



CUSTOM DISTRIBUTOR GUIDE 2014

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EDITION

FEATURING AVAD • PETRA • POWERHOUSE • STAMPEDE • WAVE

WIRELESS BY DESIGN

Custom Integration
Distribution Firms Outfit
the Connected Home

by Llanor Alleyne

Custom integration distribution firms are about to close out 2014 having witnessed and catered to an ever-changing market. With wireless networking winning the year and changing how custom integrators approach residential projects, The PowerHouse Alliance, Wave Inc., Stampede, Petra, and AVAD continue to provide the products, as well as the training to fuel and expand on what is becoming a game-changing tool for the custom integration channel.

“The connected home continues to gain more attention as it reaches mass market and functions more reliably, with more features,” noted Will Breaux, vice president of marketing for Wave Inc. “In addition to the actual automation products used for these homes, we provide Apple products to actually control the systems. We are one of the few distributors that can provide the products for automation, the training and technical support for the installation, and the Apple products to work with the system.”

For The PowerHouse Alliance, wireless audio and products necessary to receive and send Wi-Fi signals have been their biggest trend, with Dennis Holzer, the company’s executive director noting that “Vendors such as Sonos and Luxul are just two examples of lines that have done extremely well with state-of-the-art, cutting-edge products. Products from vendors as mentioned are doing very well because they provide solutions in specific areas that other

vendors don’t provide.”

At Stampede, the “internet of things,” has taken root in the form of wireless systems from companies like Neurona and the ever-growing popularity of low-cost camera drones and video surveillance solutions.

“CI customers in education, corporate, and security are looking for cost-effective new ways for their end-user clients to capture and access high quality video imagery,” said Kevin Kelly, president and COO of Stampede Presentation Products.

THE NEXT BIG THING

As wireless systems and fast networking solutions continue to reshape how end-users interact with products in their connected home, The PowerHouse Alliance sees technology product additions like Dolby Atmos gaining a firm foothold.

Petra Industries is seeing a big trend in wireless audio products. “Systems using Bluetooth, Wi-Fi and proprietary wireless technologies have been introduced by well known brands including NuVo, Peerless AV, Knoll Systems, and Logear,” noted Bill Stewart, founder and CEO, Petra Industries. “These products are gaining traction as many installations are not suited for retrofitting audio cable or speaker wire, so both installers and their customers are finding many advantages in going wireless.”

Breaux, who doesn’t foresee a groundbreaking product for 2015, puts faith in new features and changes that will make the technology underpinning home integration products more accessible.

“It is one of the reasons that we have the MSTR Brand line of products,” Breaux said. Even if we are not the ones creating the technology, we can provide dealers with protected products to coordinate with the systems they are already installing in the home. From door contacts to speakers and cables, we have products under this umbrella to work with every install, and it is all at an attractive margin to the dealer. Dealers that support this line can earn some very attractive rebates back on not only the commodities, but the premium brands they buy from us too.”

Instead of a product focus, Stampede will introduce and establish professional services as a viable dealer business opportunity in 2015.

“Everything we do at Stampede has to pass the ‘value test,’ as we like to call it,” Kelly said. “Every business idea has to answer the question, ‘Does this idea create new revenue opportunities that bring long term value to our dealers?’ We have been taking a very close look at professional services—everything from design, spec, content, and installation professional services; service and support agreements; as well as help desks and extended warranties that are going to help all of us capture ‘the whole nine yards’ of every job.”