

technology

We Can Bundle That

HOW AV MANUFACTURERS ARE PACKAGING PRODUCTS FOR THE HOSPITALITY MARKET

s AV technology continues to advance, the number of manufacturers and range of products has ballooned substantially. This has created a perplexing situation for customers—and even integrators when it comes to figuring out what equipment works best together in a system.

To enhance performance and combat uncertainty, manufacturers have been offering bundled solutions, making the selling and integration of today's complex audiovisual equipment easier than ever before.

So how exactly are manufacturers of audio distribution and loudspeakers, display mounts, and digital signage systems bundling their products to serve the hospitality market in a more concise, easier-to-sell package? And how can integrators benefit from a bundled approach?

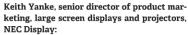
Brian McClimans, VP, global business development, Peerless-AV:

With many manufacturers offering a variety of solutions, it becomes easier to offer bundled packages. For instance, a hotel may be looking to update the TVs in its guest rooms or create a video wall for its lobby. At Peerless-AV, we could offer our UV2 TVs or Xtreme displays (depending on the need) along with an appropriate mounting solution. With our kiosk enclosures, we have offered a fully integrated solution to hospitality venues, including the

display to go inside the enclosure, the enclosure itself, the media player to play content on the display, and even the touch overlay (if the solution needs to be touchenabled). In providing solutions this way, we're able to give the integrators what they need as simply as possible. They can come to one vendor to get everything they need.

The biggest benefit for integrators using the bundled approach is time savings. Instead of looking to multiple vendors for each solution, a bundled approach offers all of the solutions needed for the project in one package. The integrator Peerless-AV's Xtreme display would have everything he or she

needs for a project from one trusted vendor. In addition, with the manufacturer combining all of the solutions together, the integrator does not need to worry about compatibility or sizing concerns. Based on the needs set forth by the integrator, the manufacturer would provide the appropriate solutions.

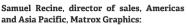


are looking for end-to-end Customers

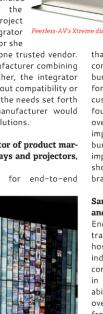
solutions that solve particular problems and achieve specific goals. NEC has the widest portfolio of display solutions in the market. allowing its partners to develop the perfect combinations of products and services to address those needs. Simple, all-in-one bundles for business signage needs can include the display, contentcreation services, computer, wallmount, and content-management software, introducing customers to the digital signage industry with easy-to-use solutions that include everything needed to run content on a single digital screen.

Product bundles introduce customers to the digital signage

industry with easy-to-use solutions that include everything needed to run content on a single digital screen. All-in-one bundles provide the necessary components for successful first deployments, including custom content creation. At NEC, we've often found that some customers have difficulty overcoming the challenges of a digital signage implementation. In response, NEC has created bundles that outline projects piece by piece, impart the benefits of digital messaging, and show the effective use of content to maximize branding and customer reach.



Encoding audio and video for low-bitrate transmission over IP is a key theme in hospitality. Matrox has worked closely with industry-leading digital signage software companies like Scala to feature a live stream in a region on digital signage displays. The ability to hybridize live-streaming content over IP with content being rendered locally from the digital signage player PC has been demonstrated to keep eyes trained on digital signage displays or display arrays. People tune out when looking at looping content, but they keep looking at news, sports, and other live content. For video-on-demand in hospitality, the recently announced Matrox Mura IPX 4K capture and IP encode/decode boards will bring encoding resolution and quality at low bitrate to serve up content on mobile devices (and just about any other device), in order to take advantage of high pixel density displays and provide beautiful content that doesn't feel like it's being streamed at all.





Planar's bundled solution in use at the observation deck at the Space Needle in Seattle, WA. Called the Sky Pad, the 135-square foot solution consists of 15 Clarity Matrix LCD Video Wall displays in a three-by-five configuration.

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Bundling the right hardware with the right vertically specialized software is key. It is also beneficial to integrators when hardware manufacturers test their products together. Customers are best served when the right products are combined. For example, Matrox Maevex H.264 encoders were recently validated by Scala to stream live content over IP to Scala digital signage players, and Matrox Graphics and Panasonic featured live demonstrations of the new Panasonic AW-HE130 PTZ camera feeding high-quality IP streams to Matrox H.264 decoders at InfoComm.

