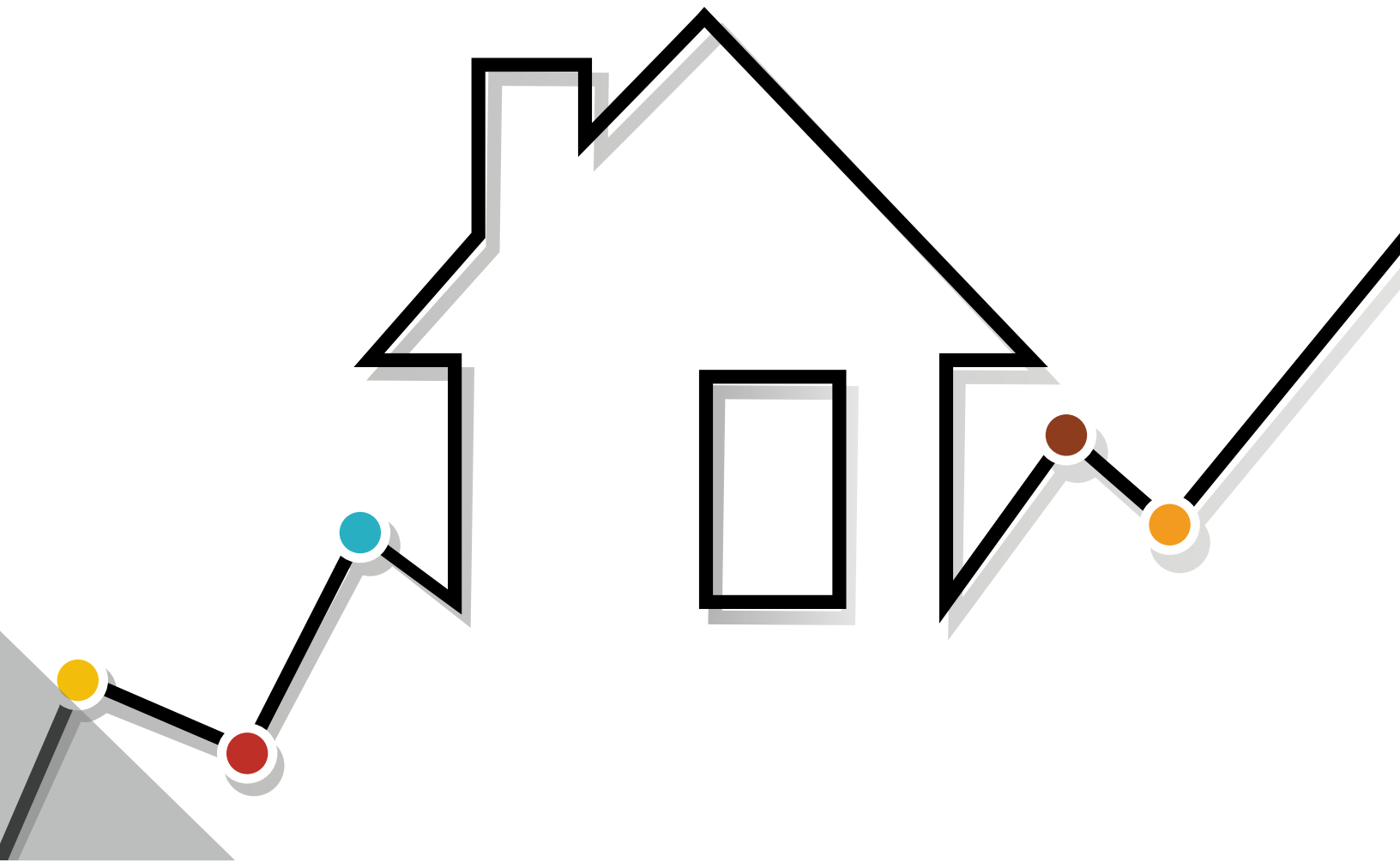


# CEPro **ADVANTAGE** SERIES



**CE PRO 100 2017**  
**REVENUES GROW 24% IN 2016**

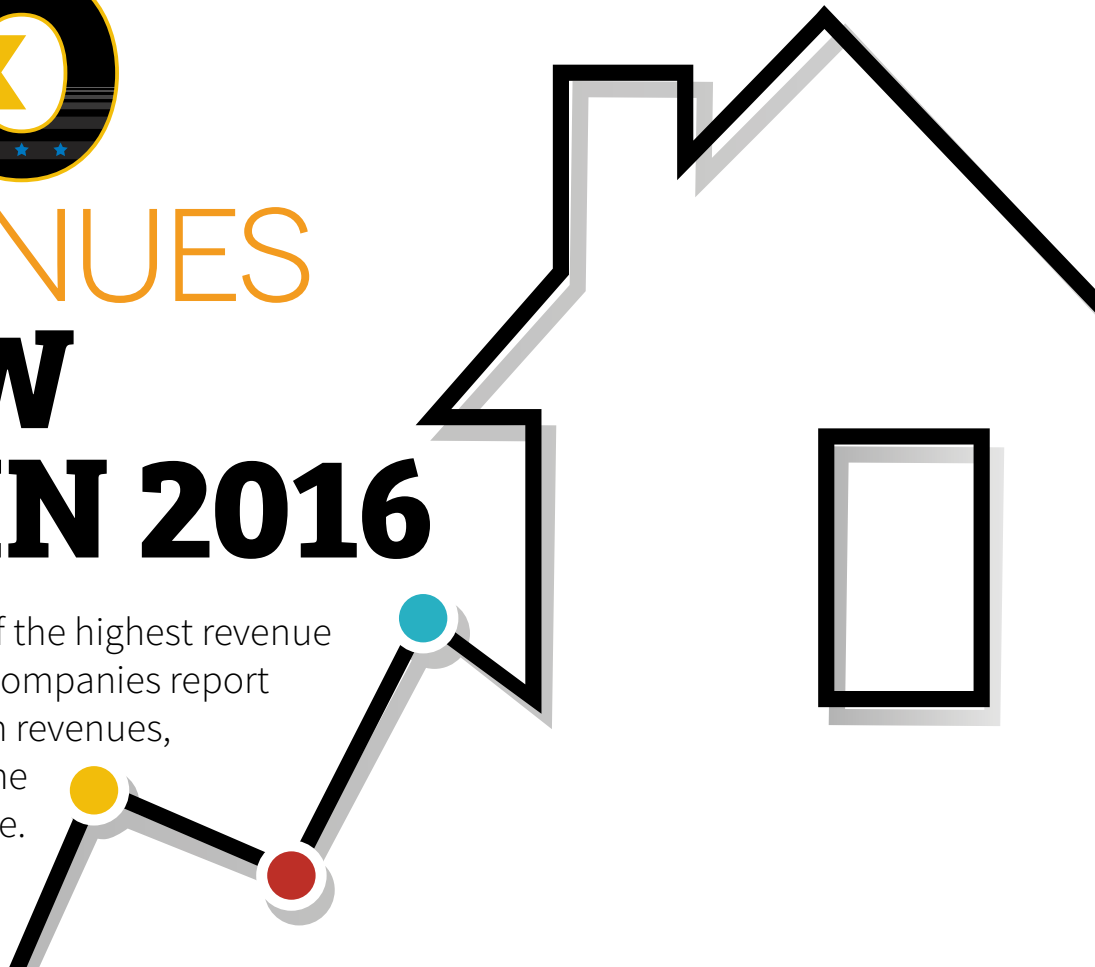




# REVENUES GROW 24% IN 2016

CE Pro's annual list of the highest revenue custom installation companies report \$2.6 billion in custom revenues, with increased income per job, per employee.

