

# CEPro

INTEGRATION | AUDIO/VIDEO | NETWORKING | CONTROL | CONVERGENCE

# 100

HIGHEST REVENUE INTEGRATORS

**AVAD**<sup>®</sup>

BitWise  
controls<sup>™</sup>

**DENON**

**IC** REALTIME  
Security Solutions

**SANUS**<sup>®</sup>

**RTI**

**SIM2**  
Multimedia

**Paradigm**  
THE ULTIMATE IN SOUND FOR MUSIC AND HOME THEATER<sup>™</sup>

**URC**  
Control the Experience.

Rank	Verified	Company	City, State	2010 Custom Residential Revenue	No. of Residential Installs	Revenue/Install	No. of Employees	Revenue/Employee	No. of Locations	Years in Business	
41	✓	Audio Video Interiors	Middleburg Heights, Ohio	\$3,963,892	150	\$26,426	24	\$165,162	1	21	
42	✓	Phoenix Unequaled Home Entertainment	Memphis, Tenn.	\$3,800,000	42	\$90,476	19	\$200,000	1	17	
43	✓	Integrated Media Systems	Sterling, Va.	\$3,750,000	100	\$37,500	20	\$187,500	1	33	
44	✓	Sound Concepts	Jonesboro, Ark.	\$3,652,102	260	\$14,047	12	\$304,342	1	8	
45	✓	Audio Video Excellence	Homewood, Ala.	\$3,640,000	52	\$70,000	26	\$140,000	2	12	
46	✓	Elite Performance Integration	Pawling, N.Y.	\$3,610,169	130	\$27,771	35	\$103,148	2	17	
47	✓	Audio Video Design	Mission Viejo, Calif.	\$3,600,000	125	\$28,800	23	\$156,522	1	21	
48	✓	Signals Audio/Video	El Segundo, Calif.	\$3,525,469	55	\$64,099	16	\$220,342	1	16	
49	✓	iWired	Scottsdale, Ariz.	\$3,523,000	453	\$7,777	23	\$153,174	2	10	
50		Integrated Excellence	Norcross, Ga.	\$3,500,000	1,800	\$1,944	50	\$70,000	4	12	
51	✓	Innerspace Electronics	Port Chester, N.Y.	\$3,363,961	90	\$37,377	18	\$186,887	1	22	
52	✓	HomeTronics	Dallas, Texas	\$3,300,100	18	\$183,339	9	\$366,678	1	25	
53	✓	AVL PRO	Naples, Fla.	\$3,124,568	45	\$69,435	13	\$240,351	2	11	
54	✓	Enhanced Home Systems	Eden Prairie, Minn.	\$3,018,000	65	\$46,431	25	\$120,720	1	22	
55	✓	SoundVision	Novato, Calif.	\$3,003,066	60	\$50,051	13	\$231,005	1	13	
56		Audio High	Mountain View, Calif.	\$3,000,000	200	\$15,000	11	\$272,727	2	14	
56		Jamiesons Audio/Video	Toledo, Ohio	\$3,000,000	180	\$16,667	18	\$166,667	1	57	
58	✓	The Premier Group	Carmel, Ind.	\$2,905,926	135	\$21,525	22	\$132,088	1	12	
59		AVIO	Troy, Mich.	\$2,800,000	40	\$70,000	20	\$140,000	2	18	
60	✓	Audiodesign	Fairfield, Conn.	\$2,750,000	107	\$25,701	11	\$250,000	1	12	

