

BETTER BY DESIGN

Invisible speaker specialist AMINA, offers its advice on working with architects and interior designers.



Amina Technologies is well aware of the impact its products have visually and structurally on a property. Visually the benefits are obvious and having a sound system with no visual intrusion is a designers' dream. Structurally, there is a need to consider the mechanics of how the products fit into the fabric of a building and although simple to install, life is much simpler if due consideration to where and how the speakers will be fitted is given at an early stage. Working with architects from the start of the project allows all possibilities to be considered. This may include options that would otherwise have been discounted or not possible at a later stage such as fitting behind polished plaster or wood panelling and creates flexibility on speaker locations which lessens as the project develops.

These influencers are passionate about aesthetics and therefore motivated about using technology that provides the

plan for speaker locations, cabling and special installation requirements, e.g. unusual plasterboard thickness, lime or polished plaster finishes. When hidden technology is specified later on in a project, at best, it can make for a complicated installation and at worst certain solutions may have to be rejected if they can't be retrofitted. A great example of this in action was the case of one integrator who had worked closely with the architect on a multi-room project including Amina invisible loudspeakers. The client had requested invisible sound in a luxury bathroom, featuring a floor to ceiling mother of pearl finish! So no retrofit or late decision options here! Working together, the architects, installer and Amina enabled planning and testing before the room was constructed and a solution was engineered that included Amina speakers being installed during the actual manufacturing of the mother of pearl covered panelling.

The result? a truly stunning room and the alternative? No invisible sound or perhaps no sound at all in the bathroom as any kind of fitment would have impacted the appearance. Collaborative efforts can create lasting partnerships that lead to regular future business. In the example above, the architect on the project was provided a solution by the integrator that they probably didn't think was possible, so where will they turn the next time?

Many similar examples of collaboration can be quoted, from developing a bespoke installation method for within the damp course of a 500 year old barn conversion,

to a hotel spa where the interior designer needed support throughout the supply chain to convince all concerned that her dream of invisible sound was really possible.

Amina Technologies recognise that for invisible loudspeakers both architects and interior designers are absolutely key in the decision making process, especially when stunning aesthetics are a key selling point. Our experiences have made us passionate in our belief that significant growth for our industry can be driven through increased awareness in those not directly involved in smart home technology, as to what is possible without ugly cables and black boxes or costing the earth. All of us have a part to play in this education process and in a further article next month in *EI* we will consider this further.

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■ Educating the design community to the advantages of hidden technology can drive the CI sector



■ By being involved right from the start of a project, genuine integration is achieved

functionality that their customers desire without impacting the look of the design.

Thus by educating influencers and their customers as to what is possible, the knowledge in the market that invisible sound and discrete technology is a realistic option increases. When in an architect's office, questions will often be raised about a variety of projects often very speculatively. This is a powerful sales tool as the architects, in all probability, would not have telephoned and asked the same questions, so an opportunity has been created that would otherwise have been missed. Equally, exhibiting at design focussed shows has directly provided real business, sometimes very substantial. A challenge for our industry is, despite our combined best efforts, the lack of knowledge of what is possible in terms of technology, without costing the earth, both with influencers and customers. People do not search the Internet for products that they don't know exist, so building knowledge and confidence we believe is key.

For Amina, our invisible loudspeakers are often specified at architect or M&E level. This allows scope in the project to