BY JASON KNOTT



## KEY BENCHMARK NUMBERS

**\$2,625,534,783**  
**(\$2.6 billion)**

Total custom residential-only revenues logged by the CE Pro 100 in 2016



**\$4.9 million**

Median custom revenues earned by the CE Pro 100 in 2016

**23.8%**

Percentage increase in average custom revenues in 2016 vs. 2015

**14%**

Percentage of predicted revenue growth in 2017



**6,142,336 (6.1 million)**

Estimated total number of smart home installations done by the CE Pro 100 in 2016

**150**

Median number of multi-subsystem residential installations per company (down 6 vs. 2015)



**WHEN IS IT OK** to have a “good problem”? The epitome of that oxymoron might be 2017. Times are so good right now that

CE Pro 100 integrators, led by Vivint Smart Home, Best Buy and ADT, simply cannot keep up with the market demand.

Indeed, right now:

- ▶ Consumer confidence just hit a plateau not seen in 16 years.

- ▶ New home construction is at its highest level since 2007, with 1,288,000 million predicted starts for 2017, tracking 7.5 percent higher vs. 2016. Of those, single-family home starts are up 6.5 percent to an annual rate of 872,000.

- ▶ The stock market experienced the

remarkable “Trump Bump” skyrocketing the Dow Jones Industrial Average around 21,000, rising 1,000 points in record time. President Trump’s promised tax reform also has the market salivating over the potential for even more expendable income in consumers’ pockets, along with potential tax breaks for businesses.

- ▶ Home remodeling spending is pacing along at a 6.7 percent growth clip, according to Harvard’s Joint Center for Housing Studies. Homeowners are expected to spend \$317 billion on home upgrades.

- ▶ Heck, even the much-maligned Millennials are getting into the act. Recent data shows that massive generation is leaping into home ownership. A recent study by Houzz revealed that one in three new homebuyers plans to install home automation in the next 12 months.

The result of this prosperity is a whopping 24 percent increase in revenues among CE Pro 100 integration companies in 2016. The cumulative revenues of the group equal \$2,625,534,783, or \$2.6 billion to keep it simple. That is up \$500 mil-

lion from the \$2.1 billion in 2015 reported by the group. The 24 percent increase is three times the 8 percent growth experienced by the rest of the industry last year, according to the *CE Pro* Annual Readership Study.

The median CE Pro 100 company reported \$4.9 million in revenues last year. Median is the figure at which half the respondents are above and half are below. For the CE Pro 100, custom revenues include income from installation, equipment that is sold and installed, and recurring revenue earned from multi-subsystem residential accounts. If revenue from all sources is considered, the CE Pro 100 represents companies that raked in more than \$45.5 billion last year.

And the news gets even better for these large custom integration firms — for 2017, the CE Pro 100 is anticipating another solid year with growth of 14 percent. Only four members of the CE Pro 100 expect to be “flat” in revenues this year, and none is forecasting a revenue decline.

For the second year in a row, the number of installations grew tremendously, to more than 6.1 million projects. The boost was led by Best Buy’s remarkable

**\$207,677**

Median revenue per employee (up 5.5 percent vs. 2015)



**\$32,520**

Median revenue per installation (up 6 percent vs. 2015)



**\$757.9 million**

Custom residential installation revenues for the No. 1 company (Vivint)

**41**

Number of CE Pro 100 companies with more than one business location/storefront

**15**

Number of CE Pro 100 companies based in California, the highest concentration of any state

**91**

Number of CE Pro 100 companies doing commercial installations last year



**24**

Median number of employees per CE Pro 100 company (up one person vs. 2015)

# CE COVER STORY

## CE PRO 100

revelation that its Geek Squad crews conducted 5 million in-home consultations in 2016. But even if that number is taken out of the mix, the other 98 companies (No. 7 HomePro did not report) conducted 1.1 million jobs. That is 447,550 more visits than were done in 2015, or a 64 percent rise.

