

SPOTLIGHT

MULTIROOM AUDIO



On-Q/Legrand says its High Performance Keypad (foreground), which augments its lyrIQ whole-house audio solution, delivers "unprecedented sound fidelity."

What's the biggest challenge facing this product segment?

The biggest challenges are improving the selling process to better convey the value, simplifying the product to make it easier to use and understand, and making these products more "built-into the home" for a cleaner and more aesthetically pleasing installation.

How can custom installers better sell this category?

By simplifying their offering, creating lifestyle collateral materials to help sell the offering, and by highlighting the lifestyle benefits when selling.

Audio Design Associates (ADA)

www.ada.net

"Distributed audio," "whole-house/home audio" or "multiroom audio"?

Thirty-years ago, Peter McKean coined the term "multiroom music" when he and Albert Langella co-founded ADA. If Peter were with us today, he would dismiss these other terms as being too sterile or complex. And Peter would be right. Our industry focuses more on buttons than fidelity and perhaps this is why so many homes sound like "distributed audio" instead of "multiroom music."



RICHARD STOERGER
VICE PRESIDENT AND COO



ADA says its MC-7000 provides "extremely cost-effective" music control that makes it easy to select songs on iPods as well as genres on XM or Sirius Radio.

Audioaccess

www.audioaccess.com

CHRIS ROBINSON
DIRECTOR OF SALES

What's the biggest challenge facing this product segment?

Not long ago, whole-house music systems were primarily only for more affluent, but in recent years manufacturers have been able to produce systems and speakers at lower cost and offer them to a much broader homeowner segment. This is the good news. The long-term challenge comes in assuring the multi-room system experience is a high-quality in all applications, including systems in mid-priced homes. Inexpensive speakers that look like a bargain at first can have a negative impact



The AVR21EN A/V Receiver/System Controller is the "heart" of Audioaccess' W.H.E.N., an integrated home theater, multiroom-audio/video and in-home communications system.

long-term growth and appeal of this segment if a lot of owners become dissatisfied or aren't able to enjoy their investment. Installations at price points tend to sell the control experience over the musical quality of a system will be acceptable regardless of the equipment used. Inexpensive electronics, especially when combined with low-quality speakers, are the ingredients for a system that sounds bad and is then abandoned, thus creating a dissatisfied whole-house audio customer. Stepping up all customers, whether by offering better-quality speakers with more expensive installations or by stepping up high-end customers with better equipment all around, is a challenge for most installers, but it's a challenge that must be addressed for whole-house systems in any price range to be accepted as offering high value and real benefits.

How can custom installers better sell this category?

Sell the overall experience in addition to the ease-of-control aspect. It is more common to sell the keypads' and other control devices' ease of use and functionality, and the touchscreens, remotes and other control devices aspects that are typically of primary interest to the whole-house audio customer. Dealers could better sell the category with demonstrations that show how improved products impact the overall experience for the customer. Whole-house systems should be actively installed in custom installers' offices and showplaces, and installers should pay as much attention to demonstrating high-quality multi-room sound as they would to demonstrating a home theater demonstration room. These systems should be readily available to audition in different areas, thus showing the customer even a modest step-up investment in speakers can improve their overall experience and long-term satisfaction. **CR**