## Alphabetical Listing and Rank of *CE Pro* 100 Companies

Abt Electronics . . . . .	4	Green Electronic Solutions . . . . .	74
Acadian Custom Installations . . . . .	87	Guardian Protection Services . . . . .	2
Accent Electronic Systems Integrators. . . . .	31	HabiTech Systems . . . . .	96
ADT Security Services . . . . .	1	Hifi House . . . . .	10
Advanced Communication Technologies . . . . .	99	HomeTronics . . . . .	52
AES/JWE (PWM Technology) . . . . .	18	HS Technology Group. . . . .	36
Affordable Alarm & Monitoring (AAMI) . . . . .	89	Innerspace Electronics . . . . .	51
Ambiance Systems. . . . .	83	Intech. . . . .	26
American Burglary & Fire . . . . .	28	Integrated Excellence . . . . .	50
Audio Command Systems . . . . .	6	Integrated Media Systems . . . . .	43
Audio High . . . . .	56	Intercontinental Security and Integration . . . . .	29
Audio Images. . . . .	67	iWired . . . . .	49
Audio Interiors . . . . .	9	Jamiesons Audio/Video . . . . .	56
Audio Video Crafts . . . . .	24	Just One Touch / Video & Audio Center. . . . .	3
Audio Video Design (Calif.) . . . . .	47	LinkUs . . . . .	67
Audio Video Design (Mass.) . . . . .	21	The Little Guys Home Technology . . . . .	33
Audio Video Excellence. . . . .	45	Logic Integration . . . . .	98
Audio Video Interiors . . . . .	41	Maverick Integration . . . . .	25
Audio Video Systems. . . . .	7	Maxsystems . . . . .	70
Audiodesign . . . . .	60	MODIA . . . . .	5
Aurant . . . . .	23	North Bay AVS Design . . . . .	82
AVIO . . . . .	59	Performance Imaging . . . . .	13
AVL PRO . . . . .	53	Phoenix Unequaled Home Entertainment . . . . .	42
Barrett's Technology Solutions. . . . .	22	The Phonograph . . . . .	62
Beutler Digital Home (A Division of Beutler Corporation). . . . .	95	The Premier Group . . . . .	58
Bjorn's Audio Video. . . . .	8	Procom Enterprises . . . . .	78
Boca Theater and Automation . . . . .	75	Projectus . . . . .	94
C&R Systems. . . . .	92	Quadrant Systems . . . . .	86
Cabling Technologies. . . . .	71	R2W . . . . .	17
Creative Sound & Integration. . . . .	73	Ray Supply . . . . .	61
Crime Prevention Security Systems & Custom Home Entertainment . . . . .	80	S.M.I.L.E. . . . .	81
Custom Systems Integration . . . . .	90	Sawyers Control Systems . . . . .	78
Cyber Sound . . . . .	15	Showcase A/V . . . . .	36
Dallas Sight and Sound . . . . .	38	Showtime Audio & Video . . . . .	72
Definitive Audio. . . . .	12	Sierra Integrated Systems . . . . .	67
Dennis Sage Home Entertainment . . . . .	63	Signals Audio/Video . . . . .	48
Digital Interiors. . . . .	88	Sound Concepts . . . . .	44
Digitech Custom Audio and Video . . . . .	84	The Sound Room . . . . .	30
DSI Entertainment Systems . . . . .	20	The Sound Shop . . . . .	100
Dynamark Systems. . . . .	65	SoundVision . . . . .	55
Dynamic Sound Systems. . . . .	93	Stereo East Home Theater . . . . .	39
e4 Control Systems. . . . .	97	Sterling Home Technologies . . . . .	85
Eagle Sentry . . . . .	40	Texas Custom AV . . . . .	66
Elite Custom Audio Video. . . . .	64	TriPhase Technologies . . . . .	34
Elite Performance Integration . . . . .	46	Tunnel Vision Technology. . . . .	35
Engineered Environments . . . . .	11	Vitex Systems . . . . .	76
Enhanced Home Systems . . . . .	54	Vivint . . . . .	27
ETC . . . . .	14	Wilshire Home Entertainment . . . . .	32
Gramophone . . . . .	16	Wiplance. . . . .	77
Grand Home Automation . . . . .	91	World Wide Stereo . . . . .	19



**Scott Fuelling, Phoenix Unequaled Home Entertainment, No. 42**

"Growing our business by developing new categories that meet the new needs of our clients, such as remote monitoring, home health care, energy management, the perceived need for additional security, and continuing to add value to our services and designs."