### OVERCOMING INEFFICIENCY

So with all this prosperity, what could possibly be the problem? Inefficiency. Integrators recognize that with the economy clicking on all cylinders, the only thing holding back their collective companies is their inability to get the work done in a timely manner with high customer satisfaction. Similar to the past few years, lack of manpower is the biggest challenge.

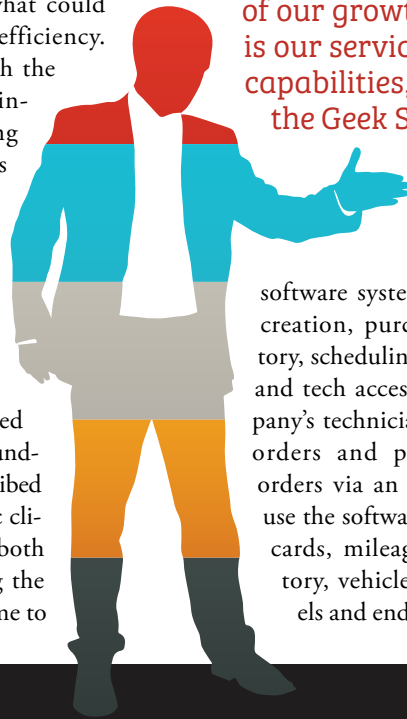
Lelch Audio Video in Saint Louis Park, Minn., just missed making the list this year, but founder Alex Lelchuk eloquently described the current “fantastic economic climate we find ourselves in” as both a blessing and a curse. During the recession, he used the slower time to

improve his processes, primarily increasing efficiency to be able to maintain quality workmanship and communication to set his company apart from the competition.

“Our plan to increase efficiency is the continued refinement of our process,” Lelchuk notes. Among the steps he has taken include purchasing a centralized

“A critical component of our growth efforts is our services capabilities, including the Geek Squad.”

—Hubert Joly, CEO, Best Buy



software system for proposal creation, purchasing, inventory, scheduling, data location and tech access. All the company’s technicians access work orders and process change orders via an iPad, and they use the software to track time cards, mileage, vehicle history, vehicle inventory levels and end-of-day reports.

Lelch AV also started staging its jobs much earlier.

“This has created an opportunity to pre-stock vehicles for multiple days as opposed to a single day. It has reduced the need for techs to come to the shop every day and instead allows them to go directly to the job site,” he explains. “We have begun production of racks in our warehouse. This is reducing the time required onsite to assemble and test. The major difference is that we can schedule different stages of a final at the same time. As opposed to one or two days for a tech to build a rack, then start programming the system. This way we can start programming beforehand and be onsite day one and eliminate a few hours in testing and burn-in.”

Companies like Signals Audio Video, Inc. in El Segundo, Calif., are also focusing on efficiency. CEO/founder Todd DeAngelis conducts regular training to retain installation standards and uniformity between the company’s two locations. He has implemented a new CRM, inventory management system and company-wide scheduling program. Signals AV also holds routine on-the-job and in-office training, and is planning joint-management roundtables for both locations.

### Big Guns

TOP INTEGRATORS BY TOTAL REVENUES (ALL SOURCES)

1. Best Buy \$39.5 billion
2. ADT \$3.3 billion
3. Nebraska Furniture Mart \$1 billion (e)
4. Vivint \$757.9 million
5. Guardian Protection Services \$198 million
6. Just One Touch/Video & Audio Center \$85.8 million
7. Automation Integration \$70 million
8. World Wide Stereo \$39.5 million
9. HomePro \$35 million
10. SST \$33.3 million

This list shows total company revenues from all sources, including commercial work, electrical, custom installation, retail and security-only.

