

Perfecting Your 'High-Wire Act'

Tips and techniques for selling wiring and cable

By Nancy Klosek

It's a skill that involves selling nuances. It's not as easy as selling a better grade of television or A/V receiver. But, if you can do it properly, it's one of the most profitable ways to make a profit.

A STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR THE CUSTOM ELECTRONICS PROFESSIONAL

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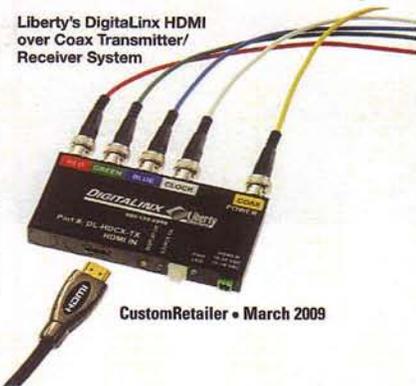
What approaches are you directing your training and sales teams to use for instructing the "hows" of selling wiring and cable, and in presenting the category to clients?



Kirk Horibeck

Today's lifestyle applications rely on signals that are more complicated and have to travel further and faster. So, with that in mind, it is important

Liberty's DigiLineX HDMI over Coax Transmitter/Receiver System



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What can you offer your customers right now about presentation of the category?

Wire and cable products are a system component. Quality wire and cable products can reduce installation time and troubleshooting requirements and reduce the required labor on an installation—all of which protects your top line revenue and your margin.

Generally speaking, what will be some of the hottest product or tech trends in the category as we move through 2009? And what industry tech trends in other categories will influence product development in this category?

Some of the hottest trends are HDMI cables, HDMI over CAT cables, HDMI over COAX and CAT6a cables.



Tributaries HX101 HDMI Extender

Tributaries

Keith Dowd
National Sales Manager

What approaches are you directing your training and sales teams to use for instructing the "hows" of selling wiring and cable, and in presenting the category to clients?



Keith Dowd

The dealer and salesperson determine the importance of cables for their clients. If they mention them late in the presentation or not at all, the message is, they don't matter. If they mention them early in the presentation and explain the value (performance improvement for the dollars spent) that good cables provide, they make them important. Presenting cables early in the presentation is the important first step.

What best pieces of advice can you offer your integrator/dealer customers right now about presentation of the category?

Unlike all the other product categories in the home theater CE category, cables have become a victim of many ridiculous marketing claims. Most salespeople, knowing little about cables, are reluctant to include the appropriate cables in a proposal. As a result, cables are almost always undersold. Salespeople believe that if they include ▶

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less expensive cables in a proposal they won't get questioned. While that's true, it's also true that the client and the dealer both lose out because the clients are sold lesser cables than they deserve (relative to the other equipment in their systems), and the dealers lose out on important profit opportunities. Correcting the bad habit is really simple, though. The salespeople simply need to understand [and then explain] the benefits of using better cables to the client, and then recommend the product their client should purchase, not the lesser product they believe they won't be asked about.

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The cable category is driven by other categories; we are the tail, not the dog. When something new comes along on the hardware side, we respond. The latest need appears to be cables for the Crestron video distribution system that requires fiber rather than copper cables.

What do you offer integrators in products, technologies or business support that makes you stand out from your competitors?

Our commitment to quality control is the best in our industry. For example, before they are shipped, every single HDMI cable and HDMI electronics device (switchers, splitters, matrix, baluns, etc.) are checked at our factory. The final step in our testing procedure requires a tech to sign off that they viewed a clean 1080p movie image from a Blu-ray player on a display panel. We know that when something goes wrong in the field and an integration company has to roll a truck, troubleshoot and solve a problem in a client's home, that's expensive. By adhering to a strict QC regimen, we greatly reduce the number of HDMI issues in the field and that saves dealers both grief and money. A lot of money.

Ultralink/XLO

Mary Cardas
General Manager



What approaches are you directing your training and sales teams to use for instructing the "hows" of selling wiring and cable, and in presenting the category to clients?

There are several. Value—Make sure the system they're selling performs its best. Spending money on a system that performs at less than 100 percent doesn't make sense. Using appropriate cables ensures you get the most out of your investment. Protection—Power protection is the cheapest insurance available. Protect components and improve the performance of every piece in a system at the same time. Enjoyment—The money's spent; make sure the new component provides optimal entertainment value. Envy—Never underestimate the value of your customer showing off to his friends!

What best pieces of advice can you offer your integrator/dealer customers right now about presentation of the category?

Underselling does a great disservice to your customer. By including inferior cables, you're selling a system that underperforms, and that creates a customer who feels like something's missing. Start just over the customer's budget, and make sure they understand what they give up as the cost of the cables comes down.

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The trend is toward fewer and smaller cables—convenience versus quality. This is a tough but important nut to crack. And the good news? AC power is getting worse—it's dirtier than ever—making power protection and filtering products even more important now.

What do you offer integrators in products, technologies or business support that makes you stand out from your competitors?

We offer better performance at any given price-point—features that make a real difference in the quality of sound and picture in whatever system they're in. CR

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Ultralink's Signature 3 interconnect and speaker cables