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Use Tablets, Smartphones to Complement, Not Replace, Remotes

Impracticality and Wi-fi dependence are main reasons integrators should not offer clients smartphones and tablets as the primary interface for home entertainment.

By [Pete Baker](#)
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Believe it or not, most consumers are actually terrified of purchasing professionally installed entertainment systems. And the simple reason for this is that they are afraid that they are going to make a huge investment, and then won't be able to operate their complex system.

As a dealer, it is vital to recognize this and understand that system control is not only vital to closing the sale, but in making the customer comfortable and satisfied with their new system.

One thing consumers often think will make them more comfortable with their new system is using their mobile devices for control. After all, tablets and smartphones are incredibly popular devices that they are certainly not intimidated by. In fact, from financial institutions to newspapers, consumers are increasingly looking for access to every aspect of their lives on their mobile devices through apps, especially on Apple products like the iPod touch, iPhone, and iPad. It's no surprise that control of their home entertainment systems isn't excluded from the list.

Dealers can and should offer their customers access to their systems on these devices as a complement to the main control system, as they provide convenient remote access to their electronic environment from virtually anywhere in the world. Users can check in on their security systems when on vacation, set the temperature at home to the perfect setting before their arrival, or turn off the lights if they left them on. It's a powerful combination of technologies and offers a cool added convenience benefit for consumers.

Why Tablets, Smartphones Aren't Primary Control Devices

Where dealers need to be careful, however, is using a tablet or smartphone as the exclusive, primary control device. The reason for this is that these devices simply aren't as practical as dedicated controllers. With the ability to use them to play games, read books, listen to music, and



Pete Baker, Remote Technologies Inc. (RTI)

a whole lot more, it is hard to count on the devices being in their intended room to control the media when it is required.

Another issue is that many of them rely on Wi-Fi. So if the network goes down, control over the system does also. And without hard buttons for tactile control, it simply doesn't offer the comfortable navigation of a professional control device.

So don't just sell a tablet as the only control element, as ultimately it may leave the customer frustrated. If your customer insists on using a tablet or smartphone as the primary controller, make sure they have a companion remote to enhance the experience. As a companion to these devices, such controllers provide instant connectivity and hard buttons for tactile control, eliminating the need for swipes or switching between applications on devices to perform basic control functions.

A companion remote or dedicated control device should be included in every installation to ensure a positive user experience and a satisfied customer. Remember, your business relies on referrals and word of mouth. Nothing is more vital to your success than a happy client who loves their system, and nothing as potentially devastating as a frustrated one.

At the end of the project, the primary element your customer will judge all your hard work on is how easy the system is to operate. So make sure they love everything about the control system (not just that it works on their phone)!

Pete Baker is the vice president of sales and marketing at control system manufacturer, Remote Technologies Inc. (RTI). He can be reached at peteb@rticorp.com.

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