**Jacek Zaworski, Procom Enterprises, No. 78**



"The challenge and opportunity at the same time will be HDMI video distribution conversion. The other big opportunity will be all kinds of content streaming services. The usual challenge is cash flow and collections."

**Paul Diggin, Advanced Communication Technologies, No. 99**

"Continuing to deal with integrating new technology into our systems while retaining a decent gross profit."

**DECLINING MARGINS**

**Paul Grayczyk, Abt Electronics, No. 4**

"Finding new and profitable avenues for growth, as our overall sales are up, but margins are not as the local market is very competitive. The best way for us to approach this is to engage with the customer and sell a lifestyle, not just a system, which should separate us from the competition."

**Franklin Karp, Audio Video Systems, No. 7**

"The challenge and opportunity are one in the same: How to add value and grow our business when many key categories are rapidly becoming commodities."

**Bjorn Dybdahl, Bjorn's Audio Video, No. 8**

"The continually declining margin structure in televisions, coupled with the constant barrage of managing the manufacturers' instant rebate promotions, which occupy far too much time that could be used much more productively working on other ways to help grow our business. Opportunities still exist, especially in categories that are difficult for big-box stores to execute, such as lighting and window treatments, which are more labor intensive and require multi-stage project management."

**Robert Cole, World Wide Stereo, No. 19**

"The race to zero on product. The big guys are trying to get into our business at low prices and taking the customer out of our market."

**Eric Smith, Intech, No. 26**

"Maintaining gross margins, due to the continued erosion of gross margin opportunity with all flat panels. This represents the largest gross dollar item(s) in a proposal, typically, and you don't want to lose this part of the sale to a big-box store and lose

credibility. The need to continue to focus on value-added sales and services, where gross margins can be attained, increasing the overall profits for each sale, will remain critical to growing the business and reaching our 2011 target."



**Ryan Heringer, Sound Concepts, No. 44**

"Keeping margin high due to other competitors selling at lower margins. The stock market is up and there will be more spending on luxury items, so we want to capture a large percentage of that market."

**Gregory Goetz, Ray Supply, No. 61**

"Replacing the lost profit on flat-panel sales, and the lost installation revenue from an increase in wireless product sales. At the same time, the increase of high-quality wireless products will present opportunities where there were none before."



**Dean Rockwell, Grand Home Automation, No. 91**

"Price/margin pressure brought by both competitive forces and (unreasonable) customers."

**APPLE, APPLE, APPLE**

**Mihir Mody, MODIA, No. 5**

"Educating the customers on how to enjoy digital content stored in their computers and smart phones throughout the house or play in their media room. Every third American owns an Apple product with some sort of digital content. At MODIA, we plan to take advantage of Apple market share and merchandise innovative products that can integrate with Apple to show additional benefits to the owner."

**Neil Greenberg, Audio Interiors, No. 41**

"The growth of Apple-based products such as iPad have had an enormous effect on the home control market. These products offer little or NO mark-up/profit, so we must re-invent ourselves, by developing new ways to achieve profitability with this new generation of products."

**STAFFING FOR UPS AND DOWNS**

**Jennifer Leidig, Ambiance Systems, No. 83**

"Growing the company to keep up with customer demand. Hiring and training new staff is time-consuming and affects overall productivity. We will be expanding our office space to allow for more employees, as well as dedicating more time to ensure our staff is properly equipped to service our customers with the attention they have grown accustomed to."

**John Clancy, Audio Command Systems, No. 6**

"Forecasting manpower in uncertain times."

# CE Pro 100 REPORTS

## 11% INCREASE IN REVENUES

The convergence of entry-level automation systems from major security companies changes the dynamic of the list in 2010.

