?

Mr Sasaki: We will open a new 10-screen Cinema Complex in Numazu City, Shizuoka Prefecture shortly. We have installed as many new facilities as possible in Grand Cinema Sunshine to Cinema Sunshine LaLaport Numazu. We will continue to evolve without providing a fixed format so that we can provide our customers with the services that meet the needs of the region and the best equipment that can be installed at that time.

