

Selling the Great Outdoors

Now, it's surely sloppy, wet, and cold in most of our hometowns, but that means it is time to think of selling spring and summer entertainment fun to get folks out of their winter funk. Think about the clients you are going to call on this week to close some sales. Are you leading with what they want or something that they would like but just didn't think of? Are you being creative with outdoor fun?

Get your client excited about something that shows you are thinking ahead and ready to close the sale now. Talk about something you know the customer en-

better than they could ever imagine. You know that they will have a nice irrigation system and great lighting. Start with that. If they believe that their dirt is worthy of water and light, then surely they will want to be on their dirt while enjoying good sound.

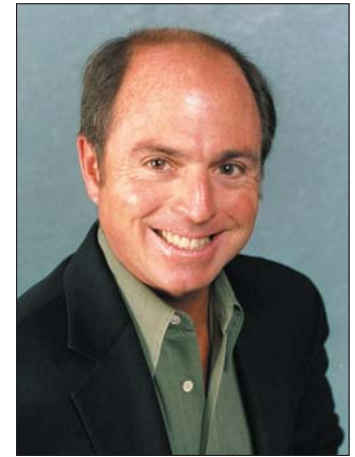
There are so many options for great sound outdoors. Everyone makes traditional outdoor cabinet speakers and rock speakers. But how can you use them effectively? How important is stereo imaging outside? If you want to cover a yard effectively, multiple speakers playing at moderate vol-

keep them close to the ground for earthy boom-boom. Wedge them up against the house or a block wall in the garden to load the bass forward.

Outdoor speakers are typically challenged by their distance from the amplifier, so you'll need a burly model for the outdoor zones. Maybe bridging the 50- to 75-watt variety for 100-plus watts per channel is the way to go, or use a multiple higher power two-channel amp dedicated to the outdoor zones. No matter what, pay attention to Ohm's law here and go for more power and use 14 AWG cable with a burial grade jacket to prevent the nasty effects of the great outdoors and other environmental vermin.

Your client probably has a wireless network in their home and would dig being able to sit outdoors surfing and e-mailing while they listen to tunes. Be ready with a high-performance wireless router that evenly covers their outdoor property. And be sure to help them design a favorite sitting spot outdoors where they can shield their screen from the natural light with minimum washout.

Now you've got them hooked, closed, and ready for more. Time to move inside their shack. Keypads and volume controls come



in outdoor versions so be sure whatever is appropriate is well-placed and is absolutely of a UV-stable material. That white volume control is not supposed to resemble Grey Poupon after a few months in the sun.

Did you note that your client likes to cook outdoors? Video display, access to source, and volume control and lighting adjustment should be right there with the flame adjustments for the grille.

Did you include a phone jack and weatherproof drawer for the phone to reside in at a convenient spot for both cooking and lounging? You can bet that this will be a welcome perk to anyone even in this age of skin-grafted mobile phones.

What about the walk-up to their front door? Even something as simple as a mono-summing or single stereo speaker at the entry with music playing softly makes a

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"Talk about something you know the customer enjoys about the outdoors"

joys about the outdoors: koi ponds, great whites in the Australian Pacific, or birds in the sky over South Dakota. Paint them a picture and take them there. Then bring this imagery into their home, onto their property. Help them visualize their backyard, patio, pool, garden, lake, or river in a way that they never did before.

Once you've talked about the fun they've had, it is time for the serious sell. Tell them you have a few ideas for making their outdoor entertainment experience

ume will fare better than fewer speakers played loudly. And, feeding a blended stereo channel to each rather than alternating stereo pairs, will provide a balanced sound field. Most multi-channel power amplifiers have a dip-switch feature to enable this.

How about some outdoor bass? There are a few ways to do this. For a simple, unobtrusive approach, go with some radical eight-inch woofer outdoor speakers and space them far enough apart to get a good bass wave and

MANAGEMENT MODULE

Burkhardt Hits the Road

RIVERSIDE, CA—SpeakerCraft president Jeremy Burkhardt is embarking on a whirlwind tour of the country. Reaching out to the dealers who have made the company a success in the custom installed audio industry, Burkhardt will literally circum-

navigate the continent in just 30 days, in a tour bus, to meet with 1,500 SpeakerCraft supporters. The North American tour will stop in 27 cities in primary and secondary markets. Burkhardt began his travels in Tampa, Florida, on March 7, and wrap up in Jacksonville on April 6.



SpeakerCraft's tour bus