

Residential Systems

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- Guide to Smart Shades
- How to Work With Orro
- High-End Audio Tech Showcase

Selling Smart LIGHTING

Make Sure Your Clients Don't Miss Out
on This Category's Full Potential



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AVR-2 Elite
20 Power
Transformer





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With smart lighting control, you get more control options than just on and off and can impress clients using simple scenes. Learn more on page 14.

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How many switches is too many? With smart lighting control, you get more control options than just on and off.

Modern Smart Lighting Almost Sells Itself (*Almost*)

The latest smart lighting systems offer major benefits and improvements to home life, and it's up to custom integrators to make sure their clients don't miss the opportunity.

By Jeff Thomas, VP of Product Management at Snap One

As automation and lighting technologies have progressed to offer affordable solutions that combine fixture-level control with whole-home programmability, it's now possible for average homeowners to enjoy the lifestyle benefits of highly customized lighting design. Builders and designers are increasingly aware of the possibilities, but there are still some professionals and homeowners who

are hesitant due to lack of adequate education or physical experience that shows the value and potential of smart lighting. For custom integrators, this is a market of opportunity.

It Starts With Education

The typical on/off light switch is one of the most familiar and longest-lived home



Simple scenes such as Hello and Goodbye can be eye-openers for prospective lighting clients.



This kitchen offers lighting scenes such as Dine, Cook, and Entertain.

technologies ever, having retained the same basic design and functionality for nearly 130 years. Homeowners might not know the technology is so ancient and assume that swapping in LED bulbs is the height of innovation and modern convenience. With so many advanced capabilities available through today's leading smart lighting solutions, including voice control, scheduled automation, trigger-based illumination, tunable colored LED bulbs and fixtures, and direct coordination with security systems, they couldn't be more wrong.

When pitching a hesitant or unaware client, a simple way to start the conversation is to ask if they want a large bank of light switches in every room. How many is too many? For most customers, their experience will reveal that having so many light switches leads to confusion and lacks the polish of every other form of technology we are now accustomed to. When they learn how a room with six lighting loads, for instance, can be controlled through a multi-button keypad with custom-engraved buttons, or through a mobile device app or even voice control, it's much harder to argue in favor of the old style.

Making Life Easier

Smart lighting, like most home technologies, has become a hot topic as prices have dropped and more options and competition have emerged. Similar to other systems, the most important function of smart lighting is to simplify home living, so it's crucial for integrators to clearly demonstrate the simplicity of control and automation that's available.

Those with showrooms or access to finished projects can create inventive

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"tours" that highlight the possibilities of consolidated lighting control, which grow exponentially when connected to other systems such as security or motorized window shades. Even the creation of "scenes," one of the most basic smart lighting capabilities, is a groundbreaking idea for clients who've never used scenes before. Similarly, creating a lighting schedule, for example setting porch lights to automatically turn on at sunset and turn off at sunrise, is also an eye-opener for clients. Video demos can be effective tools, as well, and can quickly demonstrate everything from house-wide automation to remote access.

Professional integrators have found success in selling advanced lighting by creating standardized scenes for commonly requested needs such as dining, cleaning, relaxing, and entertaining, each with specific lighting levels, colors, and use of fixtures.

Improving Design and Aesthetics

In response to ever-changing design standards and homeowner expectations, manufacturers have re-envisioned what wall plates and switches look like with contemporary designs, moving further from the traditional almond, ivory, or white switches and faceplates. At the same time, the idea of a light fixture has also evolved to include everything from lamps and ceiling cans to LED strip lights that offer full RGB color control and virtually unlimited placement.

For customers who work from home, which is a rapidly growing group, there is also value for lighting that can set a particular mood through changes in intensity and color temperature. Color-tunable lighting is becoming a favorite feature among smart-home owners, allowing single spaces to take on the appearance of a bright, invigorating workplace during the day, and then reverting to a more subdued amber environment in the evening. With scheduling and automation, this can also be used to tie lighting directly to the time of day and provide enhanced comfort by matching indoor lighting to the current natural light environment outside.

Innovation Without Compromise

There are still those among us who question the need for advanced lighting solutions, but their numbers are dwindling. Where past devices may have demanded aesthetic tradeoffs, today's smart lighting systems are purely beneficial. Architects, designers, and builders have responded to changing homeowner tastes by working in the planning stages of builds and remodels to ensure maximum utility and convenience from the home's electronics.

The ease of use and reliability of these systems, including full control through mobile device apps, engenders permanent behavior changes and expectations of how home lighting is used to create specific environments.

With current building trends and consumer tastes moving toward ultra-efficient, whole-home LED lighting, custom integrators have a major opportunity to become the knowledge resource for homeowners and also gain the trust and respect of designers through thoughtful use and control of light. Whether it's used to illuminate artwork, landscapes, or a kitchen counter, every space can be highly customized to create resort-like experiences that make guests ask, "How can I get that in my house?" **Res**