*by Jason Knott*

**T**HE LARGEST INTEGRATION COMPANIES in North America rebounded nicely in 2010 across the board. From traditional custom installation firms to retailers to security companies doing multi-subsystem installations, many companies had revenue increases. It is welcome news for the industry's largest integration firms, who just like the rest of the industry, had a rough year in 2009.

Here's a breakdown of some of the highlights from this year's results.

**REVENUES:** Overall, the data from the 13th annual *CE Pro 100* show an uptick of 11 percent in 2010, with the average company on the list reporting \$6.05 million in residential custom installation revenues. That figure is up from \$5.43 million last year but still down 18 percent from the peak of \$7.4 million reported in 2007.

But statistics can be misleading. A large number of companies were actually down in terms of revenue, but those losses were outweighed by several factors. First, the entrance of large players into the market bringing high revenues to the list. Second, many traditional companies were up. But in particular, the statistics are swayed higher in 2010 by the entry of several large security firms — namely ADT and Vivint — into the *CE Pro 100* for the first time with their offerings of entry-level home control installations. But even when those companies are taken out of the calculations, the subset of traditional custom integration companies alone showed a 3 percent increase in revenues.

**NUMBER OF INSTALLATIONS:** The proliferation of entry-level players in the market, along with a tough economy, is forcing integrators to continue to work harder for their money. Overall, the average number of installations was up an astonishing 35 per-

### KEY BENCHMARK NUMBERS

**\$605 million** Total custom revenues logged by the *CE Pro 100* in 2010

**11.4%** Percentage increase in custom revenues in 2010 vs. 2009.

**\$6.05 million** Average custom revenues earned by the *CE Pro 100* in 2010

**99,501** Total number of installations done by the *CE Pro 100*. (An average of 995 per company)

**150** Median number of installations per company

**35%** Percentage increase in total installations in 2010 vs. 2009

**83,388** Total number of installations (excluding large security companies)

**\$5,694** Average revenue per installation in 2010

**\$7,211** Average revenue per installation in 2009

**21%** Percentage decline in revenue per installation in 2010 vs. 2009.

**22** Median number of employees per *CE Pro 100* company

**37** Average number of employees per *CE Pro 100* company

**17** Number of companies based in California

**\$50 million** Custom revenues for the No. 1 company (up from \$39.8 million for No. 1 last year)

**\$149,132** Revenue per employee (excluding ADT and Vivint)

**13%** Percentage increase in revenue per employee in 2010 vs. 2009

**23** Average number of years in business

**1** Median number of business locations/storefronts

**57** Number of *CE Pro 100* companies with a single business location/storefront

**15%** Percentage growth rate predicted for 2011



No. 96



No. 18



No. 86



No. 71



No. 41

cent. What a difference a year makes! In 2009, the total number of installations had fallen 28 percent versus 2008.

Again, just so you don't think the data is inflated solely by the large subsidized offerings, traditional integrators had a 13 percent increase in the number of installations. That's still a strong number.

However, with many large players on the list this year skewing the average higher, a more accurate snapshot of a typical *CE Pro 100* company might be to look at the median number of installations. Median represents the number in which half the respondents are above and half are below. In this case, it is 150 installations per company.

**REVENUE PER INSTALLATION:** The number of jobs did not translate into higher-paying installations in 2010. Indeed, just the opposite. The average revenue per installation fell 21 percent, from \$7,211 to \$5,694. That trend is likely to continue as the public becomes even more accustomed to subsidized home automation models from alarm companies adding HVAC and lighting control to their security packages.

