5 minutes with...
Damian Cavanagh

Technology can play an important role in your home's interior design. **Damian Cavanagh** speaks to SSH about how to make the most attractive homes the smartest.

FROM A CUSTOM INSTALLATION POINT OF VIEW, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE WHEN PLANNING/DESIGNING A HOME?

A lack of planning. More often than not we are introduced to a project last minute. As a system integrator we need time to design and engineer an appropriate system for our client's needs; it's not just a matter of running cables and installing black boxes anymore. It is advantageous to have a systems integration company involved from the early stages of planning to ensure the client is receiving the best possible solution and not one that is compromised due to a limited time frame. Simple things like room dimensions in a theatre room dramatically impact a system's overall performance. Proper planning will always result in a better performing system and often save the client unnecessary costs that could have been avoided in the first place. You wouldn't arrange a builder and call your architect the week before construction to arrange the homes design, our approach needs to be seen in the same light.

DO YOU HAVE ANY TIPS ON HOW TO BEST DESIGN MULTI-FUNCTIONAL ROOMS, LIKE LIVING ROOMS THAT MAY ALSO DOUBLE AS A THEATRE?

In the past, a product's performance has often been compromised to facilitate aesthetic appeal. Thanks to advancements in technology this is no longer the case. It is very common these days for a living room to double as a home entertainment space. The most important factor to consider when designing such a space is to ensure the electronic systems do not become a prominent feature of the room when not in use. It is also important to consider some form of sound isolation inside wall and ceiling cavities as often these rooms are adjoining bedrooms and quieter areas of the home.

In addition always look at dedicating a space in the home to store the main components of the electronics system. Often this area would be the garage, basement or storage cupboard. Adopting this approach enables distribution to all rooms negating the need for unnecessary duplication of hardware. The key is to utilise the footprint of the home and again keep it simple.

HOW DO YOU BEST CONCEAL HOME AUTOMATION TECHNOLOGIES?

Careful consideration with the contracted architect, interior designer and related trades is absolutely imperative. Often cross collaboration will ensure a far better solution for the end user. For example if space is limited equipment can be concealed in joinery or a ceiling cavity and motorised when required. If everybody knows where the other is coming from, we all end up singing from the same book and the integration works seamlessly. Most manufacturers now offer a myriad of aesthetically pleasing options when it comes to home electronics and by partnering with a professional in our field, the most appropriate options can be presented based on the individuals exact requirements.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE THING YOU'VE SEEN IN THE CUSTOM INSTALLATION SPACE?

We consider ourselves a control company. If we've done our job properly, the system presented to the end user is seamless. So what gets me excited is a lot of technology made simple. Good control systems mean the world to the end user. You can have a fantastic home entertainment system and all the electronics under the sun, but at the end of the day if the system is complex to use the home owner may not perceive value in the investment made. So in my opinion simplified control is the key ingredient to a successful integration project.

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