### Old School Aces

TOP TRADITIONAL CUSTOM A/V INTEGRATORS (CUSTOM REVENUE ONLY)

1. Audio Command Systems \$27.3 million
2. Audio Video Systems \$20.8 million
3. Vitex Systems \$18.5 million
4. Synergy Florida \$14.9 million
5. AudioVisions \$14.8 million
6. Audio Interiors \$14.2 million
7. ETC \$13.9 million
8. Maverick Integration \$11.9 million
9. Audio Advice \$11.5 million
10. TVTI \$10.9

These traditional A/V specialists have the time-tested business model of doing a smaller number of projects with higher price points that entails working closely with homeowners, architects, interior designers and custom builders to fashion sophisticated integrated systems — one at a time.

### Retail Giants

TOP CUSTOM RETAILERS/ETAILERS (CUSTOM REVENUE ONLY)

1. Best Buy \$650.1 million (e)
2. Just One Touch/Video & Audio Center \$34.3 million
3. Nebraska Furniture Mart \$15.9 million
4. World Wide Stereo \$11.6 million
5. Bekins \$5.6 million
6. Bjorn’s Audio Video \$3.8 million

These integrators earn more revenue from selling equipment over-the-counter than via custom installation. Many of those over-the-counter sales form relationships with customers that lead to installing the equipment.



## Productivity Kings

HIGHEST REVENUE PER  
FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE

1. **Intech** \$750,000
2. **Digital Interiors (Calif.)** \$722,082
3. **AAMI** \$572,733
4. **World Vision** \$543,750
5. **Elite Media Solutions** \$485,000
6. **TVTI** \$439,471
7. **Audio Video Crafts** \$407,596
8. **Just One Touch/Video and Audio Center** \$403,729
9. **Automation Integration** \$400,000
10. **Acoustic Designs Inc.** \$347,340

*These efficient integrators have been able to maximize employee productivity. It is a mix of security companies (maximizing RMR), online retailers, retailers and traditional high-end integrators. Revenue figure is per-employee average. The data can be somewhat misleading, since it is based on full-time employees only; some companies make liberal use of an independent contractor workforce.*

## Big Job Gurus

HIGHEST AVERAGE REVENUE  
PER INSTALLATION

1. **AVDG** \$200,000
2. **Premiere Systems** \$192,156
3. **Audio Video Systems** \$168,764
4. **AudioVisions** \$165,156
5. **Signals Audio Video** \$160,762
6. **Sawyers Control Systems** \$156,521
7. **Boca Theater and Automation** \$138,300
8. **Maverick Integration** \$135,227
9. **ETC** \$135,184
10. **Audio Command Systems** \$125,494

*These companies are the ones that focus on big jobs that often entail long-term, complex integration of multiple subsystems. Revenue figure is per-project average.*

## VIVINT, BEST BUY, ADT ON TOP

For the second year in a row, Vivint Smart Home tops the list of the CE Pro 100. The Provo, Utah-based company has successfully migrated from its original security-centric roots to a home-automation package as its base offering for customers including security, lighting control and thermostat control. Today's Vivint customers routinely add on automated smart locks, doorbell cameras, garage door control, video surveillance cameras, voice control and more. The company is also a recurring monthly revenue (RMR) monitoring juggernaut with services like tornado alerts, flood alerts and weather alerts. In 2016, Vivint grew its revenues by an amazing \$104.2 million, from \$653.7 million to \$757.9 million.

No. 2 Best Buy also had a strong year, earning \$39.4 billion in total domestic revenues in FY 2016, up just over 3.3 percent from last year. Its online revenues spiked by 13 percent domestically. The company has 1,026 physical stores and 125,000 total employees. Its stock price has risen 435 percent since the end of 2012 when it was just \$11.29 per share to \$49.15/share at press time. For the CE Pro 100, Best Buy's custom installation

revenues are estimated, since the public company does not break out its actual installation revenues. But according to chairman and CEO Hubert Joly, one of the primary reasons for Best Buy's bottom line boost of \$148 million in FY 2016 was due to a rate increase for its Geek Squad installation service.