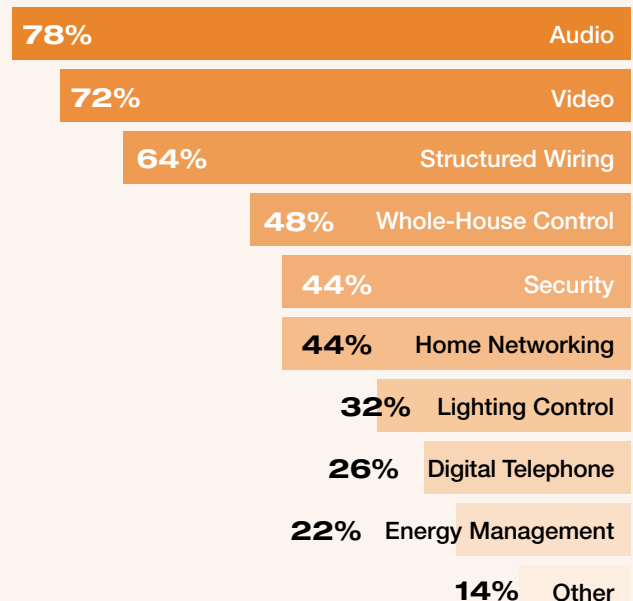
**PREDICTIONS FOR 2011:** Just like last year, optimism is also high for the coming year. Only two companies anticipate a worse 2011 than 2010, with both predicting steep declines of more than 20 percent. Meanwhile, another 13 anticipate a "flat" year in terms of revenue. That means a whopping 85 companies in the group are bullish on 2011. The average revenue increase predicted by those integrators is 15 percent for next year.

**STAFFING:** In terms of staffing, *CE Pro 100* integrators have not yet put out the "for hire" sign. The average traditional company added just one employee in 2010 vs. 2009, which is a level way

still below the high-water market for employment back in 2005. Excluding two new massive security companies (ADT and Vivint with 15,000 and 5,000 employees, respectively), the average company had 37 employees. That's just one more than in 2009. So clearly, dealers are not expanding too rapidly despite the uptick in sales. *(Editor's Note: Last year, the employee data from another large participant — Abt Electronics — was not included when calculating the average number of employees in order to do an apples-to-apples year-over-year comparison between 2008 and 2009. This year, that company's data is included.)*

With such a wide range of respondents, the most accurate way to look at staff level is the median, which gives us the number for which half the respondents are above and half are below.

#### PERCENTAGE OF INSTALLATIONS WITH THESE SUBSYSTEMS



Across the board every category increased slightly vs. 2009, which shows that dealers are installing many more integrated systems compared with standalone subsystems. The melding of the security industry and the A/V integration business is definitely reflected in this 2010 data. The percentage of installations that included security leapt 7 percent compared with 2009.

#### Top Custom-Only Integrators

1. Audio Command Systems
2. Audio Video Systems
3. Audio Interiors
4. Performance Imaging
5. Engineered Environments
6. ETC, Inc.

#### Top Hybrid Retailers

1. Just One Touch/Video & Audio Center
2. Abt Electronics
3. MODIA
4. Bjorn's Audio Video
5. Hifi House



No. 30



No. 4



No. 84



No. 10



No. 77



No. 35



No. 17



No. 25



No. 78



No. 81

For 2010, that number is 22 employees, up from a median of 20 employees in 2009.

**REVENUE PER EMPLOYEE:** One of the bellwether statistics in the industry is revenue per employee. Many integrators look carefully at this metric when determining the health of their businesses. Over the years, this piece of data has continued to fall as dealers install lower-priced systems. For 2010, traditional integrators saw a turnaround. Excluding data from ADT and Vivint, the average revenue-per-employee was \$149,132. That's up a healthy 6.5 percent from 2009. When data is calculated using all members of the list, the revenue-per-employee is just \$25,484.

Remember, this revenue number does NOT include recurring monthly revenue derived from monitoring of security accounts. Of course, subsidized systems sacrifice upfront payment in return for the long-term commitment of a monitoring contract, which turns that subsidization into profit after a certain point in time. So in terms of this list, as more mass-market companies participate, this metric will have less relevance and may be dropped from future lists of the *CE Pro 100*.

