



CUSTOM
ELECTRONIC
DESIGN &
INSTALLATION
ASSOCIATION

Five Minutes with Buzz Delano

How did you get started in this industry?

I sold stereo components at a retail store from before and during college, then I became a sales rep and wanted to move to California to work for a factory. That came together in 1983, with SAE. In 1989 I joined Terk and then Sonance in 1998. I have always dug talking to people about music, their business, and their interests in life. Now I listen more than I used to!

Who in the industry has been your biggest influence? How and why?

So many people have motivated me, encouraged me, and challenged me so they are all big influences. If I had to pick one, I would say that would be John Stiernberg. I met John in 1991 and while the opportunity to work together did not come to be at that time, the conversations John and I had from there on kept me positive, learning more, and realizing the power in knowing many people.

Describe some of your most memorable moments in the industry.

How 'bout this, instead of "moments" I'd like to describe the cool things I get to do and places I go to develop business and fulfill opportunities for the companies I consult for. Traveling the U.S. never gets old; sure the airports and hotels do, but each day and most evenings are full of conversations with people of all different nature in our industry. Terrific products and theaters are played for me, new product ideas, prototypes, and business ideas are discussed in meetings and sales grow. This is a charge-up for me. Traveling internationally is another perk. I have visited 15 countries for business, multiple times. Again, it's about the people and understanding how their business minds work. And no doubt, international cuisine and sightseeing is great. There is perhaps one memorable moment though, you could ask Julie Hazard and Roger Campbell of Sonance about it...then again maybe not.

What do you think was the greatest advance, event, or trend in our industry in the last five years?

The transformation from analog to digital. This is like going from crumbled rocks to the radial tire. So much can be accomplished so fast in the digital world, and there are lots of smart people out there creating cool technology and content for the digital realm.

What trends will affect custom integrators in the next two years?

Again, the digital express is and will affect integrators in a huge way. Integrators will need to learn to sell the services that digital will help proliferate and learn to anticipate what the client of the future will expect...and therefore the CEDIA integrator will have to be smart enough to "out expect" them.

The other trend that integrators must come to grips with is that eventually, a larger than typical integrator business model will achieve a successful installation business model. This may not be a business we know today, but some level of commoditization will occur in our industry and therefore some aspect of home entertainment will become ordinary. Prior to that however, our best integrators and some smart newbie's will figure out what success looks like beyond the commoditization model and therefore carry the torch of a true custom business.

What are three things that custom integration companies need to do to prepare for the next two years?

- Be sure you have the right people working for you and do all you can to secure their commitment to your business by engaging them in your passion for success
- Ask yourself if you are really doing anything different in your business than 3 years ago. If not, then it is time to make some changes
- Attend as many business conferences as you can, in and out of our industry. Good conferences will free up your mind to think openly, clear the way for you to resolve untended matters in your business and stimulate your creative energy