

INSIDE CI



Back in our hallowed halls once more and talking bottom-line business, SVI's own man in motion, DAVE SLATER, takes us deep Inside CI...

Well the supersonic busy period is finally over, now down to some business. We at DSE are streamlining, losing some fat, finding ways to increase productivity – all terms you would include into a power point presentation. In real life it is a tad different; but there is one sure thing in business if you don't make profit you just won't exist long. Turnover is all well and good, but if your expenses are creeping up what are you going to do to turn a profit? Well the first thing we did at DSE was find out where our weaknesses were. Sometimes you can find these in the strangest places and you are only as good as your front line staff, so this is a good place to start.

Have you trained your staff either in-house or on one of the numerous manufacturer and distributor courses? If the answer is 'no' then how do you expect to turn a profit if you are just chancing it? The biggest drain on any digital business is the aftersales backup: if you can imagine the worst scenario of 12 months of free support on something which has fitted incorrectly, this is going to cost you big time! Now I am not trying to tell you how to run your businesses just merely passing on, from experience, what I have done wrong.

DSE Digital and DSE Group grew just a little too fast for my liking and one day I woke up to a mess of the odd job biting me in the behind. It was a mixed bag of maybe the wrong kit, the wrong type of installation and a really awkward customer. This is when I decided it was time to re-focus, and over the past 12 months have scaled down DSE Digital back to a small, friendly installer type business, and it is working – less hassle on jobs, happy punters and, more importantly, profit back into the company.

Sometimes you hear people saying that if you want a job done properly, do it yourself. Well this is slightly impossible: you cannot do accounts, debt collecting, installations, selling, call outs and marketing, unless you are just a one-man-band. I did all of the above when I was a self-employed sparkie back in the distant past and it all worked as I knew about the sales, I knew the job and I knew the customer. Running a bigger business can still work with a little tweaking, just make sure everybody knows his or her role and remember communication is everything.

Canon of Work

Moving on to what gadgets I have been buying, well after lightening my wallet by 200 sobs I now have a great Wi-Fi camera utility for the iPad. This lovely piece of kit talks to my Canon camera, allows me to view live images, and adjust all the settings from inside the app. Oh my God, it is so cool! And integration of these devices has come a long way over the last couple of years. The device works totally transparently, and from the moment you start using it you ask yourself why it's not included in the box.

This is the way multi-room audio and video is going; the user should feel that it is natural. Sonos is one manufacturer that has got it right for the consumer, and it will be interesting to see what their new Playbar does to the home cinema market.

The idea behind it is akin to all of their kit, simple to setup and even simpler to control, instructions are given on your iPad and it only took me two minutes before I was sitting comfortably, enjoying the audio. The idea is that all the sources (Sky, Blu-ray, PS3) connect to the TV, and from the TV you install a single optical cable, making the need for a separate processor/amp redundant. The only downside to installing your kit this way is the physical number of HDMI connections you have on your screen.

The app also runs you through the setup of the sound, allowing you to use your TV remote to control the Playbar. You will, however, have to look hard in the TV menus to turn off the screen's own speakers, and if there is no



The Sonos soundbar solution and Dave's new cam-kit...

option for this you will be stuffed as it will turn up the TV as well as Playbar! The Sonos supports Dolby Digital 5:1 but not DTS, so that's a big weakness for me as I just love the extra depth DTS brings to the Blu-rays I play. At £599 retail this becomes a great way of you upselling to a full-blown Sonos multi-room solution. And don't forget that Sonos also have a subwoofer solution that works really well with the Playbar.

Pure Pleasure

So what's in the Inside CI diary? Well we are off to Spain to do a feature on interior design then it's the *Gadget Show Live Professional* where there will be some fine kit on show. I have heard that Pure Theatre is putting together an awesome Epson 3D passive demo, achieved by using two Epson projectors firing at the screen. Also don't forget I have become a gadget geek, so I'll be scouring the show floor for some of the best gadgets and will no doubt bump into the odd colleague from the industry.

iPad adjustable images of... what the Hell is that?!



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