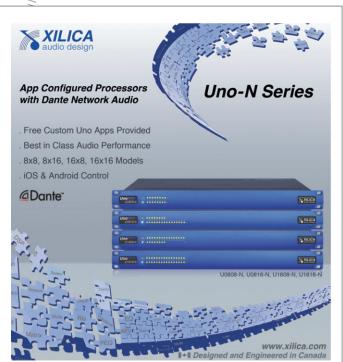
Michael Kurcab, senior manager, sales, HARMAN Professional:

Harman is a great example of how a fully integrated package, with support from the manufacturer, provides great value to hotel owners and operators. Now with AMX and Martin as a part of the Harman system, we offer hotels true connection to guests and their experiences using audio, video, lighting, and control. The idea of fewer manufacturers providing more services is very appealing to the decision makers in this market, and they appreciate the value that we bring to their properties.

An integrator selling to the hospitality market knows that a Harman system is easy and profitable to provide. It is easy to install because of technologies such as BLU Link cutting down install time and reducing connection points between BSS DSP and Crown amplifiers. A Harman system is more reliable because of innovations like Drivecore Technology in our amplifiers reducing what were once common points of failure. JBL is one of the most recognized and highly respected speaker brands in the industry, with over 500 models to fit with any hotel aesthetic. Martin lighting adds an unmatched "sense of arrival" to these properties by illuminating both the exterior and interior public spaces. With AMX bringing it all together with video distribution, control, and system management software, the integrator can give the hotel the peace of mind that comes with a single manufacturer solution.

Becky Connors, product marketing manager, Planar Systems:

The hospitality industry sets the bar for engaging visitors with highimpact and informational digital signage. From eye-catching video walls, to unique backdrop signage, to interactive kiosks, the network of displays in a hospitality setting are impressive but can be quite complex to integrate. To simplify the installation process, Planar's





Meyer Sound Constellation system in use at a restaurant. Meyer Sound only sells the possibilation system in a bundled package because it involves not just hardware and proprietary algorithms but also design, tuning, commissioning, and customer training

digital signage displays offer a range of features with the integrator in mind. The wide selection of Planar's video wall, large-format, and small-format displays feature ultra-thin mounting profiles, which not only blend in gracefully into the environment, but also comply with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) standards without the need for costly insets. For large displays and video walls, Planar's proprietary mounting systems expedite the installation process, assist in perfect alignment, and provide quick access to critical components needed in the case of a service event. For interactive applications, Planar offers integrated touch display solutions ranging in size from 15 inches, to large video walls, and nearly every size in between.

With demanding lighting and hours of usage requirements at stake, integrators rely on Planar to provide the enhanced brightness and extended reliability especially required for hotels and casinos. Unique features such as Planar's ERO (Extended Ruggedness and Optics) technology and redundant power supplies also provide the added robustness required for high traffic and/or mission-critical installations. Planar's broad line of displays for hospitality digital signage are designed to simplify installation while meeting the rigors of public venue usage and support.

Garry Wicka, senior director of marketing, LG Electronics

LG is always looking at options that help simplify selection, purchasing, and length of deployment for all display products. A great example is the two-by-two video wall bundle that LG developed for the hospitality sector. This bundle was developed based on feedback from our hospitality customers who were asking for simple solutions for video walls that could easily be selected, purchased, and deployed. The LG video wall bundle includes all items needed to get the project started—displays, cabling, and mounts. In addition to simplifying the purchasing process, the end users have also enjoyed a lower overall cost.

Integrators benefit from bundling for numerous reasons, including reduced purchasing time, since products have already been selected to work together, eliminating the need to research or double check compatibility. Bundling also eliminates the need for the integrator to kit the projects or have to worry about the delivery schedule of all the separate products. Lastly, integrators can often find additional savings when purchasing a bundled option versus purchasing all the components separately.

Mac Johnson, Constellation program manager, Meyer Sound

The reason Constellation is bundled is it offers a solution that targets at a particular audio problem, and is focused on solving that problem. For hospitality or restaurants, in an environment where you can't hear each other at the table because it's too loud, we can only offer it as a bundled solution because it involves not just hardware and proprietary algorithms but also design, tuning, commissioning, and customer training.

For integrators, it's a package that they can sell with guaranteed results; it's not an experiment, but a tested, results-oriented package. Matt Pruznick is associate editor of SCN and Residential Systems.