Best Buy's "Services" division, which represents 5 percent of total revenues, includes its consultation, design, delivery, installation, setup, protection plans, repair, technical support and educational classes. While the company reported a drop in its services revenues last year, it was primarily due to a fall in extended warranty sales for smartphones, according to the annual report. Among the "growth pillars" of the company's Best Buy 2020 initiative are to "provide services and solutions that solve real customer needs and help us build deeper customer relationships — for example, by meeting the significant technical support needs of our customers and providing more complete solutions such as security monitoring and home automation services as well as the associated products," according to the annual report.

Best Buy also plans to expand its in-

## Volume Experts by Revenue

TOP SECURITY/STRUCTURED WIRING  
BASED INTEGRATORS (CUSTOM-ONLY  
REVENUES)

1. **Vivint** \$757.9 million
2. **ADT Security Services** \$501.7 million
3. **SST** \$33.3 million
4. **(t) Guardian Protection** \$30.8 million
4. **(t) HomePro** \$30.8 million
6. **Vitex** \$18.5 million
7. **Synergy Florida** \$14.9 million
8. **Peak Audio & Video/Peak Alarm** \$11.7 million
9. **iWired** \$11.1 million

*Volume is the key word for these integrators who do as many jobs as possible in the most efficient manner. Most of them are security-based and others have strong relationships with large production homebuilders.*

## Volume Experts by Number of Projects

BUSIEST INTEGRATORS BY JOB COUNT

1. **Best Buy** 5,000,000 (e)
2. **ADT** 788,250
3. **Vivint** 267,000
4. **Guardian Protection** 24,178
5. **Nebraska Furniture Mart** 7,600
6. **Vitex Systems** 6,000
7. **Smart Systems Technologies** 4,500
8. **Synergy Florida** 3,900
9. **iWired** 3,041
10. **Dennis Sage Home Entertainment** 3,000

*These integrators completed the most projects in 2016. They represent a mix of retail, security and production-homebuilder-entrenched partners.*

## CE COVER STORY

### CE PRO 100

home advisor (IHA) program to more markets. In the IHA program, customers receive a free in-home consultation with an experienced technology advisor who can identify their needs, design personalized solutions and become a resource. Also, among the emerging product categories the company's has targeted for growth is the connected home where it aims to provide "a more compelling experience to our customers" via Magnolia and Geek Squad.

Speaking to investors in November 2016, Joly noted, "Emerging categories are

gaining traction in part due to our ability to physically showcase products and offer expert help to customers. In connected home, we're seeing strengths in home automation including security, lighting, and video monitoring. Drones are also becoming a more meaningful part of the business and virtual reality products hit all of our stores during the third quarter with new, dedicated virtual reality departments in more than 700 stores."

In the annual report, Joly says, "We will explore a number of initiatives in FY17,

including developing more consultative selling approaches and providing a richer set of services to our customers. We will also pursue growth opportunities around key, growing product categories. A critical component of our growth efforts is our services capabilities, including the Geek Squad. While it may not yet be visible in our quarterly financial results, we are making progress in this area."

At the same time, Best Buy reports a strong 4.7 percent increase in sales for its consumer electronics, which includes demand for 4K TVs. The company no longer has standalone Magnolia Audio Video stores, but has Magnolia Home Theater/Design Centers, plus 630 Samsung and 380 Sony home theater "store-within-a-store" locations.

For the CE Pro 100 listing, we are using one-third of Best Buy's total \$1.95 billion revenues from its Services division. That equates to \$650.1 million estimate, or about a \$9 million gain over last year. According to an article in *Time*, Joly cited data that its 20,000+ Geek Squad technicians made an amazing 5 million in-home calls last year. The company also changed 1,100 of its 4,000 Geek Squad "Geekmobiles" vehicles from the Volkswagen Beetle to the Toyota Prius C.

Coming at No. 3 for 2016 is the "new" ADT reporting \$501.7 million in revenue for the CE Pro 100, a mind-numbing growth of \$368 million, or 260 percent. Meanwhile, the company's number of multi-subsystem installations grew 64 percent to 788,250, up from 482,000 in 2015. It now has more than 2 million ADT Pulse customers. The venerable 142-year-old security giant went from being a public company to a private company in February 2016 when it was acquired by Apollo Global Management for a deal valued at about \$6.9 billion. The buyout combined under one roof ADT, Protection 1 and ASG Security.