The list does include other alternative sources of revenue besides installations. This year's figures, just like last year, include

recurring revenue from sources service contracts and remote managed services. It's a well-proven fact that recurring revenue offers the cash flow stability that allows companies to maintain themselves and eventually grow.

**GEOGRAPHIC TRENDS:** Five years ago, the *CE Pro 100* was rife with members from the states with explosive growth in new home construction... namely Nevada, Arizona, Florida and

California. Since the collapse of the housing market, integrators have been forced to market their services to existing homeowners. Logically, this means the *CE Pro 100* should be migrating to represent companies located in more populous states versus high-growth states.

Indeed, California still has the most representation on the list, with 17 members. Next, the tri-state area of New York/New Jersey/Connecticut with 13, followed by 11 integrators from Florida.

Other areas with strong representation include Texas (nine), Illinois (five) and Arizona (six). The Grand Canyon State of Arizona is an interesting market. As everyone knows, areas around Phoenix were a new construction boomtown for the past decade. So how can it still be a bastion for the *CE Pro 100* since the housing market collapse? It's because the area still supports affluent enclaves like Scottsdale with larger integration projects.

Analyzing the list geographically also gives you a sense of how particular regions of the country are faring. For example, while the tri-state N.Y./N.J./Conn. corridor has had some positive reports lately about MDU development and architectural firm activity, integrators in the region generally had a very rough 2010. Only two of the 13 companies in the area reported revenue increases. And one of them was Ambiance Systems in the Saratoga Springs/Albany area of upstate New York. The company had by far the strongest comeback of any company in the region with a nearly 19 percent increase. Vice president Jennifer Leidig

### Top Security/Structured Wiring Based Integrators

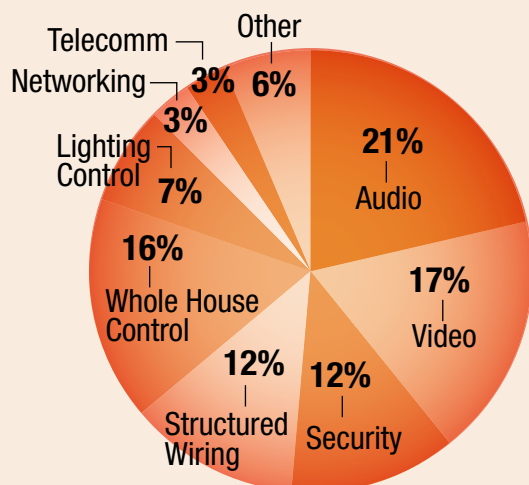
1. ADT Security Services
2. Guardian Protection
3. Vivint
4. American Burglary & Fire
5. Intercontinental Security and Integration

### Top Commercial Companies (by number of commercial installs)

1. ADT Security Services\*
2. LinkUs
3. Guardian Protection
4. Affordable Alarm & Monitoring
5. American Burglary & Fire

\* ESTIMATED

### SOURCES OF REVENUE BY SUBSYSTEM



Integrators' revenues used to be primarily derived from audio and video, then the housing boom brought structured wiring to the forefront. Now, security has made strides as a key source of income.





No. 31



No. 26



No. 42



No. 66

attributes some of the success to the company's staying power in the region as competitors have disappeared.

## CE PRO 100 VS. RANK AND FILE

So just as the recession was not near as bad for many of these larger integrators in 2009 as it was for the rank-and-file CE pro, the bounce back for larger companies has been stronger. According to the 2010 *CE Pro* State of the Industry Special Report revealed this past January, the typical custom integration company showed a 6.5 percent increase in 2010 vs. 2009, while the typical *CE Pro 100* company grew 13 percent? Why?