At sale time, the combined company had more than 6 million customers, total revenues of \$3.3 billion, and RMR of \$315 million. ADT has built strong momentum for its ADT Pulse home automation system, which attracts a higher monthly

#### HOW COMPANIES VERIFY THEIR DATA FOR THE CE PRO 100

COMPANIES ARE ASKED to submit their financial data or have it verified by their accountant for the CE Pro 100. The verification is optional. Companies were required to sign a statement (for faxed or mailed entries) that says, "the information provided is accurate and truthful."

Similar to previous years, *CE Pro* has selected gross revenue in multisystem residential installations as the determining factor for the ranking. Keep your eyes peeled for the June issue of *CE Pro* that will include a brand analysis of vendors used by the CE Pro 100. All entrants in the CE Pro 100 are eligible to attend the CE Summit as a hosted guest. It will be held in Orlando, Fla., from November 1-3, 2017.

The CE Pro 100 is aggregated in several ways:

- ▶ A qualification form appeared in the February and March 2017 issues of *CE Pro*.
- ▶ An online form was posted on *cepro.com* for three months, inviting entries. The website will maintain a list of this year's CE Pro 100 for the next 12 months.
- ▶ A blast email was sent 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 video surveillance)
- ▶ Structured wiring
- ▶ Telecommunications
- ▶ Video (sources, monitors, projectors, screens, multiroom distribution components, gaming)
- ▶ Whole-house automation/integration
- ▶ Networking (PC/broadband routers, modems, WAPs, etc.)
- ▶ Window covering controls
- ▶ Other (cellphone signal boosters, voice control, central vacuum, surge protection, irrigation control, satellite, spa controls, acoustical panels, seating, furniture, etc.)

The data does include recurring revenue from multi-subsystem installations. 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.

## CE COVER STORY

### CE PRO 100

monitoring fee. Prior to the buyout, the company reported 75 percent of all new clients were opting for Pulse, and many existing alarm subscribers were converting the Pulse, which includes lighting and thermostat control, with options for video surveillance, smart locks, garage door control and other functions.

#### MEDIANS TELL THE STORY

For the rest of the CE Pro 100, medians tell the best story of how the market is doing. And for nearly every barometer, the indicators were great in 2016. Especially important for many of the companies on the list is that the median number of installations remained the about the same as last year at 150 projects. To reiterate, median is the figure at which half the respondents are above and half are below. This data point is less able to be skewed by very large or very small respondents. That 150 installation figure represents six fewer jobs than in 2015 per company. So it is always a great

sign when revenues rise but the number of projects does not. It means integrators earned more money per project.

Indeed, the median revenue per installation grew to \$32,520, up from \$28,949. That is a \$3,571 increase, or 12 percent. Median is the best statistic to use when

**The median revenue per installation in 2016 grew to \$32,520, up 12 percent from \$28,949.**

looking at the price points because ADT, Vivint and Best Buy's Geek Squad at the top of the list greatly skew the average installation. For example, ADT's average revenue per installation (most of which is collected in RMR) is just \$636 (which, by the way, is \$100 more per system than the company earned last year). Best Buy made about \$130 per project, but that includes a lot of Geek Squad IT consultation/repair

appointments. During the recession, the average price for an installation fell precipitously from previous years when the cottage custom installation industry did not have any national players in the game with RMR business models.

Another sign of growth is the \$5 million benchmark figure. When the CE Pro 100 was introduced in 1999, the largest company on the list did \$5 million in residential custom installation revenue. This year, 48 companies on the list exceeded that \$5 million milestone.