The obvious reason could be honed business practices. In general, these larger companies tend to be more astute in their ability to operate more efficiently. Using technology like custom proposal writing software, automated billing and payroll, tight inventory control and other back-office solutions can improve efficiency and profitability. Likewise, many are members of buying groups and therefore can obtain better deals on product purchases. Finally, *CE Pro 100* companies are likely more entrenched brands in their local community, with better ability to market their services and form broader trade networking relationships with more architects, interior designers, builders and real estate agents.

In the 13 years *CE Pro* has been publishing the *CE Pro 100* (the *CE Pro 50* for the first two years), only twice did the data show declining revenues (2008 and 2009). This year's increase is more common.

## CHANGES ON THE LIST

The members of the *CE Pro 100* are ever-changing and every year there is more influence on the list from security companies and retailers with installation operations.

Unlike previous years, there were no high-profile bankruptcies among members of the *CE Pro 100* in 2010, such as MyerEmco in 2009. But for the most part, the top of the list is generally stable.

As always, many companies in the industry opt not to participate in the survey — especially when their revenues fall. Others do not participate in this 100 percent voluntary list to avoid facing any public scrutiny of their data. *CE Pro* does not make attempts to do estimates for large companies that opt not to enter. (See sidebar for details on the submittal and verification process.)

Among the *CE Pro 100* companies, more were down vs. up in 2010. In all, 33 companies reported drops in revenue. That's compared with 25 companies showing increases over last year's numbers. Many of the other companies were flat or are new members to the list.

ADT Security Services leads this year's list with a jaw-dropping \$50 million in estimated custom revenues (see sidebar). The company, which is a division of Tyco, started its ADT Custom Home/Gold program several years ago. In the program, the company performs high-end integrated installations in conjunction with its security systems. In areas where ADT does not have its own installation crews, the company partners with traditional A/V integrators.

Second on this year's list is a familiar company: Pittsburgh-area Guardian Protection Services. The company reported \$38.5 million in multi-subsystem residential installations last year. That's only a 3 percent drop from the previous year despite the fact that the number of installations performed at Guardian fell 13 percent. However, the company's topline revenue of \$127 million is a 2.4 percent increase over last year's \$124 million total.

Among the top companies that had stellar 2010 years are:

- **Abt Electronics** in Glenview, Ill., a \$300 million electronics retailer with a thriving installation business of \$30 million (up 20 percent).
- **Cyber Sound** in Scottsdale, Ariz., with \$8.2 million (up 19 percent) despite the rough market in that state.
- **Just One Touch/Video & Audio Center** in Santa Monica, Calif. (up 14 percent), even though the company did 257 fewer installations (an 11 percent decline).
- **AES/JWE** vaulted to \$8 million in revenue (up 13 percent)

CE PRO 100: COMPANY PROFILES 1998-2010

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Average Number of Years in Business	14	12	15.9	15.4	13.7	15.5	16.7	17	17.3	19.4	19.8	21.3	23
Average Number of Installations	212	302	446	328	427	987	2,278	2,325	1,121	1,144	1,087	754	995
Average Number of Full-Time Employees	27	21	35	28	30	69	110	121	50	56	49	36	37

After two years of declines in the average number of employees and installations, 2010 saw a return to growth for the *CE Pro 100*. But while the number of installations jumped quite a lot, dealers only added one new employee on average.



after merging two Southern California powerhouses.

Over its 13 years, the prestigious list has changed from one that used to include only traditional audio/video companies to a mixture of companies with their roots from audio/video, hybrid retail, automation, structured wiring, security, high-voltage electrical and HVAC. The top of the list itself shows the diversity.

Following Abt (No. 4), Houston-based MODIA (formerly Home Theater Store) is the No. 5 company. A regional hybrid retailer with nine stores, MODIA managed to boost revenues by about 4 percent to \$26.8 million. The company has closed two stores since 2008, and back in 2007, the MODIA had revenues of more than \$33 million.

At No. 6 is New York's Audio Command Systems, the first "traditional" high-end A/V integration company, aided by strong links to architects. Audio Command earned \$20.5 million in 2010, down nearly 24 percent since its peak in 2008.

While the top companies remained very stable, lower down is where the real strength of the market is seen. The No. 100 company this year is The Sound Shop in Colorado Springs, Colo., with \$1.55 million in revenue. That represents a healthy 18 percent increase over the revenue reported by last year's No. 100 firm (at \$1.31 million). However, it's still down 29 percent from the revenues of the No. 100 company in 2008. ■

### CE Pro 100 Brand Usage Data Coming in June

Watch for the detailed analysis of the products used by members of the *CE Pro 100* in the June issue of *CE Pro*. Among the questions answered will be:

- Which brands are being used more often and which are being used less?
- What level of influence did the 2010 introduction of the Apple iPad have on interface usage?
- Which product disciplines being tracked for the first time—like gaming, CCTV, home healthcare and remote managed services—are gaining traction and which are not?

## Companies Verify Their Data

Here's that boring sidebar on how we actually compile the *CE Pro 100*. The methodology is the same as in past years. For 2010, we have 89 companies providing verified financial data compared with 91 last year.

Nine years ago, *CE Pro* began asking for independent verifying documentation from companies that submitted information. The verification is optional, but the number of verified financials has steadily increased. Verification is in the form of copies of tax returns or letters from an outside CPA.

The check mark next to several of the entries denotes that the revenues listed were verified by the submission of tax records, P&L statements or written confirmations from the company's certified public accountant. Companies were required to sign a statement (for faxed or mailed entries) that says, "the information provided is accurate and truthful." That statement also appears at the bottom of electronic submissions.

Similar to previous years, *CE Pro* has selected gross revenue in multisystem residential installations as the determining factor for the ranking. Another much-talked-about aspect of the list is the outlining of the product lines that these large companies have chosen to offer. There may be better and more or less expensive product lines on the market, but it is certainly worth examining why these dealers are using particular brands. Moreover, the list allows you to gauge your own company's performance against others. It may even provide you with a valuable tool to use with investors or bankers when trying to describe the scope of the custom installation business.

The *CE Pro* list is obtained in several ways:

- A qualification form appeared in the February and March 2011 issues of *CE Pro*.
- An online form was posted on [www.cepro.com](http://www.cepro.com) for three months, inviting entries. The website will also maintain a list of the 2010 *CE Pro*

100 for the next 12 months.

- A blast email was sent out to the installing companies that subscribe to *CE Pro*.
- Special emails and phone calls were made to a handful of firms that appeared in previous *CE Pro 100* listing.

The list is ranked by the volume of billed, not booked, business from residential systems that incorporate at least three of the following subsystems:

- Audio (sources, speakers, processors or multiroom distribution components)
- HVAC control/energy management systems
- Lighting controls
- Security systems (alarms, integrated fire, access control or CCTV)
- Structured wiring
- Telecommunications
- Video (sources, monitors, projectors, screens DBS or multiroom distribution components, gaming)
- Whole-house automation/integration
- Networking (PC/broadband routers, modems, WAPs, etc.)
- Window covering controls
- Other (central vacuum, surge protection, irrigation control, spa controls, acoustical panels, seating, furniture, etc.)

The dollar volume listed from companies on the list whose primary business is selling and installing security systems is derived solely from their residential installation income in which at least three subsystems are included. For example, ADT's total company revenues are \$4.4 billion and its residential revenues are \$2.6 billion (see sidebar). Likewise, custom retailers that have entered the custom installation business are included, but only with their multi-subsystem installation revenue.

As always there are several large companies that chose not to participate in this year's listing. Many higher-end custom companies do not want to be compared with high-volume companies on any list. Is your company missing from the list? If so, email *CE Pro* at [jknott@ehpub.com](mailto:jknott@ehpub.com), or please email any other comments about the *CE Pro 100*. ■