As described in the past, many of the large players' offerings do not make for an apples-to-apples comparison with traditional custom integrators' solutions. Some continue to argue that they do not represent "custom installation." However, many entrepreneurial integrators on the list offering the same products and services as the large players, such as basic flat-panel installations and limited lighting and HVAC control tied in with a security panel. **CE Pro**

# CE COVER STORY

21-40



RANK	VERIFIED	COMPANY	CITY	CE PRO 100 REVENUES	RESIDENTIAL INSTALLS	REVENUE/INSTALL	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES (AVG. 2016)	REVENUE/EMPLOYEE	2017 BUSINESS OUTLOOK
21	v	<b>Audio High</b>	Mountain View, Calif.	<b>\$10,230,000</b>	300	\$34,100	35	\$292,286	Up 10%
22	v	<b>Premiere Systems</b>	Chicago, Ill.	<b>\$9,800,000</b>	51	\$192,157	47	\$208,511	Up 5%
23	v	<b>TriPhase Technologies</b>	Carmel, Ind.	<b>\$8,996,937</b>	167	\$53,874	44	\$204,476	Up 10%
24	v	<b>Audio Video Crafts</b>	Long Island City, N.Y.	<b>\$8,967,128</b>	101	\$88,783	22	\$407,597	Up 5%
25	v	<b>AAMI</b>	Naples, Fla.	<b>\$8,591,000</b>	250	\$34,364	15	\$572,733	Up 12%
26	v	<b>Trinity Wiring &amp; Security Solutions</b>	Manassas, Va.	<b>\$8,350,000</b>	2,600	\$3,212	45	\$185,556	Up 10%
27	v	<b>Eagle Sentry</b>	Las Vegas, Nev.	<b>\$8,200,000</b>	470	\$17,447	48	\$170,833	Up 15%
28	v	<b>Intech</b>	Hicksville, N.Y.	<b>\$7,500,000</b>	75	\$100,000	10	\$750,000	Up 20%
29	v	<b>Sound Concepts</b>	Jonesboro, Ark.	<b>\$7,270,785</b>	595	\$12,220	26	\$279,646	Up 10%
30	v	<b>Procom Enterprises</b>	Elk Grove Village, Ill.	<b>\$7,266,984</b>	400	\$18,167	48	\$151,396	Up 10%
31 (T)	v	<b>Innerspace Electronics</b>	Port Chester, N.Y.	<b>\$7,000,000</b>	125	\$56,000	23	\$304,348	Up 2%
31 (T)	v	<b>The Sound Room</b>	Chesterfield, Mo.	<b>\$7,000,000</b>	590	\$11,864	39	\$179,487	Up 20%
33	v	<b>Audio Images</b>	Tustin, Calif.	<b>\$6,923,623</b>	65	\$106,517	33	\$209,807	Up 10%
34	v	<b>Service Tech</b>	Cedar Park, Texas	<b>\$6,895,200</b>	64	\$107,738	22	\$313,418	Up 20%
35	v	<b>SoundVision</b>	Novato, Calif.	<b>\$6,705,290</b>	124	\$54,075	24	\$279,387	Up 10%
36	v	<b>Stereo East Home Theater</b>	Frisco, Texas	<b>\$6,662,000</b>	720	\$9,253	36	\$185,056	Up 20%
37	v	<b>Echo Systems</b>	Omaha, Neb.	<b>\$6,313,784</b>	60	\$105,230	25	\$252,551	Up 30%
38	v	<b>Signals Audio Video</b>	El Segundo, Calif.	<b>\$6,269,755</b>	39	\$160,763	28	\$223,920	Up 5%
39	v	<b>Holm Electric</b>	Incline Village, Nev.	<b>\$6,200,000</b>	75	\$82,667	54	\$114,815	Up 10%
40	v	<b>Dennis Sage Home Entertainment</b>	Phoenix, Ariz.	<b>\$6,113,000</b>	3,000	\$2,038	54	\$113,204	Up 10%

e = ESTIMATED CUSTOM REVENUES AND INSTALLATIONS